



**EXPLORING QUALITY ADMINISTRATION MANAGEMENT PRACTICES
ON CUSTOMER RETENTION AND SATISFACTION: CASE STUDY OF
SMALL MEDIUM MICRO ENTERPRISES AT ETHEKWINI METROPOLITAN
AREA**

By

Nkosingiphile Trevor Mchunu

21335138

**Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of the Master of Management Sciences in
Administration and Information Management Degree in the Faculty of Accounting
and Informatics at Durban University of Technology**

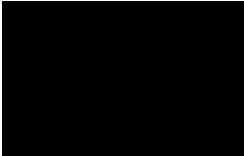
Supervisor: Dr Nduduzo Andrias Ngxongo (PhD)

Co-supervisor: Dr Smangele Pretty Moyane (PhD)

April 2024

DECLARATION

I, Nkosingiphile Trevor Mchunu, hereby declare that the work represented in this thesis project is original research and has not been submitted for a higher degree to any other university or institution.

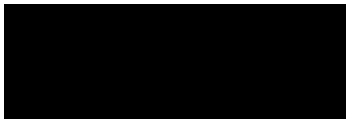


14/06/2024

Student signature

Date

Approved for Final Submission



Supervisor: Dr N.A. Ngxongo (Ph.D)

Co-supervisor: Dr. S.P. Moyane (Ph.D)

ABSTRACT

Small Medium Micro Enterprises (SMMEs) play a significant role in many countries' economic growth and development. However, customer retention and satisfaction remain critical challenges facing SMMEs. This study investigated the effectiveness of quality administration management practices in SMMEs located in the eThekwin Metropolitan Area. The objectives of the study were to examine how quality administration management practices impact customer retention and satisfaction in SMMEs located in the eThekwin Metropolitan area, to comprehend the influence of training and development of employees on quality management practices and customer retention and satisfaction in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMMEs), to recognise how internal and external factors impact quality management practices in SMMEs in the eThekwin Metropolitan area and, to determine the factors that contribute to and hinder customer retention and satisfaction in SMMEs in the eThekwin Metropolitan area and propose integrated, effective quality administration management practices to address these factors. The Quality Administration Management Theory (QAMT) was adopted as a theoretical framework in this study to assert the effective role of administration and management in achieving successful business quality management practices in SMMEs. QAMT's focus was relevant to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which often face resource constraints and struggle to implement quality management practices effectively. Due to time constraints, the geographical scope of the study was limited to the eThekwin Metropolitan Area. Potential limitations included the possibility of response bias and a relatively small sample size. The research adopted a quantitative research approach and employed a survey questionnaire to collect data from customers of selected SMMEs.

Data was analysed using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics, including t-tests, ANOVA, factor analysis, and regression analysis, through the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software. The findings of the study indicated that continuous improvement with the quality administration management practice significantly influences the customer satisfaction and in return, it positively relates to customer retention. Secondly, the results revealed that the education levels significantly had increasing impact on customer retention perceptions. The study thereafter recommended for SMMEs in the eThekwin Metropolitan area to continue striving for improvement in quality management practices achievable by implementing strategies that cater for customers with different levels of

education. Policy frameworks also need to be initiated to develop and promote customer customer retention.

Keywords: Quality Administration Management, Customer Retention, SMMEs, eThekwini Metropolitan Area, Employee Training

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I therefore acknowledge and appreciate the following persons and organisations for their support and help throughout my education.

- My supervisors, Dr N.A. Ngxongo and Dr. S.P. Moyane, for the several hours spent evaluating and revising my work.
- The Durban University of Technology for awarding me with a scholarship throughout my studies.
- My family, friends and colleagues have been a consistent source of encouragement throughout my education.
- Dr. M. Ngibe and Mrs. T.E. Ndaba for their unwavering support during my application and,
- Durban Chamber of Commerce and Industry for providing me with a gatekeeper's letter to collect data for my study.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my siblings, Siyanda and Thobani Mchunu, who were kind and supportive while I focused on my academic ambitions. To my beloved family who believed in me and encouraged me to achieve my best, including my late parents, Thembi Cynthia Ziqubu and Mduduzi Emmanuel Mchunu, this work is dedicated to you as well.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION.....	i
ABSTRACT	ii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	iv
DEDICATION	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vi
LIST OF FIGURES.....	xi
LIST OF TABLES	xii
LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS	xiv
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY.....	1
1.1 Introduction and study background.....	1
1.2 Conceptual background to the study	1
1.3 Contextual background of the study	2
1.4. Research problem.	4
1.4 Aim of the study.	4
1.5 Objectives of the study.....	5
1.6 Research questions.	5
1.7 Study hypothesis.	5
1.8 Significance of the study.	6
1.9 Delimitations of the study.....	6
1.10 Study limitations.....	7
1.11 Literature review and theoretical framework	8
1.12 Research methodology	9
1.13 Structure of dissertation	9
1.14 Summary of the chapter.....	10
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW	11
2.1 Introduction.	11

2.2	Theoretical framework.	11
2.2.1	Quality management theory.	12
2.2.2	Customer relationship management theory.	16
2.3	Quality administration management practices.	18
2.3.1	Relevance of leadership in QAM.	19
2.3.2	Role of employee retention and motivation.	20
2.3.3	Importance of quality administration management practices in SMMEs.	21
2.4	The significance of customer retention and satisfaction in SMMEs.	23
2.5	Factors influencing customer retention and satisfaction.	25
2.5.1	Commitment to top management and improvement.	26
2.5.2	Employee training and development.	27
2.5.3	Customer concentration and orientation.	28
2.5.4	Leadership style.	29
2.6	Managing customer expectations in SMMEs.	30
2.7	Existing frameworks or models for improving customer retention and satisfaction in SMMEs.	31
2.8	Strategies and initiatives to address factors hindering customer retention and satisfaction.	32
2.8.1	Pricing.	33
2.8.2	Relationship marketing.	33
2.8.3	Membership programs.	33
2.8.4	Service quality.	34
2.8.5	Customer retention.	35
2.8.6	Customer service.	35
2.9	Summary of the chapter.	36
CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY		37
3.1	Introduction.	37
3.2	Research philosophy.	37

3.3	Research design.....	38
3.3.1	Exploratory research design.....	38
3.4	Research methods.....	39
3.5	Target population.	40
3.6	Sampling methods.....	41
3.6.1	Selection of participants.....	43
3.7	Inclusion and exclusion criteria.....	43
3.8	Data collection process.....	44
3.8.1	Survey questionnaires.....	44
3.9	Pilot study.....	45
3.10	Data analysis.....	46
3.11	Validity and reliability or trustworthiness of data.....	47
3.12	Delimitations and limitations of the study.....	48
3.12.1	Delimitations of the study.....	48
3.12.2	Limitations.....	48
3.13	Ethical considerations.....	49
3.14	Summary of the chapter.....	49
CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS OF RESULTS.....		50
4.1	Introduction.....	50
4.2	Response rate for the targeted population.....	50
4.3	Demographic characteristics.....	51
4.3.1	Gender.....	51
4.3.2	Age group.....	51
4.3.3	Work experience.....	52
4.3.4	Level of education.....	52
4.4	Quality administration management (QAM).....	53
4.4.1	Impact of quality administration management on customer retention and satisfaction.....	53

4.4.2	Practices of quality administration management.	54
4.5	Reliability of the instrument.	54
4.6	Empirical findings	55
4.6.1	Customer retention.	56
4.6.2	Customer satisfaction.	59
4.6.3	Continuous improvement (CI).	62
4.6.4	Implementation of quality administration management.	67
4.7	Factor analysis.	71
4.7.1	Validating leadership style constructs.	72
4.7.2	Validating customer satisfaction constructs.	73
4.7.3	Validating continuous improvement (CI) construct.	74
4.7.4	Validating implementation of quality administration management construct.	76
4.8	Theoretical findings and hypothesis testing.	77
4.8.1	Impact of continuous improvement on customer satisfaction.	78
4.8.2	Impact of the implementation of quality administration management on customer satisfaction.	78
4.8.3	Impact of customer satisfaction on customer retention.	79
4.9	Relationship between gender, race, and constructs.	80
4.10	Correlation among the constructs.	82
4.11	Conclusion.	84
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF RESULTS.		85
5.1	Introduction.	85
5.2	The role of demographics in quality perception among SMMEs in eThekweni.	86
5.3	Quality management and organisational leadership.	87
5.4	Quality management's role in customer loyalty.	90
5.5	Enhancing teamwork and employee satisfaction.	90
5.6	A unified approach to customer retention.	91
5.7	Comprehensive customer satisfaction through quality management.	92

5.8	Continuous improvement as a catalyst for growth.	93
5.9	The critical role of customer satisfaction in driving customer retention.	93
5.10	Education's influence on customer retention perceptions.	94
5.11	The interconnectedness of quality constructs.	94
5.12	Concluding summary.	94
CHAPTER 6: SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS		96
6.1	Introduction.	96
6.2	Summary of key findings.	96
6.3	Theoretical implications.	98
6.4	Practical implications.	99
6.5	Value of the study/contribution to knowledge.	100
6.6	Recommendations for practice.	100
6.6.1	Recommendation 1.....	100
6.6.2	Recommendation 2.....	100
6.6.3	Recommendation 3.....	101
6.6.4	Recommendation 4.....	101
6.7	Limitations of the study.	101
6.8	Suggestions for future research.	102
6.9	Conclusion	103
REFERENCES.....		104
APPENDICES.....		113
Appendix A:	Appendix A: Letter of Information	113
Appendix B:	Appendix B: Consent letter	116
Appendix C:	Appendix C: Gatekeeper's Letter	118
Appendix D:	Appendix D: Ethics clearance.....	121
Appendix E:	Appendix E: Participants Questionnaire	123
Appendix F:	Editor's Letter.	140

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1 Strategies for customer retention and satisfaction.	25
Figure 2.2 Conceptual Model: Relationship between QMPPs and their impact on quality.	31
Figure 4.1 Level of agreement on statements measuring customer retention.....	58
Figure 4.2: Level of agreement on customer satisfaction.....	61
Figure 4.3 Level of agreement on continuous improvement (CI)	66
Figure 4.4 Level of agreement on the statements measuring the implementation of quality administration management practices.....	70

LIST OF TABLES

Table 3.1 Different sampling types	41
Table 4.1 Gender distribution of respondents.....	51
Table 4.2 Age distribution of the respondents.	51
Table 4.3 Years of working experience	52
Table 4.4 Respondents level of educational attainment	52
Table 4.5 Awareness of the impact of quality administration management on customer retention and satisfaction	53
Table 4.6 Organisation practising quality administration management.....	54
Table 4.7 Reliability of the research instrument.....	54
Table 4.8 The mean score on statements measuring customer retention.	56
Table 4.9 Overall evidence of customer retention	59
Table 4.10 Mean score for statements measuring customer satisfaction.	60
Table 4.11 Overall evidence of customer satisfaction among the respondents	62
Table 4.12 Mean score for statements measuring continuous improvement.....	64
Table 4.13 Overall evidence in the level of agreement of continuous improvement among the respondents	66
Table 4.14 Mean score for statements measuring the implementation of quality administration management practices.....	68
Table 4.15 Overall evidence supporting the implementation of quality administrative management practices.	71
Table 4.16 KMO and Bartlett's Test for the respective constructs	71
Table 4.17 Total variance explained for customer retention.	72
Table 4.18 Extracted factor loading for customer retention variables.	73
Table 4.19 Total variance explained for customer satisfaction.....	73
Table 4.20 Extracted factor loading for customer satisfaction variables.	74
Table 4.21 Total variance explained for the continuous improvement.	74
Table 4.22 Extracted factor loading for continuous improvement variables.....	75
Table 4.23 Total variance explained for the implementation of quality administration management.	76
Table 4.24 Extracted factor loading for the implementation of quality administration management.	77
Table 4.25 The effect of continuous quality improvement on customer satisfaction	78
Table 4.26 The effect of the implementation of quality administration management	79

Table 4.27 The effect of customer satisfaction on customer retention.....	79
Table 4.28 Relationship between demographic characteristics and the extracted constructs.	80
Table 4.29 Pearson correlation showing association among the four constructs.	83

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CI	Continuous Improvement
CRM	Customer Relationship Management
CRMT	Customer Relationship Management Theory
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
QAM	Quality Administration Management
QAMT	Quality Administration Management Theory
QMP	Quality Administration Management Practices
SME	Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
SMMES	Small Medium Micro Enterprises
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
TQAM	Total Quality Administration Management
TQM	Total Quality Management

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction and study background.

This chapter introduces the background of the research on the effect of Quality Administration Management (QAM) practices by Small, Medium, and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs) in the eThekweni Metropolitan Area concerning their customers' retention and satisfaction. Customer retention and satisfaction are very high challenge to the South African economy drivers like SMMEs. This research aims to examine the effectiveness of QAM practices on customer retention and satisfaction. The subsequent sections, therefore, elaborate on the conceptual background to the study, the contextual background, problem statement of the research, aim of the research study, research objectives and questions, significance of the study, and briefly outlines the literature review and theoretical perspectives that informed the study. The insights of this chapter provide the detailed orientation of the study.

1.2 Conceptual background to the study.

In contemporary business management, managerial efficacy, service delivery, and the comprehensive training of personnel are pivotal determinants of client retention and satisfaction. The seminal works of Bushe (2019), Mashavira, Chipunza, and Dzansi (2019), alongside Ngibe and Lekhanya (2019), have collectively illuminated the adverse implications of managerial inadequacies. These managerial inadequacies range from diminished customer loyalty to broader organisational repercussions such as operational inefficiencies and hindered potential for new customer engagements. Such attrition of clientele not only erodes revenue streams but also exacerbates competitive pressures within the sector (Banerjee 2014).

Within this discourse, the concept of Quality Administration Management (QAM) emerges as a paradigmatic approach aimed at the holistic enhancement of organisational competencies, encompassing quality, efficiency, customer satisfaction, and overall productivity in the service domain. As articulated by Gutierrez-Gutierrez, Barrales-Molina, and Kaynak (2018), QAM embodies a continuous, iterative methodology, empowering entities to adeptly navigate and facilitate challenges, thereby bolstering internal operational prowess. This is considered necessary to maintain a competitive advantage

in the constantly changing global market. The core of QAM goes beyond simple procedural changes, promoting a deep cultural transformation within companies. This change aims to develop products and services that meet and exceed consumer expectations rather than just matching them. Such a transformation is predicated on the adoption of management practices that prioritise quality through relentless improvement and the fostering of customer loyalty and satisfaction (Erkul, Chakraborty & Kaynak 2021; Samson & Terziovski 2018).

This research contributed to the current body of knowledge by highlighting the crucial importance of organisational and behavioural aspects in quality system management (Lee, Foo, Tan, Ooi, & Sohal 2021; Powell 2014). Through a quantitative lens, this research investigated the impacts of QAM practices on both external and internal customer retention and satisfaction within the contexts of Small, Medium, and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs) in the eThekweni Metropolitan area. It sought to offer valuable insights to advance customer experiences within the SMME sector. Thus, the study contributed to the growth and sustainability of SMMEs in the eThekweni Metropolitan area and South Africa in general, reflecting on measures to improve management practices and customer relationships.

1.3 Contextual background of the study.

The SMMEs sector is very important in any economy in the world, since it contributes greatly to employment creation, innovation, and economic growth. SMMEs remain the most important sector in the economic space of South Africa, especially in metropolitan areas like eThekweni. The Durban city and surrounding communities is an active economic hub with businesses and diversified industries in the area (Msomi, Ngibe, & Bingwa 2020). While the eThekweni Metropolitan Area has various business startups the SMMEs in the area are characterized by many challenging situations, which include intense competition, limited financing access, and regulatory hurdles (Hoque 2021; Ogunsola, Potwana & Chikosha 2023). The key factors that influence the sustainability and growth of SMMEs is the ability of retaining customers and also seeing to it that the customer is satisfied (Nyarko 2021). Through the effective implementation of quality management systems, quality administration management practices have realized positively impacting firm performance and customer satisfaction (Khalil & Muneenam 2021; Abbas 2020).

More so, integrated management accounting practices (MAPs) will avail to these SMMEs significant administrative and strategic benefits in assisting to come up with sustainable decisions within the organization (Msomi *et al.* 2020). Yet, education and training in this aspect are still limited, and so are skills by both the owners/managers and the personnel that may hinder these practices from being effective in their intended capacities (Msomi *et al.* 2020). Although SMMEs in the eThekweni Metro Area face a bunch of challenges, adoption of quality administration management practices and the integration of management accounting practices have the professional judgment and common sense that can play a very important role in marshaling evidence such SMMEs need in order to attain and sustain growth.

Quality administration management practices point towards the organized practice and procedure adopted by an organization to make efforts and influence their services and products meet the expectations of customer and satisfy their desires (Tripathy, 2022). These practices include quality control, continuous improvement, customer feedback mechanisms, and training and development of employees (Wang, Hung, & Hsieh, 2022). In the viewpoint of SMME, effective quality management administration with relation to the effective application of TQM principles is able to leverage subsequent operational efficiency that leads to an increase in customer satisfaction and thus, an increase in customer retention (Shaibun & Anuar, 2021). This creates the importance of customer satisfaction and retention not only for any business but obviously for SMMEs in particular, which cannot establish itself in a competitive market without customers showing loyalty towards them too (Sugiato, Riyadi & Budiarti, 2023). Customer retention is the process the company adopts to make customers stick with them for a more extended period. While customer satisfaction is a measure of the products or services of the company that meet or surpass the customer's expectations (Kalogiannidis, 2021). Both measures are directly related to the practice quality of administration and management within the organization (Basu, Bhola, & Das, 2020).

In the eThekweni Metropolitan Area, SMMEs have an unpredictable business environment characterized by dynamism, with opportunities and dilemmas competing simultaneously in the economy (Msomi, Ngibe, & Bingwa 2020). Quality administration management practices with effects on customer retention and satisfaction have been defined, giving insights that might be invaluable to the businesses, policymakers, and researchers (Shaibun & Anuar, 2021). By identifying effective strategies and practices,

competitiveness is enhanced, customer loyalty gets improved, and in turn, positively contributes to the general economic development of the region (Sugiato, Riyadi & Budiarti 2023). The study, thus, investigated influences that quality administration management practices had on both customer retention and satisfaction within the context of SMMEs operating within the eThekweni Municipality. The study, through a quantitative research design and survey methodology, essentially tried to establish how differently or otherwise the management practices influence customer experience and loyalty (Hoque 2021; Mamann, Olaoye & Abdulrahman 2020).

1.4. Research problem.

SMMEs are crucial to the South African economy, contributing significantly to employment and economic growth; however, most of them remain affected by poor customer retention and satisfaction (Ayandibu *et al.* 2019; Bushe 2019; Wentzel *et al.* 2022). Customer retention and satisfaction are crucial aspects of any business. Despite the significant role the aspect plays in the success of SMMEs and other businesses, poor customer retention and satisfaction remain a significant challenge with the prevalence of negative consequences, such as loss of revenue, reduced competitiveness, and damage to reputation (Castro *et al.* 2021; Lee *et al.* 2021; Ngibe and Lekhanya 2019). Studies have identified various factors that contribute to poor customer retention and satisfaction, such as inadequate total quality management practices, ineffective customer relationship management, and the failure to meet customer needs and expectations (Adeiza *et al.* 2022; Ali & Johl 2022). Limited studies in South Africa, and more specifically in eThekweni have been engaged to reflect on how SMMEs can effectively achieve customer retention and satisfaction. Therefore, this study sought to address this gap by examining the effectiveness of QAM practices on customer retention and satisfaction in the eThekweni Metropolitan area. Thus, the study was guided by the following research aim, objectives, and questions.

1.4 Aim of the study.

The study sought to examine the effectiveness of quality administration management practices on customer retention and satisfaction in the eThekweni Metropolitan area.

1.5 Objectives of the study.

The following objectives were addressed in relation to the primary aim of the study:

- To investigate how quality administration management practices impact customer retention and satisfaction in SMMEs located in the eThekweni Metropolitan area.
- To comprehend the influence of training and development of employees on quality management practices and customer retention and satisfaction in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMMEs).
- To recognise how internal and external factors impact quality management practices in SMMEs in the eThekweni Metropolitan area.
- To determine the factors that contribute to and hinder customer retention and satisfaction in SMMEs in the eThekweni Metropolitan area and propose integrated, effective quality administration management practices to address these factors.

1.6 Research questions.

In accordance with the stated aim of the investigation, this study is guided by the following questions.

- How do quality administration management practices impact customer retention and satisfaction in SMMEs in the eThekweni Metropolitan area?
- How do training and developing employees contribute to improving the efficiency of quality administration management practices and boosting customer retention and satisfaction in small and medium enterprises?
- What are the internal and external factors that impact the practice of quality administration management in Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs) in the eThekweni Metropolitan area?
- Which factors contribute to and hinder customer retention and satisfaction in SMMEs in the eThekweni Metropolitan area, and how can quality administration management practices be effectively tailored to address these factors?

1.7 Study hypothesis.

The hypothesis of the topic in research is as follows:

- Introducing efficient quality administration management practices in companies and institutions within the eThekwin Metropolitan area will result in increased customer loyalty and contentment. Effective quality administration management practices in businesses and organisations in the eThekwin Metropolitan area will lead to higher levels of customer retention and satisfaction.

This hypothesis proposes that quality administration management practices are positively correlated with customer retention and satisfaction.

1.8 Significance of the study.

This research provides valuable insights into the efficacy of Quality Administration Management (QAM) strategies in enhancing customer retention and satisfaction among SMMEs in the eThekwin Metropolitan area. By integrating rigorous empirical analysis with theoretical frameworks, it contributes significantly to academic literature by addressing a distinct gap regarding the implementation and impact of QAM practices within a specific socio-economic context. The findings illuminate the direct correlation between effective administrative management and improved customer loyalty, offering actionable strategies for SMMEs to heighten their competitive advantage and operational effectiveness. Furthermore, this study's implications extend to policymaking, suggesting frameworks that can foster the sustainability and growth of SMMEs, thereby catalyzing broader economic development in South Africa. This dual contribution enriches both the academic field and practical applications, providing a foundation for future research and strategic development in the realm of quality management within emerging markets.

1.9 Delimitations of the study.

Determining the study's geographical boundaries is crucial for maintaining focus and guaranteeing completion within the set timeframe. Durban, which falls under the eThekwin Metropolitan area, was the focus study area due to its accessibility and the availability of relevant data for the researcher. According to Robson (2011), geographic delimitation refers to the specific location or region where the study was conducted. In this case, the geographic scope of the study is limited to Durban, and this delimitation is necessary to ensure that the study remains manageable within the given time and resource constraints. Furthermore, Bryman (2016) points out that setting boundaries is crucial in order to prevent making unrealistic assertions and to guarantee that the research questions of the study can be answered within the limitations of the resources.

By limiting the geographic scope of the study, the researchers can focus on obtaining data from a specific area, which can be analysed and reported on in a meaningful way.

In addition, Creswell and Creswell (2017) emphasise that delimitations are useful in specifying the study's population and sample size. Limiting the study to a specific geographic area is crucial for researchers to ensure that the sample size is feasible and representative of the population of interest. Therefore, the geographic delimitation of the study to Durban eThekweni Metropolitan area was important to ensure that the study remains manageable and feasible within the given time and resource constraints.

1.10 Study limitations.

A limitation of this research was the risk of sampling bias due to the fact that the sample was taken from only one specific geographic area, Durban eThekweni Metropolitan area. This may restrict the applicability of the results to different environments or demographics. Furthermore, the research aimed to assess how QAM practices affect customer retention and satisfaction in small, medium, and micro enterprises (SMMEs) in the eThekweni Metropolitan area but encountered a significant challenge in selecting a suitable sample of SMMEs. The reliance on the Durban Chamber of Commerce and Industry database to pinpoint relevant enterprises was a strategic move that was effective in providing relevant SMMEs and buy-in for the researcher. While the utilisation of the Durban Chamber of Commerce and Industry database facilitated a more manageable and focused research process, it also delineated the boundaries of the study's insights, highlighting a crucial consideration for interpreting its outcomes and applying its recommendations (Creswell and Creswell 2017; Rahi 2017).

Additionally, the research was constrained to utilising survey questionnaires as the main method for gathering data. This limited the ability to gather in-depth and nuanced data on the experiences of SMMEs and the factors influencing their success or failure (Abutabenjeh and Jaradat 2018). However, to mitigate this limitation, the researcher engaged in a wide and detailed review of existing qualitative and quantitative studies, which helped to provide relevant insights into the experiences of SMMEs in different South African settings, including eThekweni.

1.11 Literature review and theoretical framework.

A detailed literature review is presented in chapter two (Literature Review) in the following themes: Quality Administration Management Practices (QAMP), Total Quality Management (TQM), Customer Relationship Management (CRM), determinants of customer retention and satisfaction, existing models to enhance customer retention and satisfaction strategies and initiatives to act on determinants that hinder customer retention and satisfaction. All these theories elaborate QAMP's impact on internal and external customer satisfaction and retention contextualised to SMMEs operating within the eThekweni Metropolitan area in South Africa (Lee *et al.* 2021; Powell 2014). It disseminated the theoretical underpinnings of the study which was primarily based on QAM and CRM. QAMT primarily states that effective administrations manage or run an organization towards achieving high quality products and services. At the same time, CRMT concerns knowing and nurturing relationships of customers to create loyalty and satisfaction. The chapter also evaluates the applicability of leadership, employee training and development, customer focus, and service quality, among other factors, in explaining customer retention and satisfaction. From the review, it is apparent that there exists a limited understanding of the challenges and opportunities that SMMEs face within the eThekweni Metropolitan, and this forms a good area of further study in the context.

The QAMT was introduced by Deming, 1986; it defines efficient administration and management as prerequisites for producing the product and delivering services of high quality. It scalable importance of continuous improvement, training, and development of employees, and customer retention planning(Lee *et al.* 2021; Jha *et al.* 2019; Sonandi *et al.* 2021). However, CRMT is gaining relevance on managing customers' interaction to institute continuance and long-term relationships for both organizations. It also explains the need to understand customer needs, match those needs by products or services, and, in turn, constantly strive to improve productivity of offerings to meet changing customer expectations (Prahalad and Ramaswamy 2019).

The literature review brings into perspective the relevance of leadership in QAM, the role of employee retention and motivation, as well as the duo importance of QAM practices in SMMEs (Fening, Pesakovic, and Amaria 2018; Niyi Anifowose, Ghasemi, and Olaleye 2022; Enugala 2012; Pereira *et al.* 2016; Flynn 2022; Naidu and Van Der Walt 2019). The literature also explores causes that have an effect on customer retention and customer satisfaction, such as commitment to top management and improvement,

employee training and development, orientation, concentration of customers, and leadership styles. The current frameworks and models related to customer retention and improvement of their satisfaction in SMMEs have been presented so far. Corresponding strategies and measures to overcome obstacle to such success have also been identified from over a dozen different literature pieces. The reviewed literature is further engaged in Chapter Two outlining the research gap and reflecting on the relevance of research on whether QAM practices are related to customer retention and satisfaction.

1.12 Research methodology.

A research methodology for considering the effectiveness of QAMP for customer retention and satisfaction—in SMMEs in the eThekweni Metropolitan area embraced a positivist research philosophy with an exploratory type of research design applying a quantitative research method by means of survey questionnaires for primary data collection. The target population comprised formally registered SMMEs in the eThekweni Municipality with 200 or fewer workers and a turnover of not more than R64 million. A sample size of 385 SMMEs was calculated using Raosoft sample size determination. Simple random sampling was used to select the participants from the Durban Chamber of Commerce and Industry database. Data has been analyzed by SPSS software and ensured the validity, reliability, and trustworthiness of data by taking appropriate measures as well as mentioned above. Ethical considerations, again, were catered for throughout, with the most vital being informed consent and anonymity.

1.13 Structure of dissertation.

This dissertation consists of six (6) chapters, which are as follows:

Chapter One: Introduction

The first chapter provides the conceptual insights, contextual background, study significance and background information on the themes and issues that will be examined in the study. It discusses the motivations behind the study, its goals, objectives, and research inquiries. The chapter also covers the study's outline, scope, and limitations.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

This chapter reviews the literature on the Impact of Quality Administration Management Practices on Customer Retention and Satisfaction in Durban (eThekweni Metropolitan area). It reviews the conceptual framework and theoretical framework of the research.

Chapter Three: Methodology

It is the methodology of the research. It includes the research design and study area. The motivation of the type of methodology used is included in the chapter.

Chapter Four: Presentation of Results

This chapter presents and interprets the quantitative results of the study.

Chapter Five: Discussion of Results

This chapter discusses the results integrating literature and theoretical perspectives.

Chapter Six: Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

The final chapter concludes and provide recommendations deriving from the findings stated in the chapter.

1.14 Summary of the chapter.

This chapter meticulously sets the stage for this study, delineating the critical facets of QAM practices and their pivotal role in enhancing customer retention and satisfaction within SMMEs in the eThekweni Metropolitan area. It started by delving into the context of the study, highlighting the current obstacles that SMMEs encounter, such as inadequate management, service delivery, and lack of employee training, emphasising the importance of this research. The chapter laid out the research problem, goals, and specific inquiries for the study while also suggesting a positive link between successful QAM practices and increased customer loyalty and satisfaction. The significance of the study was provided, highlighting its potential contributions in various spheres. The chapter also presented strategies employed by the researcher to mitigate the challenges inherent in the limitations. Conclusively, it provided an overview of the research study's structure, setting a clear path for exploring literature and theoretical frameworks in the following chapter. The next chapter reviews literature on the QAMP's impact on internal and external customer satisfaction and retention contextualised to SMMEs.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction.

This chapter presents a literature review relevant to the effectiveness of quality administration management practices on customer retention and satisfaction. At the heart of this discourse, the chapter explores Quality Administration Management Practices (QAMP), along with a critical assessment of the Total Quality Management (TQM) philosophy. This detailed examination is essential, as it forms the foundation for understanding the intricate links between quality management practices and their influence on customer engagement. An in-depth discussion of Total Quality Management and quality management practices is presented from global and local literature to provide a relevant foundation that helps address the objectives of the study.

The setting structure of this chapter commences with a theoretical framework discussion on the principles and application of QAMP. This is interwoven with a critical evaluation of the TQM philosophy, highlighting its pivotal role in augmenting customer satisfaction and loyalty. The organisation of the chapter is meticulously crafted, leading the reader through a sequential unfolding of topics. This approach ensures a clear and in-depth understanding of the vital role that quality management practices play in sustaining and enhancing customer relationships.

2.2 Theoretical framework.

This study was conducted through the lenses of two critical theories, namely Quality Administration Management Theory (QAMT) of Deming (1986) and Customer Relationship Management Theory (CRMT) of Payne and Frow (2005). These theories were essential in helping to understand the effectiveness of QAM practices in customer retention and satisfaction. The theoretical insights are particularly relevant to SMMEs in the eThekweni Metropolitan area and South Africa in general, as they provide valuable perspectives on how improved management practices and customer relationships can significantly contribute to the growth and sustainability of SMMEs businesses. Nkwinika

(2023) argues that over 50% of SMMEs in South Africa fail inside the initial five years. High failure levels are noted due to severe inadequacies in financial management where such businesses lack the proper ability to manage revenue inflows and control costs. The situation is made more challenging by poor marketing skills where the SMMEs lack relevant professional skills in promoting and positioning products and services. The theoretical discussion highlights the crucial role of organisational and behavioural components in quality system administration (Lee *et al.* 2021; Powell 2014). It draws relevant insights from relevant scholars to provide critical guidelines to investigate and actively evaluate the effectiveness of QAM practices on both external and internal customer retention and satisfaction within government and private SMMEs.

Literature reveals that many SMMEs in South Africa hardly survive beyond their initial year, and those in the eThekweni Metropolitan area are no exception (Ndlazi *et al.* 2023; Nkwinika 2023; Ogunsola *et al.* 2023). The theoretical review of existing literature indicates that customer satisfaction and quality management theories play an important role in shaping practical strategies and solutions to address customer retention and satisfaction problems (Prahalad and Ramaswamy 2019). Nkwinika (2023) identifies that most SMMEs in eThekweni municipality face substantial challenges that impede their success and sustainability, primarily due to a combination of factors, including insufficient business skills, limited access to financing, and inadequate management practices. The discussion helps bridge the gap between theoretical frameworks and their practical application in the specific context of SMMEs in the eThekweni Metropolitan area. Hence, it helps to directly correlate critical principles and components of quality management theories with the operational realities of SMMEs. Therefore, the following review helped in unpacking key insights that helped to guide the study.

2.2.1 Quality management theory.

Deming (1986) created the Quality Administration Management Theory (QAMT). As per the theory, one key component of quality management regulation is that it clearly assigns accountability for creating relationships at the forefront of top management (Deming 1986). According to Hill (2019) 80 % of problems in businesses are caused by frameworks, which are under the control of the administration. Deming (1986) observed that without optimal administrative responsibility, no quality management framework could succeed. The management allocates resources to processes, develops a corporate culture, selects suppliers, and nurtures enduring relationships. Deming's The

Theory of Quality Improvement (TQI) gives organizations a strategic approach to eliminating control problems by using appropriate management philosophy in relevant areas, with the base foundation in Total Quality Management principles and continuous model of improvement (Dean & Bowen, 1994; Flynn, Schroeder, & Sakakibara, 1994).

According to Anderson, Potocnik and Zhou (2019), the theoretical foundation of the QAMT focused on quality issues when creating an organisational framework that promotes participation and learning for encouraging the use of process administration rehearsals, which then encourages execution. The obligations of the best administration should take the lead in modifying processes and frameworks, according to Oakland (2018). Administration is pivotal in guaranteeing the success of value administration as top administration must formulate and communicate the vision to lead the company towards enhancing execution.

According to Deming (1986), QAMT was a crucial instrument in the analysis of organizational processes since it provided the framework of quality management utilized in improving the quality of goods and services via continual improvement and something organizations could use to provide effective execution. TQM, as an all-encompassing approach, has been shown to need customer involvement, motivated employees, process focus, solid quality infrastructure, and continuous enhancement (Deming 1986). Municipal governments are slowly realising the crucial value of quality management and how it can improve their abilities and offer notable benefits. The concept was utilised to elucidate the factor for ongoing enhancement.

The QAMT developed by Deming in 1986 proposes that effective administration and management are critical to successful quality management practices in businesses (Ross 2017). The QAMT posits that the administration invests in procedures, creates corporate culture, selects suppliers and cultivates long-term connections, which are necessary for eliminating low-quality control concerns through successful administrative procedures (Balan 2017; Kiprono and Genga 2018; Murenga and Njuguna 2020). The QAMT pays special attention to efficient administrative methods, especially beneficial for SMEs that frequently encounter limitations in resources and find it challenging to adopt quality management practices successfully. With the objective of investigating how quality administration management practices impact customer retention and satisfaction in SMEs in the eThekweni Metropolitan area, this study effectively explored the effectiveness of QAMT:

2.2.1.1 Training and Development

The QAMT plays a crucial role in assessing how training and development impact customer retention and satisfaction in SMMEs within the eThekweni Municipality. According to Lee, Foo, Tan, Ooik and Sohal (2021), adopting effective quality management practices can considerably enhance product innovation performance in SMMEs. This connection underscores the crucial nature of employee training and development in the successful deployment of QAMT.

In the context of the eThekweni Municipality, where SMMEs often grapple with challenges such as limited access to capital, insufficient business skills (financial management, marketing) and overall business management deficiencies (Nkwinika 2023), targeted training and development initiatives can be transformative (Adeola, Gyimah & Appiah 2021; Fachrurazi, Zarkasi, Maulida, Hanis & Yusuf 2022). The incorporation of QAMT-focused training will help SMME businesses develop robust financial management strategies, enhance their marketing acumen, and refine their overall managerial capabilities.

Therefore, in the setting of the eThekweni Municipality, where the economic landscape is dynamic and often challenging for SMMEs, training and development initiatives rooted in QAMT can act as catalysts for enhancing product and service quality (Adeola *et al.* 2021; Fachrurazi *et al.* 2022). The identified initiatives outline how training and development can help address the immediate skill gaps in SMMEs and shape the culture of continuous improvement and innovation, which leads to heightened customer satisfaction and retention.

2.2.1.2 Planning for Customer Retention and Satisfaction in SMMEs

In addition, QAMT will be crucial in identifying the internal and external factors that influence quality administration management practices and promote customer retention and satisfaction in SMMEs. Thus, the lenses of QAMT will help to reflect on how planning and organisational support can be improved to shape and ensure the successful adoption and integration of quality management practices in SMMEs. Sonandi, Barzani, and Nealer (2021) point out that the absence of business planning can hinder the effective adoption of TQM in small agricultural businesses in South Africa. In the context of the eThekweni Municipality, where SMMEs face challenges such as financial limitations, skills deficiencies, and management shortcomings, structured planning for customer retention and satisfaction becomes even more critical (Fachrurazi *et al.* 2022; Nkwinika 2023;

Ogunsola *et al.* 2023). By adopting QAMT-focused strategies that include comprehensive training programs, SMMEs in eThekweni can develop the capabilities not only to understand and meet customer needs but also to proactively anticipate and adapt to changing market dynamics. Castro, Alarcón and Alarcón (2021) suggest the importance of providing SMMEs with the necessary resources and support to implement QAMT through education and development programs. This proactive approach to quality management and customer satisfaction is crucial for ensuring the long-term sustainability and growth of SMMEs in the region.

2.2.1.3 Eliminate Low-Quality Control in Administration and Management of SMMEs

The study aligns with QAMT's emphasis on effective administration and management to eliminate low-quality control concerns through successful administrative procedures that facilitate successful customer retention and satisfaction. Addressing the challenge of low-quality control in the administration and management of SMMEs is a multifaceted issue that requires a comprehensive approach, integrating insights from various global contexts, including Europe, Tanzania, and specifically the eThekweni Municipality in South Africa. The QAMT offers a foundational framework for this, emphasising the need for effective administration and management to enhance quality control.

European studies, such as those by Daszkiewicz and Wach (2012) and the technical assistance report by De Groen, Egenhofer, Musmeci, Kustova, Jasen, Boonekamp, Poza, Oliinyk and Gojsie (2021), provide valuable insights into how SMEs in a developed context approach internationalisation and adapt to stringent quality standards. These studies suggest that the key to eliminating low-quality control lies in the successful implementation of administrative procedures that are both efficient and customer-centric. For SMMEs in eThekweni, this implies adopting best practices from developed economies tailored to the local context to bolster their administrative and managerial capabilities.

In contrast, a study from Tanzania by Mbugi and Lutego (2022) on inventory control in the manufacturing industry offers a perspective from a developing economy that grapples with similar challenges as eThekweni. These insights can be instrumental in understanding how to implement effective quality management practices in environments with resource constraints and less developed infrastructure. The findings underscore the importance of robust inventory and supply chain management as critical components of quality control.

Siman and Aliugo (2022) further highlight the role of inventory planning in enhancing SME competitiveness in another developing context. This reinforces the notion that effective administration in SMMEs is not just about managing resources efficiently but also about strategic planning and foresight. For eThekwini's SMMEs, where issues such as financial limitations, skills shortages, and management deficiencies are prevalent, the application of QAMT becomes even more relevant (Nkwinika 2023). Aligning the focus of QAMT on understanding the system to improve quality management practices can help SMMEs in eThekwini to learn from the experiences of businesses in similar contexts across the globe. This includes the adoption of a corporate culture that values quality, strategic supplier selection, and fostering long-term relationships, all of which are essential for eliminating low-quality control concerns.

The path to eradicating low-quality control in the administration and management of SMMEs in eThekwini involves a balanced approach of learning from global best practices and adapting them to the unique local context. By focusing on strategic planning, robust inventory management, and fostering a culture of quality, SMMEs in eThekwini can enhance their competitiveness and ensure customer satisfaction and retention. The study aims to identify internal and external factors that influence the implementation of QAMT in SMMEs. This aligns with QAMT's focus on understanding the system to improve quality management practices. The proposed effective quality administration management practices also align with QAMT's emphasis on corporate culture, supplier selection, and long-term connections to eliminate low-quality control concerns.

2.2.2 Customer relationship management theory.

This research was based on the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) theory developed by Laatuhydistys in 1995. According to Laatuhydistys, the primary factor in the concept of customer relationship management involves assessing an organisation's ability to manage customer interactions to advance client relationships effectively. Meanwhile, it is also important to evaluate how information about customer needs will be received by the organisation in order to anticipate the future demands of its customers and thus retain them.

Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2019) concluded that customers desire to purchase a brand and expect to be treated as partners, demonstrating the theory's applicability in enhancing customer quality focus practices. It starts by identifying the needs of the clients and then aligning those needs with products or services. The association should provide

a level of "maturity capability" to ensure that the product can be continually improved in the future to meet the needs, lifestyle, and usage patterns of the customer.

Organisations aim to continually improve in alignment with their respective countries' continuous improvement framework, with a primary focus on ensuring that customers remain at the centre. The writers also point out that certain organisations have taken it a step further by integrating these principles into their visions. Three principles drive their actions: shifting the focus of the client towards benefiting from improved access to services through service centres and technology platforms, leveraging technology to enhance service delivery and promote compliance, and transforming staff attitudes from authorisation-centred to establishing citizen trust through effective assistance. The theory was employed to elucidate the customer orientation factor.

Given that the focus of this research is to examine how quality management practices in administration impact customer satisfaction and retention in small and medium enterprises in the eThekweni Metropolitan area, the use of CRM theory will help analyse strategies for enhancing customer retention and satisfaction in these businesses.

In addition, the application of CRM theory in diverse contexts, from developed economies in Europe to the developing landscapes of Africa and South Africa's eThekweni Municipality, reveals the universal importance of understanding and nurturing customer relationships in the business environment. The CRM theory played a vital role in recognising the internal and external factors that drive customer retention and satisfaction in SMMEs. Various global lenses reflect that CRM theory provides a rich tapestry of approaches to enhancing customer retention and satisfaction in SMMEs. In various European contexts, it is often viewed through the prism of advanced technological tools and data analytics (Daszkiewicz & Wach 2012; Pieter De Groen *et al.* 2021). These tools enable businesses to track customer preferences, tailor services, and engage in proactive communication. For eThekweni's SMMEs, adopting such advanced CRM strategies might seem daunting due to resource limitations. However, the underlying principle of understanding customer needs and preferences can still be applied. It could involve simpler, more cost-effective methods like regular customer feedback, personalised services, or loyalty programs tailored to the local market dynamics.

According to Mbugi and Lutego (2022), the importance of inventory management in CRM highlights that efficient management of inventory directly impacts customer satisfaction

by ensuring product availability and timely delivery. Effective inventory control could be a critical step for eThekwini's SMMEs in building trust and reliability with their customers, particularly in sectors like manufacturing and retail. Siman and Aliugo (2022) study clarifies the competitive advantage gained through effective inventory planning in CRM, outlining its relevance in SMMEs such as those in the eThekwini Municipality, where challenges such as financial constraints and skills shortages are prevalent. The SMMEs in eThekwini can significantly enhance their customer service levels, leading to increased satisfaction and loyalty by focusing on streamlined inventory management.

With its unique blend of urban and semi-urban business landscapes, the application of CRM theory must be contextualised in SMMEs across the eThekwini Municipality to address local challenges (Ogunsola *et al.* 2023). This might involve training programs for SMME owners and employees to understand better customer needs or community engagement initiatives to build stronger customer relationships (Ndlazi *et al.* 2023). The key is to recognise that at the heart of CRM lies the need to connect with customers on a level that transcends mere transactions, fostering a sense of community and belonging. The CRM theory, when adapted to the specific needs and challenges of the eThekwini Municipality's SMMEs, can be a powerful tool in driving customer retention and satisfaction. Lessons from both developed and developing economies help to shape and tailor guidelines for the local context, in this case, guiding eThekwini's SMMEs to develop robust CRM strategies that are both effective and sustainable. Thus, the lenses of CRM theory will help to reflect on how planning and organisational support can be improved to shape and ensure successful adoption and integration of customer retention strategies.

The discussed theoretical lenses offer tangible strategies for enhancing SMME business practices in the dynamic region of the eThekwini Municipality. This method strengthens the foundational principles of quality management while also offering a customised evaluation that recognises the distinct obstacles and possibilities encountered by SMMEs in eThekwini.

2.3 Quality administration management practices.

Quality Administration Management (QAM) is a structured method for enhancing overall firm management to enhance quality, productivity, customer satisfaction, and profitability (Gharakhani *et al.* 2021). Utilising QAM strategies helps companies enhance internal operations, a necessary step to stay competitive in the global market. Sousa and Voss

(2022) suggest that managers utilise organisational practices to achieve company improvements, demonstrating quality management.

Lucey (2016) sees QAM practices as multiple systems working in harmony to benefit customers, while Al Manhaway (2013) describes QAM practices as a culture of organisational commitment to customer satisfaction through continual improvement by meeting or surpassing customer expectations. QAM practices refer to the ongoing endeavour of both management and employees within a specific organisation to maintain customer loyalty and satisfaction for an extended period (Watson 2003). Morghadam (2011) believes that implementing QAM practices is a process rather than a final goal. Customer satisfaction, retention, employee engagement, leadership, process control, and improvement are all crucial factors for success in quality management strategy.

2.3.1 Relevance of leadership in QAM.

The examination of existing research shows that leadership is a key factor in guiding the QAM performance of SMMEs. Drawing from a global context, there is a synthesis of insights that can be utilised to propose applicable strategies for local SMMEs such as the ones in the eThekweni Municipality. For example, studies have established the potency of visionary and transformational leadership in enhancing SMME performance (Jing 2017; Tian *et al.* 2020). A study by Jing (2017) in the Australian retail pharmacy sector is a testament to this, where firms embodying these leadership styles excelled in customer satisfaction and retention. This finding is crucial for the eThekweni Municipality's SMEs, suggesting that adopting similar leadership approaches could lead to comparable successes (Jing 2017). Additionally, Tian, Iqbal, Akhtar, Qalati, Anwar and Khan (2020) demonstrated the positive correlation between transformational leadership and employee retention, mediated by organisational citizenship behaviour. This insight could be particularly beneficial for eThekweni's SMEs in fostering a loyal and motivated workforce, subsequently impacting customer loyalty and business growth (Tian *et al.* 2020).

Flynn (2022) discloses that leadership style is how a leader uses their personality and intellect to influence the behaviour of others instead of resorting to violence or threats. Different leadership styles can affect transformation in various ways, leading to varying levels of effectiveness among leaders. As per Naidu and Van Der Walt (2019), a productive leadership style can impact change and motivate a transformation. Leadership is seen as a key factor in achieving organisational success, both currently

and in the future. Hence, the leader's role is crucial for the success of small and medium enterprises in the eThekweni Municipality.

2.3.2 Role of employee retention and motivation.

In addition, studies also reveal that employee retention and motivation are pivotal in the dynamics of SME performance. Enugala (2012) emphasises the significance of innovative retention strategies in small businesses, linking them to operational efficiency and customer fulfilment (Enugala 2012). Moreover, Pereira *et al.* (2016) highlighted the influence of individual motivations and leadership on staff retention and customer satisfaction. These findings suggest that eThekweni's SMEs could enhance their competitive edge by cultivating a workplace that values and motivates its employees, thus positively impacting customer interactions and business performance (Pereira *et al.* 2016).

Training and development play a crucial role in today's environment due to the increasing competition and challenges faced by organisations in the business world. Training for employees continues to be a significant factor in promoting job satisfaction (Batool and Batool, 2022). As per the research conducted by Jehanzeb and Bashir (2022), companies that offer training and development initiatives to their staff are experiencing high levels of employee contentment and minimal employee turnover. Employees receive numerous advantages from participating in the employee training and development program.

Wang and Lo (2019) suggest that improved customer satisfaction is strongly linked to higher customer loyalty, boosted sales and productivity, increased success with new products, and innovation, ultimately resulting in a more sustainable competitive edge. Ooi, Lin, Tan, and Chong (2021) note that organisations find it challenging to meet customer satisfaction by providing various products or services that meet their needs and go beyond their expectations. In order to achieve this, entities need to give importance to the requirements and choices of their clients.

Jha, Noori, and Michela (2019) describe continuous improvement (CI) as a set of actions aimed at enhancing performance through a structured process. In service industries and the public sector, the emphasis is on making things simpler and enhancing customer service by giving individual employees more authority and reducing bureaucracy. Per Cole (2022), the CI cycle involves setting up customer needs, fulfilling those needs,

evaluating progress, and consistently assessing customer needs for possible enhancements.

2.3.3 Importance of quality administration management practices in SMMEs.

QAM practices in SMME's performance and productivity, competitive position and profitability. This review also investigate the reasons for enrolling quality administration management practices in SMMEs.

2.3.3.1 Relationship between QAM and SMMEs

Significant connections were discovered by Fening, Pesakovic, and Amaria (2018) between the QAM variables and firm performance. The research also discovered evidence backing the claim that implementing quality management practices enhances the performance of organisations, regardless of their size or location. Niyi Anifowose, Ghasemi, and Olaleye (2022) suggest that Total Quality Management (TQM) has a strong impact on both operational performance and the speed of innovation, leading to a significant connection between TQM and the performance of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Total Quality Administration Management (TQAM) has a positive impact on SME's operational performance.

In a research conducted by Gadenne (2020) on QAM factors in SMMEs, the impact of organisational performance on the company's total market share in Queensland was analysed. The research discovered that organisational performance was defined by a subjective evaluation of total quality management performance based on how respondents viewed their company's quality management impact on productivity, competitive position, profitability, revenue growth, overall performance, and positive organisational development, as well as the objective measurements of return on assets. In the same perspective, a study by Shin, Collier and Wilson (2000) underscored the significance of supply management orientation on both suppliers' and buyers' performance, emphasising a win-win scenario in the supply chain. This observation is pivotal for SMMEs, suggesting that effective management practices are instrumental in driving business success. Moreover, Ghobadian and Gallear (1996) observed that the implementation of TQM in SMEs positively influences their competitiveness and quality outputs, reinforcing the idea that quality management is a cornerstone for maintaining a competitive edge.

However, these studies also exhibit differences in focus and impact. For instance, Koc (2007) highlighted the tangible benefits of formal quality certification in manufacturing,

marking a distinct advantage for certified firms over non-certified ones. In contrast, Chong and Rundus (2004) explored how TQM's relationship with organisational performance strengthens with increased market competition, suggesting that the impact of TQM is contingent on external market dynamics. Consequently, this means that without QAM practices, SMMEs would not survive the competition and realise profit and productivity. Thus, the researcher will examine how quality administration management practices affect the performance, productivity, competitive position, and profitability of SMMEs.

2.3.3.2 Role of QAM in SMMEs

The review of several studies helped to understand the role of QAM in SMMEs. There are diverse roles the use of QAM can be used, which include facilitating strong leadership, promoting efficient customer service and continuous improvement of business or organisational operations.

Pantouvakis and Patsiouras' (2018) study explored the significance of QAM techniques. The results showed that QAM procedures facilitate strong leadership style adoption by SMMEs. Hence, QAM practices promote good working relationships between employer and employees, good conditions, and remuneration, which evoke the attainment of SMMEs' goals. Hence, the current study will assess the role of QAM practices in facilitating strong leadership style adoption by SMMEs.

Gashti, Torbehbar and Farhoudnia (2015) investigated the significance of good administrative management techniques. Administrative management strategies increase worker satisfaction for SMMEs. The research shows that leadership styles play a crucial role in determining job satisfaction and loyalty within the Asian automotive industry. Hence, this study will establish the effects of quality administrative management strategies on worker satisfaction for SMMEs.

Salahat and Majid (2016) examined how leadership philosophies impact customer satisfaction in the Palestinian insurance industry, with employee performance playing a role as a mediator. This research examines a structural equation model linking transactional and transformational leadership styles, employee performance, and customer satisfaction by surveying 258 insurance company employees with direct customer interaction. Customer satisfaction is directly impacted by the style of leadership exhibited by the team. Employee performance plays a part in influencing the connection between leadership styles and customer satisfaction. Quality administration management techniques, therefore, increase client happiness. The researcher would

investigate how quality administration management practices affect workers' performance, and customer satisfaction.

Lee's (2012) research focused on the effectiveness of training for customer service and the company's size. The research examined 735 companies to evaluate how the size of the company impacted the correlation between training and customer service. Distinctive characteristics include incorporating training into a robust HR system, resulting in exceptional customer service and a uniquely South African setting. The benefits of customer service training significantly rise as the company grows in size, with significant benefits only evident in larger companies. The study concluded that customer service training results in quality customer service. The current study will explore the influence of QAM practices on quality customer service.

Mohammed's (2017) research looked at nonprofit organisations' ongoing improvement methods. The sample of the study consisted of leaders from nonprofit organisations in Delaware. The participant selection process heavily relied on the successful integration of CI methodologies in nonprofit organisations. Data was obtained through semi-structured interviews conducted in person with the leaders of four nonprofit organisations. Through the inductive coding of phrases and words, methodological triangulation was used to examine the data. The study found that nonprofit executives might use CI techniques to improve operations and raise money. Therefore, this research aims to explore the connection between quality administration management practices and continuous improvement in small, medium, and micro enterprises (SMMEs).

2.4 The significance of customer retention and satisfaction in SMMEs.

In order to ensure that organisations can make lasting purchasing decisions, it is crucial for them to meet client expectations and foster long-term relationships with them (Salehih 2018). Customer retention in business economics is often talked about in relationship marketing, where maintaining and developing long-lasting client connections is seen as a crucial priority (Al Dmour *et al.*, 2018). In the dynamic landscape of eThekweni's SMMEs, achieving customer satisfaction and retention is a multifaceted challenge. Nkwinika's (2023) examination of business bootstrapping models underscores the imperative of financial self-sufficiency during the nascent stages of SMMEs. This perspective aligns with the notion that reasonable resource management and minimised external financial dependencies empower these enterprises to offer competitive pricing and superior quality. For instance, diligent application of bootstrapping principles can

enable an SMME to maintain lean operational costs, thereby affording cost-conscious clientele accessible products or services.

Similarly, Ndlazi, Ongunsola, Dlamini and Nhleko (2023) stress the ethical dimensions of management within the SMME landscape. Ethical conduct is integral to cultivating customer trust and harmonising with the community's values. This ethical alignment seamlessly integrates with cost-effective decision-making. For instance, an SMME practising ethical material sourcing and fair labour standards can cultivate a positive brand image that resonates with customers, enhancing satisfaction and loyalty (Ndlazi *et al.* 2023).

Furthermore, Ogunsola, Potswana and Chikosha (2023) emphasise the pivotal role of managerial competence. The development of managerial skills enables SMMEs to oversee inventory, personnel, and customer service efficiently. When combined with bootstrapping principles and ethical practices, this proficient management results in heightened service quality, ultimately leading to enhanced customer satisfaction and retention (Ogunsola *et al.* 2023).

Many previous studies have indicated that in order to reach the retention phase, companies must consistently prioritise customer satisfaction. Hansemark and Albinsson (2019) characterise contentment as the overall mindset that a consumer holds towards a service provider. Hansemark and Albinsson (2019) suggest that customer satisfaction is a result of meeting their needs and expectations, leading to an emotional response. Satisfaction indicates a lasting connection, as customer loyalty reflects a sought-after result down the line. Client retention relies on client satisfaction, although repurchase is not necessarily guaranteed.

While customer satisfaction has been the main focus in various studies on retaining customers, the importance of factors like trust and commitment are now recognised for their influence. According to Morgan and Hunt's (2018) "The Commitment-Trust Theory of Relationship Marketing," the connection between commitment and trust is considered vital in successful relationship marketing. This theory is regarded as the most influential in the field of Relationship Marketing. They highlighted how important commitment and trust are in building strong relationships with customers and improving effectiveness, productivity, and efficiency. The level of trust between the service provider and the consumer is heavily influenced by the quality of the service, leading to a strong commitment to the provider.

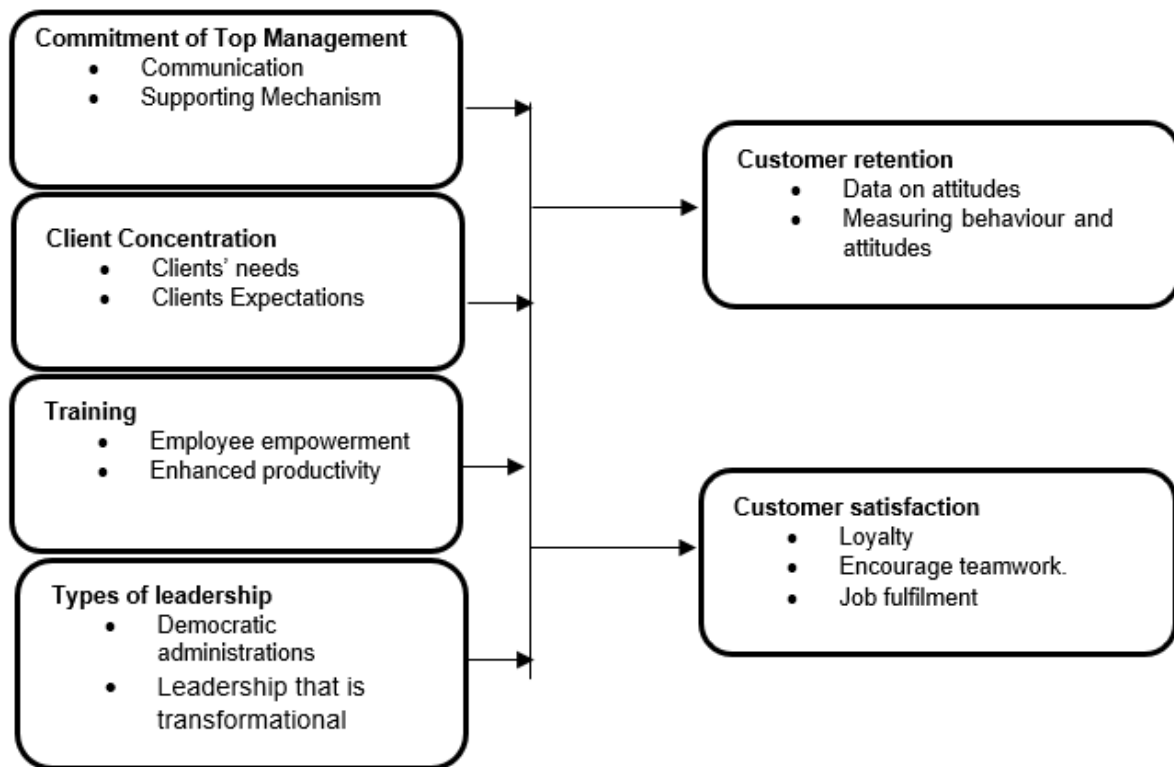
Amadi (2019) researched how training and development affect employees' performance at Safaricom Limited's call centre. The research utilised a case study approach, with 340 call centre agents from Safaricom's customer service department acting as a sample that represented the population for gathering data. The sample consisted of managers, support/analysts, and customer experience executives. Both structured and unstructured questionnaires were used to collect primary data. Based on the research results, continuous training and development are required considering factors like competition, market dynamics, customer satisfaction, and net promoter score.

2.5 Factors influencing customer retention and satisfaction.

The retention and satisfaction of customers are essential metrics for evaluating a company's performance and its competitive position in the market. Several studies have examined the effectiveness of QAM practices on customer retention and satisfaction in SMMEs (Atiku and Abatan 2021; Lee *et al.* 2021; Kim 2020). QAM practices have been recognised as critical in enhancing customer satisfaction and retention in SMMEs (Lee *et al.* 2021). Kim (2020) found that quality management practices significantly influence customer satisfaction in Korea's public sector. Abatan (2018) also noted that strategic capabilities such as quality management practices are essential for the sustainability of SMMEs in Gauteng. Sonandi, Ladzani, and Neale (2021) pointed out that the absence of proper business planning hinders the successful adoption of TQM in small agricultural businesses in South Africa.

Balan (2017) highlighted the importance of administrative management and the mechanisms of its development in promoting effective QAM practices. Literature has identified that several factors in QAM practices can influence SMMEs to achieve successful outcomes in customer satisfaction and retention through a commitment to top management, client concentration, training, and types of leadership (See Figure 1.1 below). This literature review delves into how factors such as commitment to top management and improvement, employee training and development, customer concentration and orientation, and leadership style impact customer retention and satisfaction.

Figure 2.1 Strategies for customer retention and satisfaction.



Source: David (2018:22)

2.5.1 Commitment to top management and improvement.

Commitment to top management is an essential factor that can influence customer retention and satisfaction. Ali and Johl (2022) showed a positive correlation between TQM practices and the sustainable performance of SMEs. In this context, top management's commitment to quality management practices, such as continuous improvement and employee involvement, can significantly impact customer satisfaction and retention. Research done by David (2018) in intermediate colleges in Machakos County, Kenya, revealed that quality management practices enhanced customer satisfaction. Additionally, clients' concentration is another factor that can influence customer retention and satisfaction. Adeiza, Abdullahi, Abdel, Fawehinmi, Ismail, Amaut, Aigbogun, Adam and Ehido (2022) highlighted that customer relationship management (CRM) implementation positively influences customer loyalty among consolidated banks. In this study, the authors found that customer satisfaction mediates the relationship between CRM implementation and customer loyalty. Thus, firms that concentrate on meeting the needs of their clients are more likely to achieve higher customer retention and satisfaction.

In his study from 2017, Mohammed investigated the methods of continuous improvement for nonprofit organisations. The study focused on leaders of nonprofit organisations in Delaware. The individuals chosen had a track record of effectively carrying out continuous improvement strategies within nonprofit organisations. Information was gathered by conducting semi-structured in-person interviews with 4 leaders of nonprofit organisations. Data was examined by utilising methodological triangulation, which involved the inductive coding of phrases and words. The research found that nonprofit executives can use continuous improvement techniques to improve performance and increase earnings.

2.5.2 Employee training and development.

Employee training and development have been found to be positively related to quality administration management practices and customer retention and satisfaction in SMMEs (Atiku and Abatan 2021). Okyere and Amoakoh (2019) emphasised that relationship marketing models can also improve the competitiveness of SMMEs such as hair salons. Moreover, Galvão, de Carvalho, Oliveira, and Medeiros (2018) identified that SMMEs can implement customer loyalty approaches based on customer relationship management to enhance customer retention and satisfaction. Murenga and Njuguna (2020) demonstrated that TQM practices positively influenced service delivery in SMEs such as Horizons Offices Limited in Kenya. In this context, firms that invest in employee training and development are more likely to provide quality services that meet customers' needs and expectations, resulting in higher customer retention and satisfaction. Finally, the type of leadership can also impact customer retention and satisfaction. Larsson and Broström (2020) found that insurers' perception of customer loyalty is influenced by their leadership style. Leaders who embrace a leadership approach focused on customers are more apt to attain increased levels of customer satisfaction and loyalty. In contrast, leaders who focus more on the company's performance than the customers' needs may struggle to achieve high levels of customer retention and satisfaction.

A study by Amadi (2019) explores how training and development impact the performance of Safaricom Limited call centre employees. The research utilised a case study method to gather data from 340 employees at the Call Center, part of Safaricom's Customer Care Division, representing the population. The sample consisted of managers, support/analysts, and executives in customer experience. Both structured and unstructured questionnaires were used to collect primary data. The research found that

ongoing training and development are essential, considering factors such as competition, market changes, customer happiness, and net promoter score.

Furthermore, Lee (2019) examines how the size of a company impacts the success of customer service training. The research examined how the size of a company influenced the impact of training on customer service in a sample of 735 firms. Distinct features consist of incorporating training into a comprehensive, high-performance HR platform, customer service as a result, and the specific circumstances in South Africa. The advantages of customer service training are much greater for larger companies, as only significant benefits are seen in big firms.

2.5.3 Customer concentration and orientation.

Focusing on various factors that meet the needs and expectations of customers can impact customer retention and satisfaction. Studies have indicated that the factors that help to facilitate to attract the concentration of customers include the use of digital marketing platforms (Adam *et al.* 2020), total quality management practices (Ali and Johl 2022), and service delivery (Murenga and Njuguna 2020). For example, a study by Agabu Phiri and Pillay (2017) identify how customer perceptions of service quality were essential for customer retention and satisfaction in SMMEs such as Crossley Holdings in Durban, South Africa. Kiprono and Genga (2018) also found that TQM practices significantly enhance the performance of airlines in Kenya.

Hawa (2015) investigated how service quality acts as a mediator in the connection between customer orientation and customer happiness. The study population consisted of customers from the 41 outlets of Pharmacy One in Amman, which offer a range of pharmaceutical services to meet customer needs. The researcher chose 248 participants from customers visiting Pharmacy One branches during the study phase, using convenience sampling. The research discovered that there was a significant statistical correlation between customer focus and customer happiness, as well as a significant statistical correlation between service excellence and customer satisfaction.

In another research, Kim (2014) examined how customer orientation influences the effectiveness of customer relationship management through mediation. Based on the research results, the influence of focusing on customers on CRM effectiveness is influenced by orientation towards training and how customers process information. The practical results provide suggestions for managers and theories on CRM implementation. The effects of customer orientation, service orientation, service quality, service encounter

quality, and perceived value towards customer satisfaction and behavioural intention were studied by Ming and Chung (2019) in the context of retail. The research methodology was characterised as descriptive. Questionnaires were used to collect primary data. Linear regression and Pearson correlation were both utilised. As per the research, maintaining a focus on customers and their needs is key to fostering positive customer behaviour.

2.5.4 Leadership style.

Studies indicated that effective leadership is critical for ensuring customer satisfaction and retention (Ali and Johl 2022; David 2018; Larsson and Broström 2020). Leaders who are customer-oriented, supportive, and empowering are more likely to inspire and motivate employees to provide excellent customer service, leading to increased customer satisfaction and retention (Ali and Johl 2022; Larsson and Broström 2020). In contrast, leaders who are more focused on their power and authority may hinder employee engagement and motivation, resulting in poor customer service and reduced customer satisfaction and retention (David 2018).

To enhance customer retention and satisfaction in SMMEs in the eThekweni Metropolitan area, effective QAM practices should be implemented. This may involve developing strategic capabilities such as quality management practices (Abatan 2018), employee training and development (Atiku and Abatan 2021), and relationship marketing models (Okyere and Amoakoh 2019). Additionally, the internal and external factors that influence QAM practices should be identified and addressed, such as the lack of business planning (Sonandi *et al.* 2021) and customer perceptions of service quality (Agabu *et al.* 2017). Finally, implementing TQM practices (Ali and Johl 2022) and improving service delivery (Murenga and Njuguna 2020) can contribute to customer retention and satisfaction in SMMEs in the eThekweni Metropolitan area.

Pantouvakis and Patsiouras (2019) conducted a study investigating how leadership style affects the connection between service quality and customer satisfaction in a B2B setting. Exploratory factor and regression analyses were utilised to develop and evaluate a distinct survey tool. 118 small businesses were surveyed through personal interviews to collect information. The findings indicated that leadership is not essential for service quality, as commonly believed, but instead influences the connection between service quality and customer satisfaction.

The research conducted by Gashti, Torbehbar, and Farhoudnia (2015) examined how leadership styles are linked to employee loyalty and job satisfaction. Questionnaires served as the instrument for collecting data. In this study, both descriptive and inferential statistics were utilised. The results showed that managers in the Iranian automotive industry primarily use traditional leadership styles, resulting in low levels of employee satisfaction on average. The research shows that in Asian automobile industries, leadership styles play a significant role in influencing job satisfaction and loyalty.

Salahat and Majid (2016) conducted research that compared leadership styles in the Palestinian insurance industry and their impact on customer satisfaction, with a focus on the mediating role of employees' performance. This study examines a structural equation model that connects leadership styles (transactional and transformational), employees' performance, and customer satisfaction using survey data from 258 insurance company employees who interact directly with customers. The evidence indicates that both transactional and transformational leadership styles do not have a direct effect on customer satisfaction. Meanwhile, the connection between leadership styles and customer satisfaction is partially influenced by the performance of employees.

2.6 Managing customer expectations in SMMEs.

Most SMMEs in the eThekweni Municipality often lack effective customer expectation management, which affects them in retention and satisfaction of customers (Ndlazi *et al.* 2023). Customer expectations refer to the desires and requirements that customers have for the goods or services they seek (Nabio 2019). It has been noted in Samaan's (2021) study that customer expectations can be defined as the beliefs that individuals hold, which serve as standards against which their experiences are evaluated. A wide range of external factors, such as past experiences, advertising, personal backgrounds, attitudes, beliefs, word-of-mouth communications, individual needs, and product/service knowledge, influence customers' expectations. It has been shown in previous research by Samaan (2021) that customer expectations have a significant and favourable influence on customer satisfaction. Hence, it is essential to recognise and integrate customer expectations in product or service design and delivery to guarantee customer contentment and reduce any possible discontent.

2.7 Existing frameworks or models for improving customer retention and satisfaction in SMMEs.

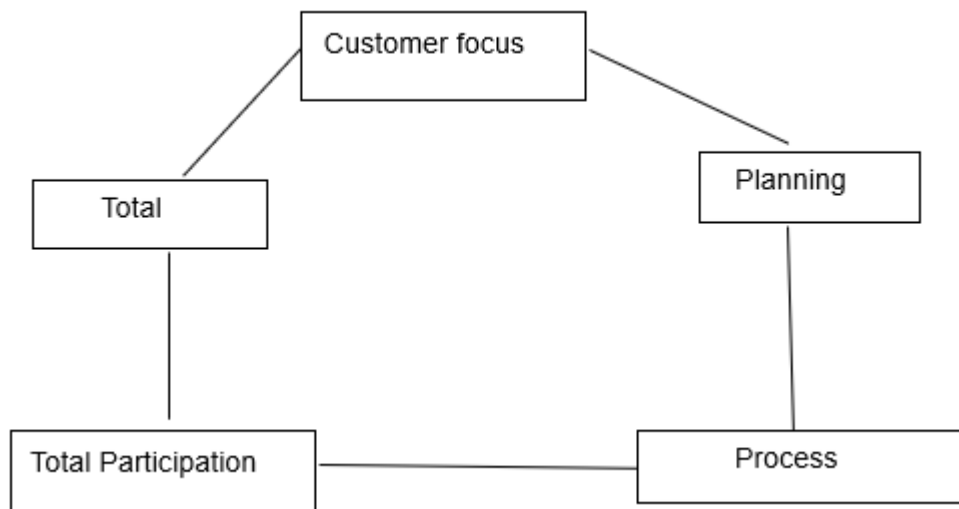


Figure 2.2 Conceptual Model: Relationship between QMPPs and their impact on quality.

Source: Barros, Sampaio and Saraiva (2014).

The conceptual model presented by Barros, Sampaio and Saraiva (2014) offers valuable insights into how quality management practices can influence effective performance and highlights the significance of various practices, such as process management, leadership commitment, and employee involvement. This holistic perspective resonates well with the understanding that SMMEs in eThekwinini can greatly benefit from a comprehensive quality management framework. Such an approach can bolster their competitiveness and enhance customer satisfaction, both of which are pivotal for the survival and growth of SMMEs in this competitive market (Nkwinika 2023). However, it is crucial to recognise the limitations of applying this model in the specific context of SMMEs in eThekwinini. Firstly, the model may not fully account for the resource constraints that are often a stark reality for these enterprises. Many SMMEs in eThekwinini operate with limited financial and human resources, making the implementation of extensive QMPPs a daunting task. Additionally, the model might not adequately consider the local intricacies and cultural factors that influence quality management practices in eThekwinini. These factors can differ from the contexts in which the model was originally developed.

Furthermore, the model may not sufficiently account for the dynamic nature of SMMEs in eThekwinini, where businesses often navigate through volatile markets and contend with

rapid changes in customer preferences and regulatory landscapes. Consequently, a model that does not flexibly adapt to these changes may offer limited practical utility.

The model begins with understanding customers' needs. Effective administration practices in organisations involve ongoing processes that gather, assess, and respond to customer data. Many times, activities are expanded to include understanding the customers of competitors. It also requires gaining a deep comprehension of customers' requirements. Effective administration practices in organisations combine customer feedback with other data and utilise the planning process to coordinate operations across the entire organisation in order to oversee daily tasks and reach long-term objectives. Strategies are periodically evaluated and modified as needed. The coordination of all QAM activities relies on the planning process.

Effective quality management practices in organisations recognise that customer satisfaction hinges on consistently providing products and services that meet their requirements, are delivered on time, and offer good value for money. Organisations utilise process management techniques within quality management practices to create stable and cost-effective processes that meet customer expectations (Nkwinika 2023). Quality administration management practices in organisations recognise that what is considered exceptional performance now may not be considered acceptable performance in the future. Therefore, they utilise process improvement concepts to achieve significant advancements and continuous improvement is also implemented in the quality administration management practices system itself.

2.8 Strategies and initiatives to address factors hindering customer retention and satisfaction.

Customer retention is greatly aided by senior management's backing (Farquhar 2004). According to Wadongo, Odhuno, Kambona and Othuon (2018), top management support may be understood as the organised direction provided by a company's top executives, which in turn helps to increase customer retention rates. To keep and satisfy their clients, businesses typically require dedication from the senior management team (Villanueva and Hanssens 2017). Yee, Yeung and Edwin (2021) underlined the value of offering clients service assurances such as money-back guarantees or refunds if the service is unsuccessful. Such reassurance is seen to be essential for keeping a consumer. To ensure the mentioned service guarantees and remain highly competitive in the market,

the support of management is crucial (Venetis and Ghauri 2014). Hence, retaining customers is highly possible only with constant support from the top management of the firm (Yee *et al.* 2020).

2.8.1 Pricing.

Price is a crucial retention strategy (Dawes 2019). Consumers are seen as individuals who aim to get the most value out of their purchases (Kotler and Keller 2016), often viewing a product's price as a reflection of its worth and understanding that there may be a trade-off between price and quality (Wang 2017). Likewise, Polo, Sese and Verhoef (2018) emphasised the importance of companies establishing equitable prices for their services to attract and retain customers in the long run. Customer loyalty depends on getting good value for their money (Voon 2018) because reasonable prices show clients how good the service is (Jin *et al.* 2018). As a result, customer retention is made easier by a firm's competitively set service prices (Dawes 2019).

According to Ryu, Lee and Kim (2016), prompt and dependable staff behaviour in providing customer service and assistance is crucial for boosting a company's retention rate and, in turn, the level of customer satisfaction. Dependability involves serving customers accurately, reliably, and consistently, while responsiveness is the willingness to assist customers and provide services promptly (Sayuti 2011). Courteous, skilled, and friendly staff members are essential for keeping customers loyal (Liao and Chuang 2004; Sayuti 2011).

2.8.2 Relationship marketing.

Relationship marketing, which involves engaging in two-way communication with customers, is an important strategy that encourages interactive engagement (Roberts *et al.*, 2003). It is widely recognised that the key to retaining customers lies in the effective two-way communication between a company and its clients (Reinartz and Kumar 2003). The primary methods to enhance retention rates include regular engagement, soliciting consumer feedback, and maintaining continuous communication with customers (Gupta *et al.* 2006; Bassey *et al.* 2011). As a result, it has been discovered that engaging with customers interactively can increase customer loyalty to a business (Reinartz and Kumar 2003; Gupta *et al.* 2006; Bassey *et al.* 2011).

2.8.3 Membership programs.

Membership programs have an impact on customer retention rates because they give businesses a chance to regularly contact their consumers while also learning more about

them (Stengel 2013). The membership card offers important details about the consumer, including their income, purchasing habits, likes, and dislikes, as well as their chosen method of payment (Arnold *et al.* 2018). Furthermore, Currah and Wrigley (2014) found that, over time, the company's marketing communication strategies and customer retention processes will be improved by utilising the personal data collected from the membership program's database. When given vouchers, card members typically feel a connection to the companies, which makes them happy (Bolton *et al.* 2020). In conclusion, membership programs do help businesses retain customers (Currah and Wrigley 2014).

Membership programs impact customer loyalty by offering companies regular interaction opportunities with customers and the chance to gain insights into their preferences (Stengel 2013). The membership card contains important details about the customer, such as income, spending behaviour, preferences, and preferred payment methods (Arnold *et al.* 2018). Furthermore, Currah and Wrigley (2014) concluded that utilising customers' data from the membership program database would help enhance the company's marketing communication strategies and customer retention over time. Cardholders typically develop a feeling of connection with companies when they receive vouchers, which satisfies them (Bolton *et al.* 2020). In conclusion, membership programs do help companies retain customers, as noted by Currah and Wrigley (2014).

Customers are believed to be likely to stay because they do not want to pay the whole cost of switching (Steven *et al.* 2012). Switching cost refers to the overall expenses that consumers have to pay when they decide to switch to different companies (Gustafsson *et al.* 2015). Furthermore, Seo, Ranganathan, and Babad (2018) noted that changing retailers could result in time lost while looking for a new one, financial expenses during the search, and additional undisclosed costs. Customers typically hesitate to switch service providers because they worry about losing their membership points, as noted by Steven *et al.* in 2012. It would be smart to determine that customer loyalty is heavily influenced by the costs associated with switching service providers (Ranaweera and Prabhu 2013).

2.8.4 Service quality.

Companies are placing significant emphasis on the quality of service to the point where it is now considered a crucial aspect of a company's strategic plan (Samat *et al.* 2016). Likewise, it has been recognised as a key element in keeping customers (Sayuti 2011).

Tu *et al.* (2011) stated that perceived service quality is the difference between the anticipated and received customer service from a company. Venetis and Ghauri (2014) stressed that the quality of services provided influences the future repurchase intention, and companies that offer strong pre and post-customer support can retain their customers effectively. Hence, there is a strong possibility of customer loyalty when they believe that companies provide high-quality services (Venetis and Ghauri 2014).

2.8.5 Customer retention.

The retention of customers relies heavily on CRM, according to Omar *et al.* (2017). Customer relationship management involves firms engaging in activities aimed at building relationships, which can be done through traditional methods or electronically (Feinberg and Kadam 2012). Ndubisi (2007) has linked customer relationship management and electronic CRM to successful service recovery processes with a focus on unhappy customers. Furthermore, Yunus (2009) has emphasised that electronic CRM activities involve building a positive relationship with customers through sharing the newest promotions and updates to please them ultimately. Thus, these remarkable CRM initiatives can result in enhanced customer loyalty within a company (Omar *et al.* 2007; Yunus 2009).

2.8.6 Customer service.

Customer service refers to how customers perceive a company based on specific observable factors such as the environment, place, and atmosphere created for the customer when comparing it to other companies (Razak *et al.* 2017). Customer service is seen as a crucial tool in maintaining a company's customer base. Al-Eisa and Alhemoud (2019) have determined that the physical aspects and environment of a business, including factors like noise, music, lighting, temperature, store layout, furniture and equipment arrangement, decor, and signage, significantly impact customers' choice to remain with a business. In addition, customers' choice to continue doing business with a company is influenced by the store's appearance since it would be challenging to replicate the firm's distinct atmosphere. However, Vesel and Zabkar (2019) have found that customers evaluate the quality of customer service through a limited number of interactions. Happy customers can usually endure bad customer service experiences on rare occasions. Hence, it can be inferred that maintaining customers is possible by providing superior customer service, as demonstrated by companies (Al-Eisa and Alhemoud 2009).

2.9 Summary of the chapter.

This chapter began with discussing about the meanings of quality. The study examined the background and discussed the implementation of QAM practices, factors affecting quality administration management, and customer retention and satisfaction in SMMEs. The literature suggests that QAM practices, employee training and development, internal and external factors, and customer retention and satisfaction are important issues for SMMEs. Effective QAM practices can improve customer retention and satisfaction and address factors that contribute to and hinder these outcomes. While the literature review offers useful perspectives on quality management practices and customer satisfaction in different industries and contexts, there is a noticeable research gap centred around SMMEs in the eThekweni Metropolitan area. While some studies have examined similar topics in South Africa, they do not specifically address the unique challenges and opportunities faced by SMMEs in this specific geographic location. Therefore, this research study helps to fill the recognised gap by focusing on specific contexts. Hence, more research is required to investigate how quality administration management practices impact customer retention and satisfaction in SMMEs in the eThekweni Metropolitan area.

The next chapter discusses the research methodology adopted for the study.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction.

The previous chapter discussed the reviewed literature relevant for the study. This chapter outlines the essential steps taken in the study to collect data that addresses the research inquiries. A series of steps form part of this chapter, the goal being to find answers to the research study's problem. Therefore, the chapter focuses on the investigation of the research issue by beginning with the research philosophy and then proceeding with the research design and approach employed. The chapter then discusses the target population, sampling methods used as well as the method of data collection and analysis. This chapter concludes with the data quality control and ethical considerations which were addressed.

3.2 Research philosophy.

The appropriateness of a research methodology has a bearing on the authenticity of the research study. It is paramount that research follow a specified pattern as a means to acquire specific results that are insightful and the anticipated response to the research questions (Tombs and Pugsley 2020). A research paradigm is an overarching theoretical perspective on the world and the origins of a study, shaping a researcher's research focus (Creswell and Creswell 2018). On the same note, Tombs and Pugsley (2020) hold the view that a research paradigm tells of the researcher's plan of action in unpacking the research problem whilst at the same time displaying the philosophical process of the researcher. According to Baran (2016), the most famous research paradigms entail transformative, positivism, constructivism, and pragmatism.

This research utilised a positivist research paradigm. The positivist research paradigm was deemed appropriate for this study because it focused on utilising objective, empirical approaches to produce knowledge (Rahi 2017). Unlike interpretivism and constructivist paradigms that align well with qualitative research that seeks to establish perspectives, the use of the positivist research paradigm allows the researcher to remain objective and establish relationships between various variables (Kaliyamurthi 2021). This approach enabled the collection of data through standardised surveys and questionnaires, which provided a large sample size for statistical analysis. Using a positivist research

philosophy also enabled the testing of hypotheses and the establishment of cause-and-effect relationships between the variables being studied.

3.3 Research design.

Saunders and Thornhill (2019) define a research design as a method that researchers use to address the research questions. The expectation is that the objectives should be simple, achievable, measurable, and reliable. Kelvins (2018) further expands that a research design can be viewed as a blueprint for conducting the research, with details on the procedures specific to the collection of information relevant to solving the problem being investigated. In the same vein, Akhtar (2016: 68) notes that the “research design can be considered as the structure of research and the ‘glue’ that holds the different elements in a research project together; in short, it is a plan of the proposed research work.” Different research designs exist, including descriptive, explanatory, and exploratory design (Sileyew 2019). This study adopted the exploratory research design.

3.3.1 Exploratory research design.

Exploratory research design seeks to understand the in-depth nature of a phenomenon. Mole (2019) is of the view that exploratory research tends to be involved in instances where a subject being investigated is novel or in cases where meagre information exists. Thus, the design allows the full exploration of a research problem, considering the aim will not be to merely conclude without fully understanding the problem. Additionally, exploratory research establishes a base for further investigation into a subject by focusing on areas or populations that have been less explored or are in limited supply, as noted by Winston (2022). Upon reviewing this study, an in-depth examination was conducted to assess the effectiveness of QAM practices in the eThekweni Metropolitan area SMMs, specifically in relation to customer retention and satisfaction. This is a less commonly pursued path, particularly in the South African context. Therefore, it is considered more practical to approach it with an exploratory mindset.

In addition, exploratory research targets the analysis of lived experiences. This means the design leaves no room for mere speculation as its basis is on true, experienced facts (Mole 2019). In the case of this study, this allowed for the gleaning of first-hand and lived information from the participants. This undoubtedly increased the reliability of the gathered data and, to some extent, made the information easily generalised to the entire population. Therefore, the study was best suited for an exploratory research design.

3.4 Research methods.

A research strategy includes detailed plans and procedures outlining the steps and assumptions of the methods utilised in research for collecting and analysing data. The approach to research, according to Shannon-Baker (2016), can be either deductive or inductive. The deductive approach is zeroed on testing an existing theory and is more inclined to scientific investigation. The researcher, through the deductive approach, is attributed the liberty to study the literature that already exists as well as the theories of a phenomenon in order to test the hypotheses presented by those very theories the contrary, inductive is focused on building theories. Saunders (2016) points out that the inductive method leads to making broader generalisations from basic observations. The study took a deductive stance, considering it is within the positivist framework. It had to search for new knowledge and compare it to the existing literature to prove a theory.

The deductive stance in positivist research involves starting with a theory or hypothesis and then conducting research to test its validity. This process contrasts with inductive research, which begins with observations and moves towards theory formation (Ryan 2018). The positivist paradigm, by its very nature, seeks to provide explanations based on empirical evidence and often employs statistical methods to analyse data (Park *et al.* 2020). For instance, this approach can guide study design and implementation by focusing on measurable outcomes and empirical validation of theories (Park *et al.* 2020; Ryan 2018). In essence, the deductive research approach in positivism is a systematic method that seeks to test theories through empirical observation and quantitative analysis, thereby advancing scientific knowledge in a structured and controlled manner (Ryan, 2018).

The main methods of research include qualitative, quantitative, and mixed approaches. Flick (2018) notes that qualitative research is more concerned with exploring a phenomenon in its everyday context. Information in the qualitative approach is open-ended and not numerical. Data gathered in qualitative research is mainly through observations, interviews and focus groups, and the data is usually descriptive (Jovancic 2019).

Quantitative research is a systematic approach which is aimed at collecting data that is numerical and can be analysed using statistical methods (Creswell and Creswell 2017). A quantitative approach is meant to give detailed numerical evidence that supports the phenomena's application to the general population. Sekaran and Bougie (2018), in

summary, characterise quantitative research as numerical, non-descriptive and mostly suitable for statistical analysis, easily plotted into graphs, conclusive, and the results easily applied to the general population.

Savela (2018) reveals the following as the advantages of utilising the quantitative approach:

- Findings can be applied to the general population.
- Researcher biasness is eliminated, considering the data is a numeric measurement.
- Subjectiveness is also ensured through numeric measurement.
- It is also easy to statistically determine the internal consistency of measurement.

The use of a quantitative method was appropriate for this study as it enabled the collection of data that could be analysed statistically to establish cause-and-effect relationships between QAM practices, employee training and development, and customer retention and satisfaction in SMMEs in the eThekweni Metropolitan area.

3.5 Target population.

As per Saunders, Lewis and Thornhi (2016: 729), the research population refers to the entire group of cases or members that the research inquiry will focus on and from which a sample will be selected. The target population is the complete group of people, things, or occurrences that have the specific information or qualities the researcher wants to apply to a wider context (Creswell and Creswell 2017). It is the group of individuals who are the focus of the study and who meet the inclusion criteria for the research. In this study the target population consisted of businesses that met the definition of SMMEs as defined by the government of South Africa. The specific target population for this study was a total of 2400 SMMEs on the Durban Chamber of Commerce and Industry database in the eThekweni Municipality (Moyo 2019). This criterion applied to companies having fewer than 200 workers (Malarvizhi *et al.* 2016) and a yearly revenue below R64 million. This was in accordance with the definition of an SMME having employees over 30 but less than 200. However, the target population involved SMMEs that are registered under the Durban Chamber of Commerce. The research sought to examine how QAM practices impact customer satisfaction and retention; thus, the target population included SMMEs that had customers who could provide feedback on their satisfaction levels.

3.6 Sampling methods.

The carrying out of a research study in a timeously manner depends on the selected few individuals to be part of the research who are representative enough of the larger population. This is where sample and sampling come into the picture. Sampling is the process of selecting a subset of individuals from a larger population to participate in a study (Taherdoost, 2016). The purpose of sampling is to select a sample representative of the population under study, allowing for the generalisation of results to the larger population (Abutabenjeh and Jaradat 2018).

Following this, sampling techniques become essential in research, and they can be classified into probability sampling and non-probability sampling. Non-probability sampling is the very opposite of probability sampling, as it entails a sample that is identified through non-random methods (Sekaran and Bougie 2018). The researcher is left with the discretion of selecting the participants they deem relevant and informative towards the study. Thus, in non-probability sampling, each participant's probability of being selected is unknown, and this sampling method is widely popular with exploratory qualitative research.

For the purpose of this study, probability sampling was utilised. Probability sampling involves giving all potential participants an equal and unbiased opportunity to be chosen for a research study. In probability sampling every individual has an equal chance of selection to the study as any other (Datta 2018). Probability sampling, as one of its benefits has been found to reduce systematic error and minimise the bias of having participants selected by the researcher to be easily manipulated towards the results the researcher perceives to be right. However, on the other hand, this method has also been found to be expensive to conduct and time-consuming (Saunders *et al.* 2016).

Table 3.1 Sampling types

Sample type	Description
Probability sampling	
Random	There are no preferences, as there is a random selection of elements.

Stratified	This entails the categorisation of the population targeted for the study by characteristics which suit the research questions (for example, by years of experience or job level) and from each category a representative sample is chosen.
Cluster	The targeted population of the study is separated into segments (for example, province or block) and participants are then chosen at random.
Non-probability sampling	
Systematic	A sequence is followed in choosing representative elements (5, 10, 15).
Quota	A set criterion influences the choosing of representative elements, and this guarantees that the element is across targeted elements.
Purposive	The sample is picked based on their knowledge of a subject matter. This is usually used when the researcher possesses certain knowledge to identify the relevant participants.
Convenience	The representative element is identified from a population present and reachable at the time of study. This, for example, can be the free personnel in a work setting during the research.
Snowball	A small number of key elements is chosen, and these act as referrals for more relevant and knowledgeable participants.

The study adopted simple random sampling. This was appropriate for selecting a representative sample of SMMEs in the eThekweni, Durban area. The use of simple random sampling technique helped reduce researcher biases and ensured that the best

results that represented the population were produced (Abutabenjeh and Jaradat 2018). Simple random sampling technique involved randomly selecting a predetermined number of SMMEs from a comprehensive list of all registered SMMEs in the area.

Sampling size

The sample size is smaller than the targeted population and consists of a certain number of participants who are identified from the target population (Creswell and Creswell 2018). According to Abutabenjeh and Jaradat (2018), the sample size in a quantitative study should be large enough to ensure statistical power and representativeness. The size of the sample was decided through statistical power calculations that take into account factors like effect size, significance level, and desired precision (Creswell and Hirose 2019). Considering that there were 2400 registered SMMEs under the Durban Chamber of Commerce, using the Raosoft sample size calculation, a sample size for this study of 3324 SMMEs was arrived at based on the margin of error of $\pm 5\%$ with a 95% confidence level.

3.6.1 Selection of participants.

Abutabenjeh and Jaradat (2018) note that random sampling is a commonly used sampling technique in quantitative research. In this method, each individual in the population has an equal opportunity to be chosen for the research. This ensures that the sample accurately represents the population and minimises bias. The participants for this study were chosen through a random sampling method from the database of the Durban Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The database contains information on registered SMMEs in eThekweni municipality and provides detailed profiles of each business, including the size of the business, the industry, and the location. The researcher used this information to identify SMMEs that met the criteria for inclusion in the study. The researcher then generated a list of SMMEs from the database and assigned a unique identifier to each SMME. A random number generator was then used to select the required number of participants from the list. The researcher then contacted the selected participants via email and phone to request their participation in the study.

3.7 Inclusion and exclusion criteria.

The following inclusion criteria were employed to select suitable participants:

- i. Formal SMMEs registered under the Durban Chamber of Commerce and Industry database were selected.
- ii. Only SMMEs located in the eThekweni Municipality were sampled.
- iii. Only SMMEs that have 200 employees and below and a turnover of less than 64 million were included.

The following exclusion criteria were employed in selecting suitable participants:

- i. Informal SMMEs were not involved in the Study.
- ii. SMMEs that were registered under the Durban Chamber of Commerce and Industry but had ceased operations or were currently not in business were also not included.

3.8 Data collection process.

According to Hofman (2021:1), data is “information obtained during an investigation or study”. Data collection instruments are then methods utilised to collect relevant data (Saunders and Thornhill 2019). Methods used for gathering data in qualitative and quantitative research typically consist of observing, distributing surveys, examining documents, conducting experiments, and interviewing participants. This research utilised survey questionnaires for data collection.

3.8.1 Survey questionnaires.

A survey questionnaire is a self-administered instrument consisting of a series of questions designed to elicit specific information from respondents (Sekaran and Bougie 2016). It is an efficient method for collecting standardised data from a large sample size and allows for statistical analysis to be conducted to draw meaningful conclusions. Debois (2019) also notes that a survey questionnaire is a data-gathering tool which contains specific questions to the understanding of a phenomenon being studied. These questions, according to Billups (2020), can be either administered orally or in written form. The survey questionnaire can be physically administered, mailed, emailed or put online. In quantitative research, survey questionnaires usually include closed-ended questions with set response choices like multiple choice, rating scales, or Likert scales (with options from 1(Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). This enables the collection and analysis of quantitative data through the use of statistical techniques. As noted by Creswell and Creswell (2017), survey questionnaires are useful for exploring relationships between

variables and describing and comparing the characteristics of different groups. The researcher developed closed-ended survey questionnaires from scratch to collect data on customer retention, satisfaction, and QAM practices in SMMEs in the eThekweni Metropolitan area.

The researcher carried out the following steps to prepare the survey questionnaires. These steps were to eliminate any traces of bias and allow the gathering of data to saturation:

- The researcher ensured the survey objectives were clear to everyone and set for the study's goals. This ensured that the research stayed in the course without any deviations.
- After pilot testing, questions were then created by the researcher which were relevant and easy to understand. These questions only addressed the concerns of the research problem and nothing else.
- The identified participants for the study were then invited through email and follow-up phone calls were ...courteously. The nature of the study was informed to them, including the right to anonymity and withdrawal at any given time.
- The researcher then created online survey questionnaires using the Google survey form, and the link was shared with the participants through the email.
- The ultimate data or responses were collected and organised for the final evaluation.

3.9 Pilot study.

Majid *et al.* (2017: 41) note that "a pilot study represents a cornerstone of good research design, and in fact, a pilot study is an essential initial step in research, and this applies to all types of research studies". A pilot study was carried out prior to the primary data collection to assess the questionnaire and improve the research procedures. The initial research involved 10 respondents who were selected using random number generator who filled out the survey and gave their opinions on the questions' clarity, relevance, and suitability. The pilot study also helped to determine the reliability and validity of the questionnaire. The data collected from the pilot study was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics to identify potential issues or areas requiring modification. The feedback received from participants was used to refine the

questionnaire and improve the research procedures. This process ensured the validity and reliability of the questionnaire and enhanced the trustworthiness of the study (Abutabenjeh and Jaradat, 2018; Creswell and Hirose 2019).

3.10 Data analysis.

The study utilised the SPSS (version 29) software to analyse the data gathered from the survey questionnaire in order to extract valuable insights and make informed conclusions in line with the research goals. SPSS, a widely-used software application, is utilised for analysing quantitative data (Field, 2018).

The first step in data analysis using SPSS was data cleaning and preparation. This involved checking the data for accuracy, completeness, and consistency. Any missing values, outliers or errors were identified and corrected or removed as necessary. The data was then coded and entered into the software. Then, descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were calculated to summarise the data and offer a fundamental comprehension of the studied variables. This involved exploring the distribution of variables and assessing the normality of data. After that, inferential statistics was used to test the research hypotheses and answer the research questions. The appropriate statistical tests were selected based on the research design and the level of measurement of the variables. For example, t-tests or analysis of variance (ANOVA) may be used to compare means between groups; regression analysis may be used to examine the relationship between variables, and chi-square tests may be used to analyse categorical data.

Ultimately, the findings of the examination were explained and communicated clearly and succinctly. Tables, graphs, and charts were used to present the findings, and the results were discussed in the context of the research questions and objectives. The conclusions drawn from the study were supported by the statistical analysis conducted using SPSS. The use of SPSS in data analysis provides an efficient and effective way of extracting valuable insights from data collected during a quantitative study. By following established procedures for data preparation, using appropriate statistical techniques, and interpreting the results accurately, researchers can draw reliable and valid conclusions from their research data. Descriptive and inferential statistics were conducted, providing chi-square, correlations, ANOVA and regression analysis.

3.11 Validity and reliability or trustworthiness of data.

In research studies, validity and reliability are crucial elements that determine the credibility of the results obtained (Rahi 2017). Validity concerns if a study accurately measures what it aims to measure, while reliability focuses on the consistency of the results. Several steps were taken to ensure that the proposed quantitative study on the effectiveness of QAM practices on customer retention and satisfaction in SMMEs in the eThekweni Metropolitan area was valid and reliable. One approach to ensuring validity and reliability is using validated survey instruments (Rahi 2017). In the proposed study, a validated survey questionnaire (through supervisor review and ethical review process) was used to collect data from the sample population, ensuring that the study measured the intended constructs. Additionally, a pre-test was conducted to identify any potential issues with the survey instrument, such as unclear questions or response options, thus improving the validity and reliability of the study (Creswell and Hirose 2019).

To ensure the reliability of the study, clear and concise data collection methods were used, ensuring that the survey instrument was administered consistently to all participants and that the data collected was analysed using reliable statistical methods. Transferability was ensured using purposive random sampling, which ensured that the sample population was representative of the target population of SMMEs in the eThekweni Metropolitan area (Abutabenjeh and Jaradat 2018). Dependability was ensured through clear and concise data collection methods, and confirmability was achieved by using supervisor reviews and comments to validate the study's findings (Abutabenjeh and Jaradat 2018).

In conclusion, the proposed quantitative study on the effectiveness of QAM practices on customer retention and satisfaction was conducted using a validated survey questionnaire, pre-tests, data triangulation, respondent validation, prolonged engagement, purposive random sampling, clear data collection methods, and an external auditor. These measures ensured the validity, reliability, and trustworthiness of the study, thus increasing the credibility of the results obtained.

3.12 Delimitations and limitations of the study.

3.12.1 Delimitations of the study.

According to Robson (2011), geographic delimitation refers to the specific location or region where the study will be conducted. In this instance, the study was restricted to Durban's geographic area, which was essential to maintain the study's manageability within the specified time and resource limits. Additionally, Creswell and Creswell (2017) point out that delimitations also help define the study's population and sample size. By limiting the study to a specific geographic area, the researchers can ensure that the sample size is feasible and representative of the population of interest.

3.12.2 Limitations.

One of the limitations of this study was the potential of sampling bias, as the sample was drawn from a single geographic location, namely Durban (eThekweni Municipality). This limited the generalisability of the findings to other settings or populations. As noted by Creswell and Creswell (2017), the use of convenience sampling and small sample size can also limit the study's external validity, as it may not be representative of the larger population. Additionally, relying on self-reported data may lead to issues with social desirability bias, where respondents may give answers they believe to be more socially acceptable or desirable. As noted by Rahi (2017), longitudinal studies can more effectively establish causal relationships and identify trends over time. However, due to time constraints and resources, a longitudinal design was not feasible for this study.

Moreover, the research was restricted to the utilisation of survey questionnaires as the main method of collecting data. This limited the ability to gather in-depth and nuanced data on the experiences of SMMEs and the factors influencing their success or failure. As Abutabenjeh and Jaradat (2018) noted, using multiple data collection methods, such as interviews or focus groups, can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the research topic.

Finally, the research was constrained by the possibility of inaccuracies in measurement, as the accuracy and consistency of the survey questions were affected by issues such as response bias or the wording of questions. Nevertheless, efforts were made to reduce measurement inaccuracies by utilising validated and reliable survey tools and carrying out a trial run of the questionnaire before distributing it to the initial participants. Overall, while these limitations were acknowledged, they should not detract from the value of the

study in contributing to the existing body of knowledge on the factors influencing the success or failure of SMMEs in Durban, considering data was collected to saturation.

3.13 Ethical considerations.

The researcher took into cognisance various ethical principles in conducting this research, as highlighted below. The participants were informed of the objectives of the research to make them aware of what they were agreeing to. Consent forms were furnished electronically via email and in person to participants who agreed to be part of the study. Participants were debriefed on the nature of the study and assured that their participation was on a voluntary basis with no form of coercion. Bribe was not even used to acquire participants for the study and the participants were also informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any given time.

The participants were informed of the protection of their identity as participation was done anonymously. Transcribed data was identified with codes, and the questionnaires were only revealed by the researcher and the supervisor. Any other information which might compromise the participants' anonymity was not used in the study. Before beginning the study, the researcher received approval from the appropriate Research Ethics Committee. This assured that all ethical principles would be followed.

3.14 Summary of the chapter.

The research methodology that guided this study was discussed in this chapter. The study adopted the positivist paradigm, and it took an exploratory stance. The quantitative method approach was adopted, and 385 SMMEs were identified to be part of the study using the Raosoft sample size calculation, which was based on a margin of error of +/- 5% with a 95% confidence level. The participants were randomly selected, and a link was made available to them through their emails and direct phone calls for the survey questionnaire, which was put online. The data was analysed through the SPSS software package and all steps to ensure the information was reliable, valid and trustworthy followed. The chapter ended with unveiling the ethical considerations which were taken into cognisance. The next chapter looks at the presentation of findings.

CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

4.1 Introduction.

The previous chapter presented the research methodology that guided the study at hand. This chapter presents, interprets, and analyses the findings of the study. The arrangement of research findings is in the sequence described below. The chapter sets off by briefly explaining procedures followed for analysing quantitative data and qualitative data. The chapter went further to present the response rates for all the targeted populations and thereafter, presented the structure adopted in the formulation of research instruments.

4.2 Response rate for the targeted population

There are 2400 registered SMMEs under the Durban Chamber of Commerce in Ethekewini (Moyo 2019) using the Raosoft sample size calculation, a sample size for this study of 332 SMMEs was arrived at based on the margin of error of +/- 5% with a 95% confidence level. The questionnaire was the data collection instrument and was distributed to 332 respondents, only 150 responded which yielded to 45.18% response rate. The usable questionnaires were 149 respondents provided responses, which account for about 44.88%. A response rate of around 44.88% is generally regarded as acceptable for appropriately conducted social science research. Fincham (2008) justifies that a response rate between 30-60% can be usually held as acceptable; this is particularly true when the design of the research, procedures for sampling, and methods for continuing to try to obtain respondents are good.

Procedure followed for analysing quantitative data

The data collected and entered into IBM SPSS Version 29 are several questionnaires with a total of 149 respondents to undergo further analysis. Data cleaning is executed first to aid in the detection of some apparent error or incongruity. To this end, the procedure employed entailed calculating both central tendencies and dispersion measures. Descriptive summaries of different sets of data first entailed the computation for frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations. Inferential statistics for this research include t-tests and chi-square tests to discover whether there are significant

differences and relationships in between the variables. Further, the regression analyses were conducted to further determine how such independent variables could impact each of the dependent variables.

4.3 Demographic characteristics.

The demographics of the respondents provide a foundation for analyzing the survey results, highlighting variations across gender, age, work experience, and educational levels. This structured demographic profile allows for targeted insights and interpretations specific to the SMMEs within the Durban Chamber of Commerce.

4.3.1 Gender.

Table 4.1 provides the gender distribution of the respondents.

Table 4.1 Gender distribution of respondents N=149

		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	80	53.7
	Female	69	46.3
	Total	149	100.0

The results revealed that 80 individuals, or 53.7% of the total, identified as male. On the other hand, 69 participants, making up 46.3% of the total, identified as female.

4.3.2 Age group.

The age group distribution of the respondents is shown in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2 Age distribution of the respondents. N=149

		Frequency	Percent
Age	Under 30 years	25	16.8
	31-35 years	22	14.8
	36-40 years	35	23.5
	41-50 years	32	21.5
	51-60 years	27	18.1
	More than 60 years	8	5.4
	Total	149	100.0

Most respondents fall within the age categories of 36-40 years (23.5%) and 41-50 years (21.5%), representing a significant proportion of the total sample. Additionally,

respondents under 30 years old account for 16.8% of the total, while those in the age range of 31-35 years constitute 14.8%. The study also includes respondents aged 51-60 years (18.1%) and more than 60 years (5.4%).

4.3.3 Work experience.

Table 4.3 shows the working experience of the respondents. The data revealed that most respondents, constituting 48.3% of the total, reported having worked for a duration of 5 to 9 years. Following closely, 24.2% of respondents indicated having less than 4 years of professional experience. A notable portion, 18.8%, falls within the range of 10 to 19 years of working experience. Respondents with over 20 years of experience make up 8.7% of the total.

Table 4.3 Years of working experience **N=149**

		Frequency	Percent
Working Experience	Less than 4 years	36	24.2
	5 to 9 years	72	48.3
	10 to 19 years	28	18.8
	Over 20 years	13	8.7
	Total	149	100.0

4.3.4 Level of education.

The level of educational attainment of the surveyed respondents is given in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4 Respondents level of educational attainment **N=149**

		Frequency	Percent
level	No formal education	18	12,1
	Diploma	36	24,2
	Undergraduate degree	27	18,1
	Higher certificate	20	13,4
	High School	20	13,4
	Postgraduate degree	28	18,8
	Total	149	100,0

The data revealed that the largest proportion, accounting for 24.2% of the total, holds a diploma, followed closely by those with postgraduate degrees at 18.8%. Respondents with undergraduate degrees constitute 18.1% of the total, reflecting a substantial presence of individuals with higher academic achievements. Furthermore, 13.4% of respondents reported having completed their education at the high school level or with a higher certificate. Notably, 12.1% of respondents indicated no formal education.

4.4 Quality administration management (QAM).

This section details questions related to quality administration management.

4.4.1 Impact of quality administration management on customer retention and satisfaction.

Table 4.5 Awareness of the impact of quality administration management on customer retention and satisfaction N=149

		Frequency	Percent
Are you aware of the impact of Quality Administration management on customer retention and satisfaction?	No	16	10,7
	Yes	133	89,3
	Total	149	100,0

Table 4.5 shows the number of respondents who are aware of the impact of QAM on customer retention and satisfaction. The data reflects a strong awareness among respondents regarding the impact of QAM on customer retention and satisfaction. A significant majority, comprising 89.3% of the total, affirmed their awareness of this impact. This positive acknowledgement underscores the recognition among respondents of the crucial role that effective QAM plays in influencing customer retention and satisfaction. On the other hand, a smaller proportion, 10.7%, indicated a lack of awareness on this matter. While this represents a minority within the sample, it could be an area of interest for further investigation or targeted communication to enhance understanding.

4.4.2 Practices of quality administration management.

Table 4.6 Organisation practising quality administration management.

N=149

		Frequency	Percent
Does Your Company/organisation practice Quality Administration Management?	No	19	12,8
	Yes	130	87,2
	Total	149	100,0

Table 4.6 shows the number of respondents to the company/organisation that practices QAM. The data indicates a predominant inclination towards the implementation of QAM, with 87.2% of respondents affirming that their respective companies or organisations do practice it. On the contrary, a smaller proportion, constituting 12.8% of the total, reported that their companies or organisations do not currently engage in QAM practices. This suggests that while the majority acknowledges and incorporates quality administration principles into their operations, there is still a noteworthy minority without such practices.

4.5 Reliability of the instrument.

Table 4.7 Reliability of the research instrument

Constructs	Number of items	Cronbach's alpha
Customer retention	6	0.951
Customer satisfaction	4	0.933
Continuous improvement	5	0.946
Implementation of quality administrative management	6	0.949
Total	21	0.979

Before presenting the empirical findings from the study, this section deliberately focused on the reliability of the study instrument. Reliability and validity of research are the two prominent aspects of the research study. The reliability of the various constructs was

assessed to measure different aspects related to the subject under investigation. The reliability was calculated by taking together related items measuring similar constructs. As shown in Table 4.7, the reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha, a measure of internal consistency. The results demonstrate a high level of reliability for each construct, indicating the consistency and accuracy of the measurement.

Customer retention, which includes 6 elements, showed strong internal reliability with a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.951. This indicates a strong level of dependability in assessing factors linked to customer retention in the research. The customer satisfaction construct showed strong internal reliability, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.933. The results indicate that the components of this concept together offer a dependable assessment of customer contentment. The CI construct, made up of 5 items, showed a high level of internal consistency, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.946. This indicates that the components of this framework consistently assess different aspects of CI. The quality of administrative management was assessed with 6 items in the construct implementation. This structure showed strong internal consistency with a Cronbach's alpha score of 0.949. This shows a trustworthy assessment of factors connected to the execution of effective administrative management practices.

In total, the combined Cronbach's alpha for all 21 items was extremely high at 0.979. This shows a general high degree of internal consistency and trustworthiness for the entire measuring tool. These results highlight the trustworthiness and uniformity of the measurement instruments utilised in the investigation, bolstering trust in the accuracy of the gathered data for examining and making inferences about customer retention, customer satisfaction, CI, and quality administrative management implementation.

4.6 Empirical findings .

This section details the results of the empirical findings of the research study. A one-sample t-test was conducted in order to assess whether there was notable concordance/discordance with each item assessing the related concepts. The average agreement score is compared to a central score of '3' to assess if there is a significant difference from '3'. Values below 3 indicated agreement, while values above 3 indicated disagreement.

4.6.1 Customer retention.

Table 4.8 The mean score on statements measuring customer retention.

Customer retention		Mean	Standard deviation	t	df	p-value
Acknowledge Good Customer Service	CR1	1,94	,887	26,690	148	<.001
Often Recommend your organisation	CR2	2,01	,826	29,653	148	<.001
Share Information About your organisation	CR3	1,97	,870	27,700	148	<.001
Volunteer as a Spokesperson for your organisation	CR4	2,08	,934	27,199	148	<.001
Value for Money	CR5	2,05	,943	26,588	148	<.001
Rarely Dissatisfied with Services	CR6	1,94	,887	26,690	148	<.001

Table 4.8 shows the analysis of customer retention. The data was subjected to a t-test, comparing the means of different aspects of customer response. The results indicate statistically significant differences, suggesting that these factors play a crucial role in influencing customer retention. In terms of acknowledging good customer service (CR1), the mean score for acknowledging good customer service is 1.94, with a standard deviation of 0.887. The t-test yielded a highly significant result ($t = 26.690$, $df = 148$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that customers who acknowledge good customer service are likely to

contribute significantly to customer retention. The results show that customers who often recommend the organisation have a mean score of 2.01, with a standard deviation of 0.826. The t-test result ($t = 29.653$, $df = 148$, $p < 0.001$) is highly significant, emphasising the strong relationship between recommending the organisation and enhanced customer retention.

The mean score for sharing information about the organisation is 1.97, with a standard deviation of 0.870. The t-test result ($t = 27.700$, $df = 148$, $p < 0.001$) is highly significant, indicating that customers who actively share information contribute significantly to customer retention. Customers willing to volunteer as spokespeople for the organisation have a mean score of 2.08, with a standard deviation of 0.934. The t-test result ($t = 27.199$, $df = 148$, $p < 0.001$) is highly significant, highlighting the substantial impact of such volunteering on customer retention.

In terms of value for money (CR5), the mean score for perceived value for money is 2.05, with a standard deviation of 0.943. The t-test result ($t = 26.588$, $df = 148$, $p < 0.001$) is highly significant, indicating that customers perceiving good value for money significantly contribute to customer retention. Furthermore, the results show that customers who rarely experience dissatisfaction with services have a mean score of 1.94, with a standard deviation of 0.887. The t-test result ($t = 26.690$, $df = 148$, $p < 0.001$) is highly significant, suggesting a strong association between satisfaction and customer retention.

In summary, the statistical analyses affirm the importance of these customer-related factors in influencing customer retention.

Figure 4.1 further illustrates the level of agreement on customer retention. The results indicate that a substantial portion of respondents, 82.5% (31.5% 'SA' and 51% 'A'), expressed positive sentiments, acknowledging good customer service. Conversely, only 15.2% indicated a neutral or negative stance. Most respondents, totalling 83.9% (23.5% 'SA' and 60.4% 'A'), reported that they often recommend the organisation. This positive inclination is a promising indicator of customer satisfaction and loyalty. Similarly, 84.5% (26.8% 'SA' and 57.7% 'A') of respondents indicated a positive tendency to share information about the organisation. This suggests a willingness to engage in positive word-of-mouth promotion.

Over three-quarters of respondents, 77.8% (25.5% 'SA' and 52.3% 'A'), showed a positive inclination towards volunteering as a spokesperson for the organisation. This

indicates a potential pool of advocates willing to promote the organisation actively. A significant majority, 79.1% (26.8% 'SA' and 52.3% 'A'), expressed positive sentiments regarding the value for money provided by the organisation. This is a key aspect influencing customer satisfaction. The data reveals that 79.1% (26.8% 'SA' and 52.3% 'A') of respondents rarely experience dissatisfaction with the services provided by the organisation. This reaffirms a high level of satisfaction among the customer base.

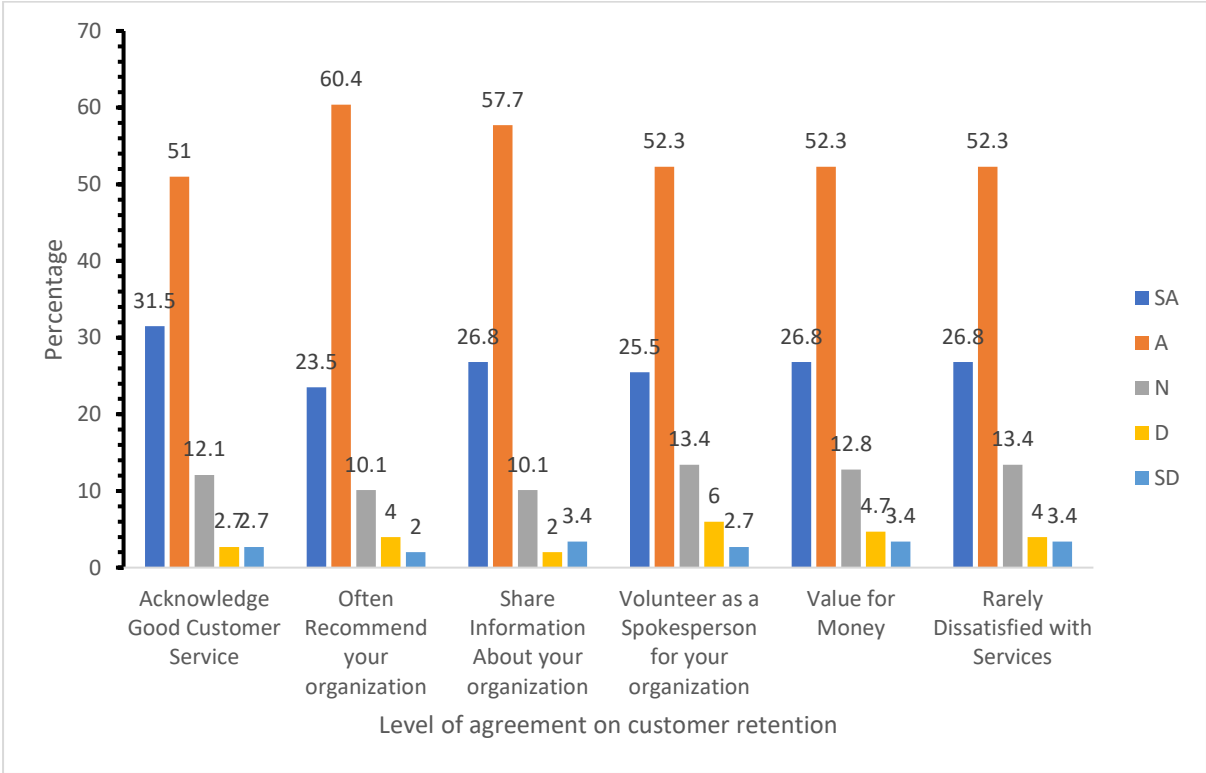


Figure 4.1 Level of agreement on statements measuring customer retention

Table 4.9 shows the overall evidence of customer retention in the organisation. The data reveals a mean customer retention score of 2.02, with a standard deviation of 0.800, calculated from responses provided by 149 surveyed respondents. In order to assess the statistical significance of this mean, a t-test was conducted, yielding a highly significant result ($t = 30.756$, $df = 148$, $p < 0.001$). The statistically significant t-value, coupled with a very low p-value, indicates that the observed mean customer retention score is unlikely to have occurred by chance. This implies a robust association between the factors influencing customer retention within the studied context. The higher lower mean score suggests a generally positive perception of customer retention, while the low standard deviation indicates a relatively consistent agreement among respondents.

In summary, the statistical analysis affirms that the observed mean customer retention score is not a random occurrence and provides strong evidence for the effectiveness of factors contributing to customer retention within the context of the study.

Table 4.9 Overall evidence of customer retention

Customer retention	n	Mean	Standard deviation	t	D f	p-value
CR	149	2.02	0.800	30.756	148	p<0.001

4.6.2 Customer satisfaction.

This section details the statements measuring customer satisfaction. The mean value, standard deviation, and t-test are given in Table 4.10. Quality management strategies encourage consumer loyalty to the firm (CS1): The mean satisfaction score for this aspect is 1.91, with a standard deviation of 0.888. A t-test yielded a highly significant result ($t = 26.203$, $df = 148$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that customers are significantly satisfied with the impact of quality management strategies on fostering consumer loyalty.

Quality administration management methods encourage client retention (CS2): For this aspect, the mean satisfaction score is 2.00, with a standard deviation of 0.900. The t-test result is highly significant ($t = 27.112$, $df = 148$, $p < 0.001$), emphasising the strong satisfaction customers derive from QAM methods in encouraging client retention.

Teamwork is promoted through quality administrative management techniques (CS3): The mean satisfaction score for this aspect is 1.91, with a standard deviation of 0.880. The t-test result is highly significant ($t = 26.430$, $df = 148$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that customers express significant satisfaction with the promotion of teamwork through QAM techniques.

Job satisfaction is a result of QAM methods (CS4): The mean satisfaction score for this aspect is 1.91, with a standard deviation of 0.925. The t-test result is highly significant (t

= 25.147, df = 148, $p < 0.001$), signalling strong customer satisfaction with the impact of QAM methods on job satisfaction.

In summary, the statistical analyses confirm that customers are highly satisfied with the perceived impact of quality management strategies on consumer loyalty, client retention, teamwork promotion, and job satisfaction. The consistently low p-values suggest that these results are unlikely to occur by chance, strengthening the validity of the findings. The organisation can take these positive customer satisfaction scores as indicators of the effectiveness of its quality management strategies in meeting customer expectations and fostering positive perceptions.

Table 4.10 Mean score for statements measuring customer satisfaction.

Customer satisfaction		Mean	Standard deviation	t	df	p-value
Quality management strategies encourage consumer loyalty to the firm.	C S 1	1,91	,888	26,2 03	14 8	<.001
Quality administration management methods encourage client retention.	C S 2	2,00	,900	27,1 12	14 8	<.001
Teamwork is promoted through quality administrative management techniques.	C S 3	1,91	,880	26,4 30	14 8	<.001
Job satisfaction is a result of quality administration management methods.	C S 4	1,91	,925	25,1 47	14 8	<.001

Figure 4.2 further shows the level of agreement on the statements measuring customer satisfaction. A significant proportion of respondents, totalling 87.2% (31.5% 'Strongly Agree' and 55.7% 'Agree'), express a positive sentiment towards the idea that quality management strategies play a pivotal role in encouraging consumer loyalty to the firm. This indicates a widespread belief among participants that effective quality management contributes significantly to fostering customer loyalty. A majority of respondents,

comprising 82.5% (27.5% 'Strongly Agree' and 55% 'Agree'), share the view that QAM methods positively influence client retention. This underscores the perception that implementing robust QAM practices is associated with increased client retention. The data suggests a positive perspective on the relationship between QAM techniques and teamwork, with 84.6% (32.9% 'Strongly Agree' and 51.7% 'Agree') of respondents supporting this notion. This indicates a prevailing belief that QAM fosters a collaborative team environment.

A significant majority of respondents, accounting for 84.6% (34.9% 'Strongly Agree' and 49.7% 'Agree'), believe that job satisfaction is a direct outcome of implementing QAM methods. This highlights the perceived positive impact of QAM on employee satisfaction within the organisation.

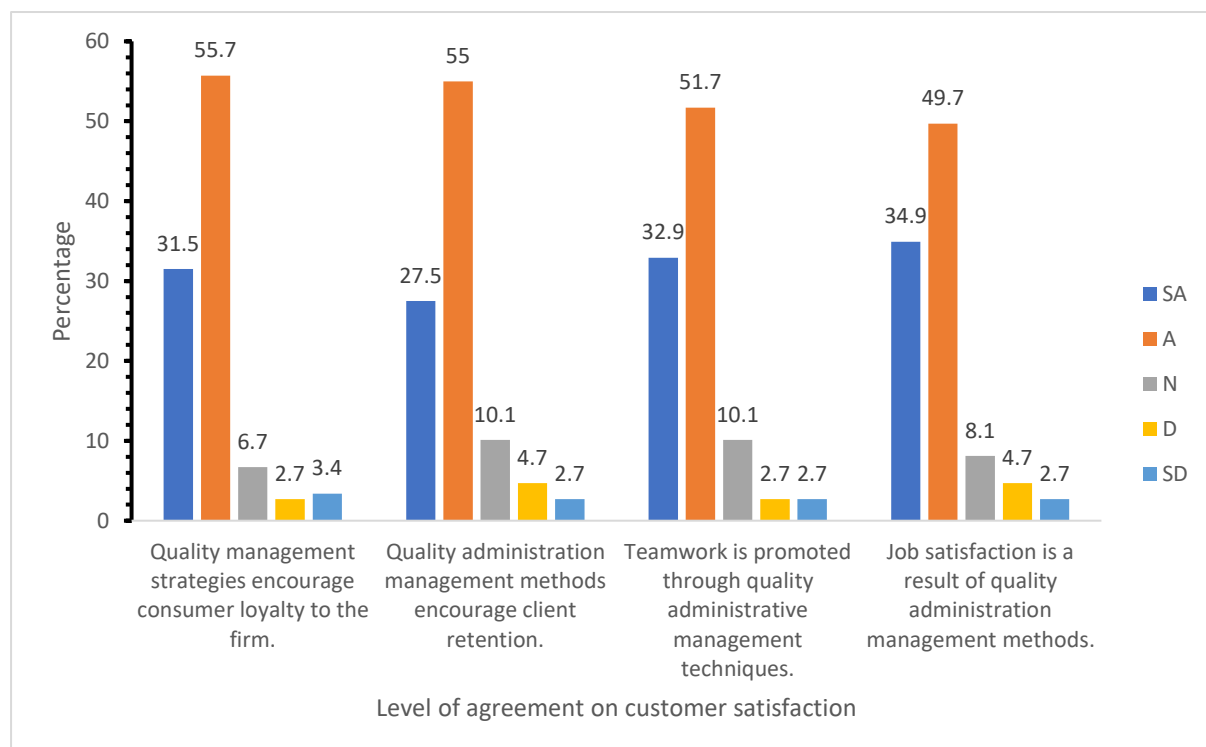


Figure 4.2: Level of agreement on customer satisfaction.

The composite analysis of customer satisfaction, based on responses from 149 surveyed respondents, reveals a mean satisfaction score of 1.93, with a standard deviation of 0.818. In order to assess the statistical significance of this mean score, a t-test was conducted, resulting in a highly significant finding ($t = 28.796$, $df = 148$, $p < 0.001$). The substantial t-value and very low p-value suggest that the observed mean customer satisfaction score is highly unlikely to be a result of random chance. The low standard deviation further indicates a relatively consistent agreement among participants

regarding their satisfaction with the product, service, or experience under consideration. In summary, the statistical analysis supports the conclusion that customers express a high level of satisfaction.

Table 4.11 Overall evidence of customer satisfaction among the respondents

Customer satisfaction	n	Mean	Standard deviation	t	D f	p-value
CS	149	1.93	0.818	28.796	148	p<0.001

4.6.3 Continuous improvement (CI).

The statements in Table 4.12 relate to the influence of CI on customer retention and satisfaction. With regards to the statement that CI results in more engaged staff, who are more likely to retain and satisfy customers (CI1), the mean satisfaction score for this aspect is 1.87, with a standard deviation of 0.864. A t-test yielded a highly significant result ($t = 26.443$, $df = 148$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that respondents strongly believe CI leads to more engaged staff, contributing to increased customer retention and satisfaction.

In terms of the statement, CI results in improved customer service, which ensures client retention and satisfaction (CI2). The mean satisfaction score is 1.89, with a standard deviation of 0.839. The t-test result is highly significant ($t = 27.522$, $df = 148$, $p < 0.001$), emphasising the strong belief that CI initiatives result in improved customer service, thereby ensuring client retention and satisfaction.

Regarding the statement that a culture of CI has been demonstrated to increase staff engagement and decrease attrition rates, resulting in customer retention and satisfaction (CI3), the mean satisfaction score for this aspect is 1.91, with a standard deviation of 0.915. The t-test result is highly significant ($t = 25.522$, $df = 148$, $p < 0.001$), suggesting a strong consensus among respondents that a culture of CI positively impacts staff engagement, reduces attrition rates, and contributes to customer retention and satisfaction.

Regarding the statement, CI benefits an organisation by providing it with the people, procedures, and technologies it requires to deliver services in ways it was before incapable of doing (CI4): The mean satisfaction score for this aspect is 1.90, with a standard deviation of 0.883. The t-test result is highly significant ($t = 26.245$, $df = 148$, $p < 0.001$), indicating a widespread belief that CI provides essential resources, enabling organisations to deliver services in innovative and improved ways.

Regarding the statement that CI allows the business to offer a greater number of clients and grow its services beyond its current capabilities (CI5), The mean satisfaction score for this aspect is 1.86, with a standard deviation of 0.915. The t-test result is highly significant ($t = 24.788$, $df = 148$, $p < 0.001$), demonstrating a strong belief that continuous improvement enables businesses to expand their services and cater to a larger clientele.

In summary, the statistical analyses affirm that respondents express a high level of satisfaction with the perceived impact of CI on staff engagement, customer service improvement, staff retention, resource provision, and overall organisational growth. The consistently low p-values suggest that these results are unlikely to occur by chance, strengthening the validity of the findings.

Table 4.12 Mean score for statements measuring continuous improvement.

Continuous improvement		Mean	Standard deviation	t	df	p-value
Continuous improvement results in more engaged staff, who are more likely to retain and satisfy customers.	CI1	1,87	,864	26,443	148	<.001
Continuous improvement results in improved customer service, which ensures client retention and satisfaction.	CI2	1,89	,839	27,522	148	<.001
A culture of continuous improvement has been demonstrated to increase staff engagement and decrease attrition rates, resulting in customer retention and satisfaction.	CI3	1,91	,915	25,522	148	<.001
Continuous improvement benefits an organisation by providing it with the people, procedures, and technologies it requires to deliver services in ways it was before incapable of doing.	CI4	1,90	,883	26,245	148	<.001
Continuous improvement allows the business to offer a greater number of clients and grow its services beyond its current capabilities.	CI5	1,86	,915	24,788	148	

Figure 4.3 further shows the level of agreement on statements measuring CI. The results show that a significant majority of respondents, comprising 87.3% (33.6% 'Strongly Agree' and 53.7% 'Agree'), express a positive sentiment towards the idea that CI initiatives lead to more engaged staff.

This engagement, in turn, is believed to contribute to higher customer retention and satisfaction. This finding emphasises the perceived link between staff engagement, customer retention, and satisfaction. Similarly, a substantial portion of respondents, totalling 85.2% (32.2% 'Strongly Agree' and 53% 'Agree'), believe that CI efforts result in improved customer service. This improvement is seen as a key factor in ensuring client retention and satisfaction, reinforcing the connection between CI and positive customer outcomes. A significant majority, 83.9% (34.2% 'Strongly Agree' and 49.7% 'Agree'), perceive that a culture of CI has a demonstrated impact on increasing staff engagement and reducing attrition rates. This is seen as a crucial factor leading to customer retention and satisfaction.

Most respondents, 87.2% (32.2% 'Strongly Agree' and 55% 'Agree'), acknowledge the benefits of CI in providing organisations with the necessary resources to deliver services in more effective ways. This is perceived as contributing to enhanced customer satisfaction. The highest level of agreement is observed in this statement, with 86.6% (36.9% 'Strongly Agree' and 49.7% 'Agree') of respondents indicating that CI enables businesses to expand their services and cater to a larger clientele. This expansion is seen as a positive outcome leading to increased customer satisfaction.

In summary, the findings from these responses highlight a strong belief among respondents in the positive impact of CI on staff engagement, customer service improvement, staff retention, and overall organisational growth. These perceptions underscore the importance of a CI culture in achieving positive outcomes for both the staff and customers.

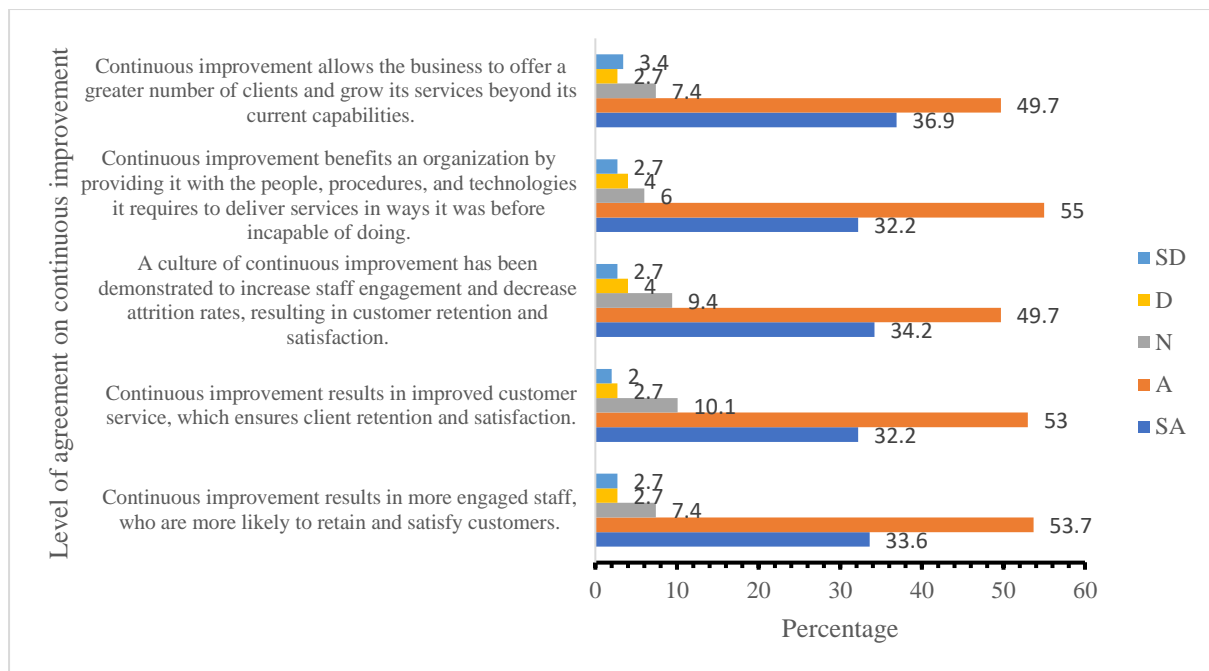


Figure 4.3 Level of agreement on continuous improvement (CI)

The composite analysis of CI based on responses from 149 respondents is further shown in Table 4.13. The data reveals a mean satisfaction score of 1.89, with a standard deviation of 0.801. The substantial t-value and very low p-value indicate that the observed mean score for CI is highly unlikely to be a result of random chance. Instead, it suggests a robust and statistically significant level of satisfaction among the respondents. The low standard deviation further indicates a relatively consistent agreement among participants regarding their satisfaction with CI efforts. In summary, the statistical analysis supports the conclusion that respondents express a high level of satisfaction with the perceived impact of CI initiatives.

Table 4.13 Overall evidence in the level of agreement of continuous improvement among the respondents

Continuous improvement	n	Mean	Standard deviation	t	D f	p-value
C1	149	1.89	0.801	28.744	148	p<0.001

4.6.4 Implementation of quality administration management.

Table 4.14 details the perception of the surveyed respondents on the implementation of QAM. The mean score, standard deviation, and t-test values are presented below:

In the organisation, there is evidence of high management participation in quality problems (QAM1).” The mean satisfaction score for this aspect is 1.96, with a standard deviation of 0.861. A t-test yielded a highly significant result ($t = 27.778$, $df = 148$, $p < 0.001$). This indicates a strong consensus among respondents that there is compelling evidence of high management participation in addressing quality problems within the organisation.

The top management is the driving force behind quality management initiatives (QAM2). For this aspect, the mean satisfaction score is 2.05, with a standard deviation of 0.918. The t-test result is highly significant ($t = 27.224$, $df = 148$, $p < 0.001$), emphasising the belief that top management serves as the driving force behind quality management initiatives, contributing significantly to the organisation’s commitment to quality.

The management offers all the resources required for high-quality programming (QAM3). The mean satisfaction score for this aspect is 2.05, with a standard deviation of 0.943. The t-test result is highly significant ($t = 26.588$, $df = 148$, $p < 0.001$), indicating a strong consensus among respondents that management provides all necessary resources for high-quality programming, underscoring the commitment to supporting quality initiatives.

The senior management is involved” in the quality management initiatives (QAM4): The mean satisfaction score for this aspect is 1.96, with a standard deviation of 0.884. The t-test result is highly significant ($t = 27.049$, $df = 148$, $p < 0.001$), suggesting a strong belief that senior management actively participates in quality management initiatives, contributing significantly to the organisation’s overall quality efforts.

All stages and levels of quality management processes are overseen by senior management (QAM5). The mean satisfaction score for this aspect is 2.03, with a standard deviation of 0.965. The t-test result indicates a highly significant finding ($t = 25.632$, $df = 148$, $p < 0.001$), reinforcing the perception that senior management has a comprehensive oversight role in all stages and levels of quality management processes.

In the organisation, strict quality management practices are used (QAM6). The mean satisfaction score for this aspect is 2.03, with a standard deviation of 0.986. The t-test result is highly significant ($t = 25.091$, $df = 148$, $p < 0.001$), indicating a strong consensus that strict quality management practices are implemented within the organisation.

In summary, the statistical analyses confirm a high level of satisfaction among respondents regarding the implementation of quality administration management practices. The consistently low p-values across all aspects suggest that these results are unlikely to occur by chance, providing robust evidence for the organisation's commitment to quality management practices at various levels.

Table 4.14 Mean score for statements measuring the implementation of quality administration management practices.

Implementation of quality administration management		Mean	Standard deviation	t	df	p-value
In the organisation, there is evidence of high management participation in quality problems.	QAM1	1,96	,861	27,778	148	<.001
The top management is the driving force behind quality management initiatives.	QAM2	2,05	,918	27,224	148	<.001
The management offers all of the resources required for high-quality programming.	QAM3	2,05	,943	26,588	148	<.001
The senior management is involved in quality management initiatives.	QAM4	1,96	,884	27,049	148	<.001
All stages and levels of quality management processes are overseen by senior management.	QAM5	2,03	,965	25,632	148	
In the organisation, strict quality management practices are used.	QAM6	2,03	,986	25,091	148	

Figure 4.4 further provides the level of agreement on the respondents' perception of the implementation of QAM practices. In the organisation, there is evidence of high management participation in quality problems (QAM1): A significant majority of respondents, totalling 84.6% (28.2% "Strongly Agree" and 56.4% "Agree"), indicate a positive perception regarding the evidence of high management participation in addressing quality problems. This suggests that there is a widespread belief that management is actively involved in resolving quality issues within the organisation.

The top management is the driving force behind quality management initiatives (QAM2): A substantial portion of respondents, comprising 80.6% (26.2% "Strongly Agree" and 54.4% "Agree"), expressed the belief that top management plays a crucial role as the driving force behind quality management initiatives. This reinforces the idea that top management is seen as a key influencer in shaping the organisation's quality management efforts.

The management offers all the resources required for high-quality programming (QAM3): A significant majority, 78.8% (26.8% "Strongly Agree" and 52.3% "Agree"), believe that management provides all the necessary resources for high-quality programming. This indicates a positive perception that the organisation's management is committed to supporting quality initiatives with the required resources.

The senior management is involved in the quality management initiatives (QAM4): A substantial majority of respondents, comprising 84.3% (28.9% "Strongly Agree" and 56.4% "Agree"), believe that senior management is actively involved in quality management initiatives. This suggests a prevailing positive sentiment regarding the active participation of senior management in quality-related activities.

All stages and levels of quality management processes are overseen by senior management (QAM5): The data indicates that 83.2% (27.5% "Strongly Agree" and 55.7% "Agree") of respondents perceive that senior management oversees all stages and levels of quality management processes. This reinforces the belief that senior management has a comprehensive involvement in quality management practices.

In the organisation, strict quality management practices are used (QAM6): A significant majority of respondents, totalling 80.5% (30.2% "Strongly Agree" and 50.3% "Agree"), expressed the belief that strict quality management practices are

implemented in the organisation. This suggests a positive perception of the organisation's commitment to maintaining rigorous quality standards.

In summary, the findings from these responses indicate a high level of positive perception regarding management's involvement and commitment to quality management practices within the organisation. Respondents generally believe that management, at various levels, actively participates in quality-related initiatives, indicating a strong organisational commitment to maintaining and improving quality standards.

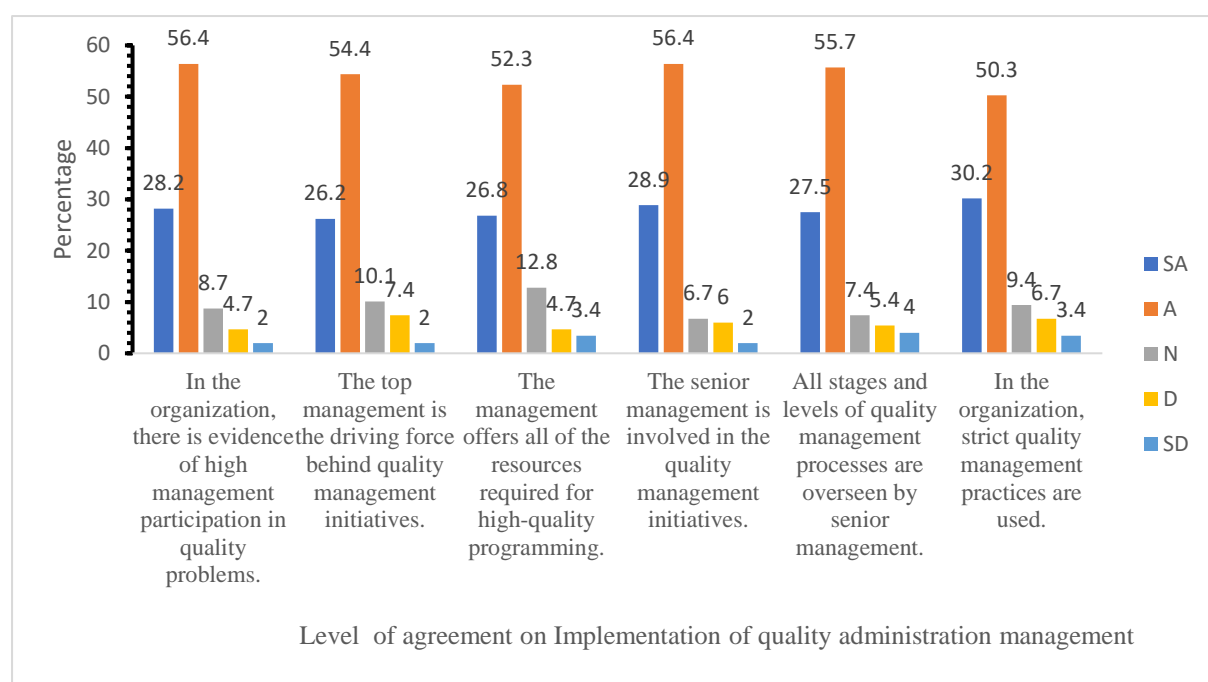


Figure 4.4 Level of agreement on the statements measuring the implementation of quality administration management practices.

Table 4.15 shows the overall perceptions regarding the implementation of quality administrative management. The results reveal a mean satisfaction score of 2.01, with a standard deviation of 0.830. In summary, the statistical analysis supports the conclusion that respondents express a high level of satisfaction with the perceived implementation of quality administrative management within the organisation.

Table 4.15 Overall evidence supporting the implementation of quality administrative management practices.

Implementation of quality administrative management	n	Mean	Standard deviation	t	Df	p-value
QAM	149	2.01	0.830	29.579	148	p<0.001

4.7 Factor analysis.

Table 4.16 KMO and Bartlett's Test for the respective constructs

Question	Section	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy	Bartlett's Test of Sphericity		
			Approx. Chi-Square	df	Sig.
2	Customer retention	0.922	828.874	15	<0.0001
3	Customer satisfaction	0.833	497.631	6	<0.001
4	Continuous improvement	0.862	743.036	10	<0.001
5	Implementation of quality	0.914	872.293	15	<0.001

Factor analysis was used to assess the items loaded in the same defined constructs. According to Watkins (2018), factor analysis can help identify common factors that explain the order and structure of measured variables. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) made use of the principal component analysis (PCA) extraction method and Varimax rotation on each of the 6 items measuring customer

retention, 4 items related to customer satisfaction, 5 items related to customer improvement, and 6 items related to the implementation of quality administrative management. Shrestha (2021) reveals that for the condition of EFA, the Kaiser-Meyer value should exceed the value of 0.5, and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity must be statistically significant. As shown in Table 4.16, across all question sections, the KMO Measures of Sampling Adequacy indicate a high to very high degree of adequacy in sampling for the variables. Additionally, the significant results of Bartlett's Test of Sphericity provide evidence that the variables within each section are related and suitable for further factor analysis. This suggests that the data is well-suited for exploring underlying factors and relationships within each question section.

4.7.1 Validating leadership style constructs.

Using the eigenvalues greater than one, the PCA for the extracted items for the customer retention constructs revealed a single factor dimension explaining 79.5% of the total variance (Table 4.17).

Table 4.17 Total variance explained for customer retention.

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	4,771	79,513	79,513	4,771	79,513	79,513
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.						

Table 4.18 presents the factor loading for the customer retention construct. Higher absolute values of loadings indicate a stronger contribution of the variable to the principal component. The loading for each item on the extracted component revealed a high factor loading, with the highest recorded for the item "Often Recommend your organisation". The loadings suggest that this underlying factor is strongly associated with positive customer perceptions, including acknowledgement of good customer service, willingness to recommend the organisation, sharing information, volunteering as a spokesperson, perceiving

value for money, and experiencing rare dissatisfaction with services. The fact that only one principal component was extracted suggests that there is a common underlying factor that influences all these variables. This component represents a unified pattern or dimension that captures shared variance among the customer retention variables.

Table 4.18 Extracted factor loading for customer retention variables.

	Component
	1
Acknowledge Good Customer Service	,872
Often Recommend your organisation	,927
Share Information About your organisation	,901
Volunteer as a Spokesperson for your organisation	,904
Value for Money	,851
Rarely Dissatisfied with Services	,892
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.	
a. 1 component extracted.	

4.7.2 Validating customer satisfaction constructs.

Using the eigenvalues greater than one, the PCA for the extracted items for customer satisfaction constructs revealed a single factor dimension explaining 82.9% of the total variance (Table 4.19).

Table 4.19 Total variance explained for customer satisfaction.

Comp onent	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	3,318	82,940	82,940	3,318	82,940	82,940
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.						

Table 4.20 shows the factor loading for construct measuring customer satisfaction. These loadings represent the strength and direction of the relationship between each variable and the extracted principal component. Higher absolute values of loadings indicate a stronger contribution of the variable to the principal component. All the items are loaded strongly into one component. This component represents a unified pattern or dimension that captures shared variance among the variables. The loadings suggest that this underlying factor is strongly associated with positive outcomes of customer satisfaction, including encouraging consumer loyalty, promoting client retention, fostering teamwork, and enhancing job satisfaction through quality management and administration methods.

Table 4.20 Extracted factor loading for customer satisfaction variables.

	Component
	1
Quality management strategies encourage consumer loyalty to the firm.	,940
Quality administration management methods encourage client retention.	,893
Teamwork is promoted through quality administrative management techniques.	,913
Job satisfaction is a result of quality administration management methods.	,896
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.	
a. 1 component extracted.	

4.7.3 Validating continuous improvement (CI) construct.

Using the eigenvalues greater than one, the PCA for the extracted items for the CI constructs revealed a three-factor dimension explaining 82.4% of the total variance (Table 4.21).

Table 4.21 Total variance explained for the continuous improvement.

Component	Initial Eigenvalues	Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings
-----------	---------------------	-------------------------------------

	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	4,120	82,394	82,394	4,120	82,394	82,394
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.						

Table 4.22 Extracted factor loading for continuous improvement variables.

	Component
	1
Continuous improvement results in more engaged staff, who are more likely to retain and satisfy customers.	,939
Continuous improvement results in improved customer service, which ensures client retention and satisfaction.	,910
A culture of continuous improvement has been demonstrated to increase staff engagement and decrease attrition rates, resulting in customer retention and satisfaction.	,881
Continuous improvement benefits an organisation by providing it with the people, procedures, and technologies it requires to deliver services in ways it was before incapable of doing.	,911
Continuous improvement allows the business to offer a greater number of clients and grow its services beyond its current capabilities.	,897
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.	
a. 1 component extracted.	

Table 4.22 shows the factor loading for the CI construct. These loadings represent the strength and direction of the relationship between each variable and the extracted principal component. Higher absolute values of loadings indicate a stronger contribution of the variable to the principal component. From the data, all the factors loaded strongly into a single component. This component represents a unified pattern or dimension that captures shared variance among the variables. The loadings suggest that this underlying factor is strongly associated with positive outcomes, including increased staff engagement, decreased attrition rates, improved customer service, and the ability to deliver services beyond previous capabilities through continuous improvement initiatives.

4.7.4 Validating implementation of quality administration management construct.

With the use of eigenvalues greater than one, the PCA for the extracted items for the implementation of quality administration constructs revealed a single factor dimension explaining 80.5% of the total variance (Table 4.23).

Table 4.23 Total variance explained for the implementation of quality administration management.

Comp onent	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	4,829	80,481	80,481	4,829	80,481	80,481
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.						

Table 4.24 shows the factor loading for the implementation of QAM. These loadings represent the strength and direction of the relationship between each variable and the extracted principal component. Higher absolute values of loadings indicate a stronger contribution of the variable to the principal component. The data indicates that all factors load strongly into a single component. This component represents a unified pattern or dimension that captures shared variance among the variables.

The loadings suggest that this underlying factor is strongly associated with positive management involvement in quality-related aspects, including active participation, resource provision, and oversight of quality management practices at different levels.

Table 4.24 Extracted factor loading for the implementation of quality administration management.

	Component
	1
In the organisation, there is evidence of high management participation in quality problems.	,888
The top management is the driving force behind quality management initiatives.	,886
The management offers all the resources required for high-quality programming.	,901
The senior management is involved in quality management initiatives.	,940
All stages and levels of quality management processes are overseen by senior management.	,873
In the organisation, strict quality management practices are used.	,894
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.	
a. 1 component extracted.	

4.8 Theoretical findings and hypothesis testing.

This section addresses the formulated research hypotheses. The impact of the independent variables (IV) on the dependent variable (DV) was tested using simple linear regression analysis for each hypothesis. Each hypothesis was thoroughly examined for normality of the residuals, linearity, and homoscedasticity to ensure they were not compromised.

4.8.1 Impact of continuous improvement on customer satisfaction.

Hypothesis 1 was stated as follows:

H0: Continuous quality improvement in the organisation has no impact on customer satisfaction.

H1: Continuous quality improvement in the organisation positively influences customer satisfaction.

As shown in Table 4.25, CI accounts for 72.8% ($R^2 = .728$) of the variance in CS, $F(1, 148) = 393.009$, $p < .001$. The data also shows that CI is a significant predictor of CS, and the relationship was positive ($\beta = .853$, $p < .001$). This means that as CI increases (agreement on continuous improvement in the organisation), CS (agreement that customer satisfaction) increases.

Table 4.25 The effect of continuous quality improvement on customer satisfaction

Hypothesis	DV	IV	R	R^2	F	df 1 ; df 2	p-value	B (regression coefficient)	t	p-value
H1	CS	CI	0.853	.728	393.009	1 ; 148	< .001	.853	19.824	< .001

4.8.2 Impact of the implementation of quality administration management on customer satisfaction.

Hypothesis 1 was stated as follows:

H0: There is no significant effect of the implementation of quality administration management on customer satisfaction.

H1: The implementation of quality administration management significantly influences customer satisfaction.

As shown in Table 4.26, QAM accounts for 62.4% ($R^2 = .624$) of the variance in CS, $F(1, 148) = 243.496$, $p < .001$. The data also shows that QAM is a significant predictor of CS, and the relationship was positive ($\beta = .790$, $p < .001$). This means that as QAM increases (agreement on the implementation of quality administration management), CS (agreement on customer satisfaction) increases.

Table 4.26 The effect of the implementation of quality administration management

Hypothesis	DV	IV	R	R^2	F	df 1 ; df 2	p-value	B (regression coefficient)	t	p-value
H2	CS	QAM	0.790	.624	243.496	1 ; 148	<.001	.790	15.604	<.001

4.8.3 Impact of customer satisfaction on customer retention.

Hypothesis 1 was stated as follows:

H0: Customer satisfaction has no significant impact on customer retention.

H1: Customer satisfaction significantly influences customer retention.

As shown in Table 4.27, CS accounts for 71.4% ($R^2 = .714$) of the variance in CR, $F(1, 148) = 367.370$, $p < .001$. The data also shows that CS is a significant predictor of CR, and the relationship was positive ($\beta = .845$, $p < .001$). This means that as CS increases (agreement on customer satisfaction), CR (agreement on customer retention) increases.

Table 4.27 The effect of customer satisfaction on customer retention

Hypothesis	DV	IV	R	R^2	F	df 1	p-value	B (regression coefficient)	t	p-value
------------	----	----	---	-------	---	------	---------	----------------------------	---	---------

						; d f 2		coefficient)		
H3	C R	C S	0.845	.714	367..370	1; 148	<.001	.845	19.167	<.001

4.9 Relationship between gender, race, and constructs.

Independent samples t-test was applied to test the difference between the demographic characteristics and the level of agreement on the extracted constructs (Customer retention, customer satisfaction, continuous improvement, implementation of quality administration management). No notable discrepancy was observed in any of the constructs measured based on gender, age group, and years of work experience. However, the ANOVA result indicates a notable disparity in the agreement level regarding customer retention within the company based on education levels ($P=0.018$). Respondents with undergraduate degrees (mean = 1.64) agree significantly more than any other groups.

Table 4.28 Relationship between demographic characteristics and the extracted constructs.

Demographics	Customer retention (CR)		Customer satisfaction (CS)		Continuous improvement (CI)		Implementation of quality administration management (QAM)	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Gender								
Male	2.08	0.72	1.98	0.69	1.95	0.72	2.09	0.75
Female	1.95	0.89	1.87	0.95	1.81	0.88	1.92	0.91
<i>t</i> value	0.975		0.762		1.055		1.292	
Sig.	0.332		0.448		0.293		0.198	
Age group								

Under 30 years	2.06	0.95	1.68	0.83	1.65	0.81	1.84	0.83
31-35 years	1.94	0.66	1.92	0.90	1.89	0.76	2.14	0.95
36-40 years	2.01	0.52	2.01	0.57	1.95	0.53	2.06	0.56
41-50 years	1.96	0.72	1.89	0.66	1.80	0.59	1.86	0.59
51-60 years	2.10	1.09	2.06	1.08	2.12	1.15	2.19	0.15
More than 60 years	2.04	1.02	2.06	1.08	1.93	1.09	2.00	1.05
F ratio	0.152		0.739		1.016		0.809	
Sig.	0.979		0.595		0.410		0.545	
Level of experience								
Less than 4 years	2.12	0.85	1.89	0.81	1.78	0.70	1.99	0.85
5 to 9 years	1.87	0.56	1.90	0.68	1.83	0.65	1.91	0.59
10 to 19 years	2.19	0.95	2.03	0.94	2.04	0.96	2.24	1.07
Over 20 years	2.22	1.27	2.04	1.25	2.20	1.30	2.13	1.25
F ratio	1.854		0.286		1.357		1.139	
Sig.	0.140		0.835		0.258		0.336	
Level of education								
No formal education	2.38	1.04	2.18	1.08	2.07	1.09	2.30	1.20
Diploma	1.94	0.59	1.79	0.57	1.82	0.53	2.06	0.67
Undergraduate degree	1.64	0.57	1.77	0.82	1.64	0.59	1.68	0.61
Higher certificate	1.98	0.66	1.99	0.70	1.87	0.70	1.95	0.70
High School	2.33	0.90	2.10	0.89	2.12	0.92	2.13	0.87
Postgraduate degree	2.04	0.93	1.94	0.93	1.95	1.00	2.05	0.93
F ratio	2.824		0.946		1.142		1.454	
Sig.	0.018		0.454		0.341		0.209	

4.10 Correlation among the constructs.

Table 4.29 depicts the Pearson correlation coefficients between four constructs: Customer Retention, Customer Satisfaction, Continuous Improvement, and Quality Administration. The Pearson correlation coefficient between Customer Retention and Customer Satisfaction is highly significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed) with a coefficient of 0.845. This indicates a strong positive correlation, suggesting that customer satisfaction also tends to increase as customer retention increases and vice versa. The correlation between Customer Retention and Continuous Improvement is also highly significant ($p < 0.01$), with a coefficient of 0.786. This suggests a robust positive correlation, indicating that as efforts in continuous improvement increase, there is a tendency for higher customer retention.

The correlation between Customer Retention and Quality Administration is highly significant ($p < 0.01$), with a coefficient of 0.771. This implies a strong positive correlation, indicating that as the implementation of quality administration practices increases, customer retention is likely to increase. The correlation between Customer Satisfaction and Continuous Improvement is highly significant ($p < 0.01$), with a coefficient of 0.853. This suggests a strong positive correlation, indicating that as efforts in continuous improvement increase, there is a tendency for higher customer satisfaction. The correlation between Customer Satisfaction and Quality Administration is highly significant ($p < 0.01$), with a coefficient of 0.790. This implies a robust positive correlation, indicating that as the implementation of quality administration practices increases, customer satisfaction is likely to increase.

The correlation between Continuous Improvement and Quality Administration is highly significant ($p < 0.01$), with a coefficient of 0.838. This suggests a strong positive correlation, indicating that as efforts in continuous improvement increase, there is a tendency for higher implementation of quality administration practices.

In summary, the correlation matrix reveals strong and significant positive correlations among all pairs of variables. This implies that organisations witnessing improvements in customer retention are likely to observe simultaneous improvements in customer satisfaction, continuous improvement efforts, and the implementation of quality administration practices.

Table 4.29 Pearson correlation showing association among the four constructs.
N=149

		Customer retention	Customer satisfaction	Continuous improvement	Quality administration
Customer retention	Pearson Correlation	1	,845**	,786**	,771**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<,001	<,001	<,001
	N	149	149	149	149
Customer satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	,845**	1	,853**	,790**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001		<,001	<,001
	N	149	149	149	149
Continuous improvement	Pearson Correlation	,786**	,853**	1	,838**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	<,001		<,001
	N	149	149	149	149
Quality administration	Pearson Correlation	,771**	,790**	,838**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	<,001	<,001	
	N	149	149	149	149
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).					

4.11 Conclusion.

The chapter presents the analysis and interpretation of the data gathered that sought to measure the effectiveness of QAM practices on customer retention and satisfaction. Both descriptive and inferential analysis using SPSS version 29 (IBM) was applied in the analysis of the data. The descriptive analysis reveals that most of the respondents were male, within 36-40 years old with about 5-9 years of working experience. The One-sample t-test shows that there was consensus in the respondents' agreement with the statements measuring customer retention, customer satisfaction, continuous improvement, and implementation of QAM practices. The Cronbach alpha test and the factor analysis both confirm the reliability and validity of each construct. The regression analysis suggests that the implementation of QAM positively influences customer satisfaction, which, in turn, significantly influences customer retention. The results are further supported by the Pearson correlation, which shows a significant association between the implementation of QAM practices on customer satisfaction on the one hand and customer retention on the other hand.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

5.1 Introduction.

This chapter discusses the results presented in the previous chapter in detail. The research objectives were used to summarise the important results. This will combine the statistical results in the previous chapter with the broader academic discourse on the QAMP of SMMEs and customer retention and satisfaction in the eThekweni Municipality. Thus, the chapter seeks to thread the statistical outcomes with theoretical insights and contemporary literature on customer satisfaction and retention. It also includes a discussion based on the findings to attempt to answer the following research questions:

1. How do quality administration management practices impact customer retention and satisfaction in SMMEs in the eThekweni Metropolitan area?
2. What is the role of employee training and development in enhancing the effectiveness of quality administration management practices and improving customer retention and satisfaction in SMMEs?
3. What are the internal and external factors that influence quality administration management practices in SMMEs in the eThekweni Metropolitan area?
4. Which factors contribute to and hinder customer retention and satisfaction in SMMEs in the eThekweni Metropolitan area, and how can quality administration management practices be effectively tailored to address these factors?

Therefore, a thematic discussion is presented to provide coherent and organised implications of the study results. It provides empirical substantiation to the theoretical discourse on the critical importance of quality management and customer relationship strategies in sustaining customer loyalty and driving retention by highlighting the (a) role of demographics in quality perception among SMMEs in eThekweni, (b) quality management and organisational leadership, (c) quality management's role in customer loyalty, (d) enhancing teamwork and employee satisfaction, (e) unified approach to customer retention, (f) continuous improvement as a catalyst for growth, (g) the critical role of customer satisfaction in driving customer retention, (h) educator's influence on customer retention perceptions, (i)

the interconnectedness of quality constructs. The alignment of survey results with theoretical insights underscores the necessity for SMMEs, especially in challenging environments such as the eThekweni Metropolitan area, to implement strategic quality management practices that meet but exceed customer expectations, facilitate a loyal customer base, and ensure long-term business sustainability. This will be concluded at the end of the chapter through a summary.

5.2 The quality perception among SMMEs in eThekweni.

The demographic characteristics of the study's respondents, including their gender, age, work experience, and education level, provide a rich backdrop for analysing the applicability and perception of quality management practices across diverse groups. It was relevant to understanding the knowledge of SMMEs on customer needs and shaping solid and strategic relationships to support business growth and sustainability. The literature suggests that demographic factors can significantly affect the perception and outcomes of quality management initiatives (Prahalad and Ramaswamy 2019). The results of this study reflect a broad demographic spectrum and imply a universal applicability of quality management principles, transcending demographic boundaries to encompass a wide array of organisational participants. It suggests that demographic factors do not limit the principles of QAMT and CRMT but rather have broad applicability that can cater to the nuances of different groups within the workforce. Such inclusivity is essential for facilitating an organisational culture that values and implements quality management practices effectively (Ndlazi *et al.* 2023; Nkwinika 2023).

The absence of significant differences in perceptions of quality constructs based on gender, age, and years of work experience, contrasted with the significant differences based on education, offers an intriguing insight into the demographics of quality perception. This is when the ANOVA test indicated a substantial variation in the agreement level on customer retention within the company based on education levels ($P=0.018$). Respondents with undergraduate degrees (mean = 1.64) agree significantly more than any other groups. This suggests that while personal characteristics such as age and gender may not significantly influence perceptions of quality and customer satisfaction, the level of education does.

These results pertain to the main goal of the research, but they indicate that the variance in educational attainment strongly influences how SMMEs are perceived in the eThekweni Municipality. This finding is pivotal for businesses, especially in crafting communication and engagement strategies that resonate with diverse customers. It implies a strategic imperative to consider educational diversity in customer engagement practices. It underscores the need for nuanced, educated-tailored communication that aligns with the varied levels of quality appreciation inherent in diverse customer segments. This will assist in holistically analysing other factors that may impact customer retention and satisfaction, which is one of the study's objectives.

5.3 Quality management and organisational leadership.

Nkwinika (2023) highlighted that the challenges SMMEs face, including limited business skills, access to financing, and inadequate management practices, provide a contextual backdrop. These could be posed against the study's results as part of data analysis. The awareness and practice of quality management principles among the study's respondents offer hope for addressing these challenges. Therefore, SMMEs can enhance customer satisfaction and retention by integrating quality management practices into their operations, mitigating systemic issues hindering their growth and sustainability (Ogunsola *et al.* 2023). The findings further eluded and revealed a strong positive correlation between Continuous Improvement and Quality Administration with a coefficient of 0.838. This means that as the efforts in continuous improvement increase, there is a higher implementation of quality administration practices. Thus supporting Ogunsola, Potswana and Chikosha (2023) in their study of enhancing customer satisfaction.

The QAMT, as expounded by Deming (1986) and further elaborated upon by recent scholars (Ndlazi *et al.* 2023; Ogunsola *et al.* 2023), posits that the essence of enhancing quality within organisations lies significantly in the top management's commitment and systemic practices. This foundational theory finds resonance with the study's results, where a substantial majority of respondents (89.3%) acknowledged the impact of QAM on customer retention and satisfaction. The high awareness and implementation rate of quality management practices, as reported

by 87.2% of the respondents, corroborates the literature's assertion on management's pivotal role in advancing a quality-centric organisational culture (Hill, 2019; Nkwinika 2023).

The results underscore the significance of the strategic implementation of QAMP, highlighting leadership commitment and employee involvement as key determinants of its success. The results align with theoretical perspectives on the role of leadership in quality management (Bass and Avolio, 1994; Ndlazi *et al.* 2023). It shows how leadership approaches that promote engagement, openness, and ongoing education can enhance the influence of quality management on customer satisfaction and loyalty. This underscores the need for SMMEs to adopt a holistic approach to quality management that reinforces the argument that leadership's role extends beyond mere endorsement of quality initiatives (Ndlazi *et al.*, 2023; Ogunsola *et al.* 2023). It involves employees' active engagement and empowerment at all levels, promoting an organisational ethos where quality management is perceived as a collective responsibility.

The empirical analysis of customer retention within the context of SMMEs in the eThekweni Metropolitan area reveals a statistically significant relationship between QAM practices and customer retention among SMMEs in eThekweni. Using the Pearson correlation tool, the study looked at the four constructs to analyse the association between them to address its hypothesis. The findings revealed a strong positive correlation between Customer Retention and Customer Satisfaction, with a coefficient of 0.845. The correlation between Customer Retention and Continuous Improvement is also highly significant ($p < 0.01$), with a coefficient of 0.786. The correlation between Customer Retention and Quality Administration is highly significant ($p < 0.01$), with a coefficient of 0.771. The correlation between Customer Satisfaction and Continuous Improvement is highly significant ($p < 0.01$), with a coefficient of 0.853. The correlation between Customer Satisfaction and Quality Administration is highly significant ($p < 0.01$), with a coefficient of 0.790. The correlation between Continuous Improvement and Quality Administration is highly significant ($p < 0.01$), with a coefficient of 0.838. The mean scores for these variables significantly diverge from the neutral benchmark of '3', indicating a solid consensus on their positive impact on customer retention. Thus proving the hypothesis to be accurate and answering the research questions.

Organisations would highly benefit from the results attained. Employee satisfaction and productivity are likely to be increased. Such will enhance the employer-employee relationship, benefitting the organisation as they would have established coherence. These results confirm that effective quality management practices significantly enhance product innovation performance, positively influencing customer satisfaction and retention (Lee *et al.* 2021). The analysis, leveraging a one-sample t-test, reveals a pronounced agreement among respondents regarding the critical importance of several customer-related factors, including acknowledgement of good customer service, the propensity to recommend the organisation, active information sharing about the organisation, volunteering as spokespersons, perceived value for money, and rare experiences of dissatisfaction with services provided.

Furthermore, the study results highlight the significant contributors to customer retention. They reflected the importance of customers sharing information about the organisation (CR3) with a mean score of 1.97 and a standard deviation of 0.870 ($t = 27.700$, $df = 148$, $p < 0.001$), and volunteering as spokespersons (CR4) with a mean score of 2.08 and a standard deviation of 0.934 ($t = 27.199$, $df = 148$, $p < 0.001$). These results illustrate a robust association between customer engagement behaviours and retention. This resonates with Nkwinika's (2023) observation on the necessity for SMMEs to address operational challenges, such as inadequate marketing expertise, to enhance customer engagement and retention. The statistically significant association between perceived value for money further validates the theoretical perspectives on the pivotal role of value perception in customer retention strategies (Nkwinika 2023; Lee *et al.* 2021). This quantitative validation of customer-centric factors as determinants of retention dovetails with the theoretical expositions of QAMT and CRMT. The findings resonate with the insights of Lee, Foo, Tan, Ooi and Sohal (2021), who emphasise the strategic imperative of embedding quality management practices within organisational DNA to spur innovation and customer satisfaction.

5.4 Quality management's role in customer loyalty.

The integration of quality management strategies within organisations has been empirically shown to enhance consumer loyalty significantly (CS1, Mean = 1.91; SD = 0.888; $t = 26.203$; $df = 148$; $p < 0.001$), underscoring the critical nexus between meticulously applied quality management practices and customer loyalty. This statistical evidence echoes the theoretical assertions of Anderson, Potocnik and Zhou (2019), who highlight the transformative potential of quality management in fostering a culture of CI and customer-centricity. Similarly, the findings align with Balan (2017) and Murenga and Njuguna (2020), who advocate strategically aligning quality management practices with organisational goals to cultivate consumer loyalty. For example, Azhari, Senathiraja, and Haque. A study conducted in 2023 examined how customer satisfaction contributes to increasing customer loyalty. The research showed a noteworthy correlation between trust, verbal recommendations, and customer devotion. This is consistent with the study results on the rise in customer loyalty as quality management improves.

Nonetheless, their study indicated a lack of empirical evidence for the connection between service quality, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty. The empirical and theoretical confluence suggests a paradigm where quality management is not just an operational necessity but a strategic asset that directly contributes to sustaining customer loyalty and, by extension, organisational success. Therefore, this study will contribute significantly to the existing literature, highlighting the importance of deploying QAM practices on customer satisfaction and retention. The Pearson correlation supported the results, which showed a significant association between the two variables. Therefore, organisations are encouraged to deploy such practices.

5.5 Enhancing teamwork and employee satisfaction.

The significant satisfaction expressed by customers regarding the promotion of teamwork and job satisfaction through quality management practices (CS3 and CS4; $p < 0.001$) reflects a broader organisational benefit. These findings resonate with the work of Kiprono and Genga (2018), who assert that quality management practices are instrumental in creating environments that promote teamwork and

enhance job satisfaction. This perspective is further supported by Ross (2017), emphasising that effective quality management extends beyond process optimisation to include human resource development. The statistical validation of these aspects highlights the dual focus of quality management on both customer and employee satisfaction, suggesting that the implementation of quality management practices serves as a cornerstone for building a cohesive, motivated, and satisfied workforce, thereby driving organisational excellence and competitive advantage.

The strong belief in CI as a driver for organisational success, staff engagement, and customer satisfaction (CI1-CI5; $p < 0.001$) captures the essence of quality management as a dynamic and ongoing process. This empirical insight is supported by the theoretical frameworks of Oakland (2018), who posits that the essence of quality management lies in its ability to shape an environment of continuous learning and adaptation. Furthermore, the emphasis on CI aligns with Deming's (1986) foundational principles, advocating for a systematic process enhancement and problem-solving approach. The alignment between the empirical findings and theoretical discussions underscores the importance of embedding CI into the organisational culture, ensuring that businesses remain agile, responsive, and capable of exceeding customer expectations in an ever-evolving market landscape.

5.6 A unified approach to customer retention.

The factor analysis results underscore a singular dimension within customer retention constructs, revealing a unified approach pivotal for SMMEs in the eThekweni Metropolitan area. This singular factor, encapsulating elements such as the willingness to recommend and acknowledge good service and value for money, illustrates a holistic customer perception that transcends individual service attributes (Shrestha 2021; Watkins 2018). The profound implication is the interdependence of service quality, customer acknowledgement, and value perception in crafting a cohesive customer retention strategy. Literature suggests that a unified customer retention framework, as evidenced by the high degree of variance explained (79.5%), is crucial for sustaining competitive advantage and fostering long-term customer relationships (Anderson *et al.* 2019; Balan 2017). This analysis aligns with Deming's (1986) QAMT, which advocates for a systemic

approach to quality management, underscoring the role of holistic customer satisfaction strategies in enhancing customer loyalty and retention.

5.7 Comprehensive customer satisfaction through quality management.

The exploration of customer satisfaction constructs further emphasises a singular, comprehensive dimension, echoing the centrality of quality management and administration methods in achieving elevated levels of customer satisfaction. With a capture of 82.9% of the total variance, this dimension reflects an integrative perspective on customer satisfaction, where elements such as consumer loyalty, teamwork promotion, and job satisfaction interplay to create a robust customer satisfaction framework (Shrestha 2021; Watkins 2018). This resonates with the literature highlighting the pivotal role of quality management practices in meeting and exceeding customer expectations, thus driving satisfaction and loyalty (Lee *et al.* 2021; Prahalad and Ramaswamy 2019). The findings suggest that SMMEs in the eThekweni Municipality can significantly benefit from embedding QAM principles into their operational strategies, ensuring consistent delivery of superior value and customer satisfaction.

The empirical findings vividly underscore the significant impact of CI on customer satisfaction, with a substantial 72.8% of the variance in customer satisfaction explained by continuous quality improvement initiatives. This aligns with the evolving discourse within the quality management literature, which posits that an organisation's commitment to CI is a critical determinant of its ability to meet and exceed customer expectations (Anderson *et al.* 2019; Balan 2017). The positive and significant relationship ($\beta = .853$, $p < .001$) not only validates the hypothesis but also echoes Deming's (1986) assertions about the necessity of perpetual enhancement in organisational processes to achieve superior customer satisfaction.

The analysis demonstrates the considerable influence of QAM practices on customer satisfaction, explaining 62.4% of the variance. This significant relationship ($\beta = .790$, $p < .001$) reinforces the premise that implementing robust quality management frameworks is fundamental to enhancing customer satisfaction. The literature suggests that QAM practices, encompassing comprehensive strategies

for quality assurance, compliance, and enhancement, are instrumental in creating customer value (Lee *et al.* 2021; Prahalad and Ramaswamy 2019). The findings corroborate the view that systematic quality management practices streamline operational efficiency and embed a customer-centric ethos within the organisation, thereby significantly impacting customer satisfaction.

5.8 Continuous improvement as a catalyst for growth.

The factor analysis within the CI construct reveals an intriguing dimensionality, suggesting that CI initiatives are critical for organisational growth and customer service enhancement. This singular dimension, accounting for 82.4% of the total variance, underscores the importance of engaging staff, enhancing customer service, and extending service capabilities beyond current boundaries. Such findings indicate a culture where CI permeates all organisational operations, leading to sustained customer satisfaction and retention (Shrestha 2021; Watkins 2018). This analysis aligns with the CI principles advocated by QAMT, highlighting the necessity for SMMEs to adopt a proactive stance towards innovation and improvement to adapt and thrive in the dynamic business landscape of the eThekweni Metropolitan area.

5.9 The critical role of customer satisfaction in driving customer retention.

The study's findings also illuminate the pivotal role of customer satisfaction in fostering customer retention, with a remarkable 71.4% of the variance in customer retention accounted for by customer satisfaction. This strong positive relationship ($\beta = .845$, $p < .001$) underscores the essential nature of satisfaction in the customer retention process. Consistent with the literature, the results imply that customer satisfaction serves as the cornerstone of customer loyalty and retention strategies (Ndlazi *et al.* 2023; Ogunsola *et al.* 2023). Satisfied customers are more likely to exhibit repeat purchasing behaviours, advocate for the brand, and demonstrate a higher tolerance towards price changes, thereby significantly enhancing customer retention rates. The study results imply that understanding and managing customer expectations and experiences are vital for maintaining enduring customer relationships for SMMEs in the eThekweni Municipality.

5.10 Education's influence on customer retention perceptions.

The significant difference in levels of agreement on customer retention across educational levels. Particularly, the higher agreement among respondents with undergraduate degrees underscores the nuanced understanding of quality and customer-centric practices among more educated individuals. This finding resonates with the literature suggesting that educational attainment equips individuals with a heightened awareness and appreciation for quality service and CI practices (Lee *et al.* 2021; Prahalad and Ramaswamy 2019). It illustrates a critical insight that education not only moulds expectations but also refines the discernment with which services and quality improvements are evaluated. This emphasises the need for organisations to tailor their customer retention strategies with a keen understanding of their customer base's educational background, potentially aligning more sophisticated quality improvement narratives with higher-educated segments.

5.11 The interconnectedness of quality constructs.

The strong and significant correlations among customer retention, satisfaction, CI, and the implementation of quality administration underscore a foundational concept. These constructs are not isolated metrics but are deeply interconnected facets of a holistic quality management approach. The correlations align with the theoretical underpinnings of Total Quality Management (TQM) and Continuous Improvement (CI) frameworks, suggesting that enhancements in any one of these areas are likely to spur improvements across the board (Anderson *et al.* 2019; Deming 1986). This interdependence highlights the importance of adopting an integrated approach to quality management, where efforts to improve one aspect of service or administration contribute to a broader ecosystem of quality, ultimately enhancing customer satisfaction and retention.

5.12 Concluding summary.

This chapter has discussed the study results through the lenses of existing literature and the intricate theoretical insights of QAMT and CRMT. It illuminated how these foundational theories underpin the study's results and offer a lens through which

the impact of QAM practices on customer retention and satisfaction can be viewed, especially within the context of SMMEs in the eThekweni Metropolitan area. Through a detailed exploration, it emerged that the principles advocated by Deming (1986) regarding the systemic nature of quality management and the pivotal role of top management in facilitating a culture of quality are vividly reflected in the study's findings. Similarly, the essence of CRMT, focusing on strategic customer interactions to enhance loyalty and satisfaction, resonated strongly with the empirical data. The chapter bridged theoretical perspectives with practical insights, highlighting the universal applicability of these theories across diverse demographic segments, thereby underscoring their significance in addressing the nuanced challenges SMMEs face. In sum, this discussion enriched the quality and customer relationship management discourse. It offered actionable strategies for businesses, particularly SMMEs in the eThekweni Metropolitan area, aiming for sustainable growth and enhanced customer relationships. The next chapter outlines the conclusions and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER 6: SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction.

This chapter concludes the study and is divided into six broad sections. The study's objectives, methodology, main findings, and conclusions are all summarised in the first section. They are crucial because they show how the research goals have been achieved. The recommendations derived from the study are the main subject of the second section. The study's worth is covered in the third section. The study's shortcomings are considered in the fourth section. The areas recommended for further research are highlighted in the fifth section. Finally, a summary of the entire study is given.

6.2 Summary of key findings.

The state of SMMEs in South Africa is an issue of great concern to the government, business owners, stakeholders, and researchers. Many enterprises have failed due to their inability to adopt QAM practices for customer retention and satisfaction. The primary objective of this study was to explore the effect of QAM practices on customer retention and satisfaction, especially within the eThekweni Metropolitan area in South Africa. The objectives of this study were to:

1. To investigate the effectiveness of quality administration management practices on customer retention and satisfaction in SMMEs in the eThekweni Metropolitan area.
2. To understand the impact of employee training and development on quality administration management practices and customer retention and satisfaction in SMMEs.
3. To identify the usage of internal and external factors that influence quality administration management practices in SMMEs in the eThekweni Metropolitan area.
4. To determine the factors that contribute to and hinder customer retention and satisfaction in SMMEs in the eThekweni Metropolitan area and propose

integrated, effective quality administration management practices to address these factors.

The study revealed a positive association between implementing QAM practices and customer satisfaction and retention. It reviewed the literature on SMMEs' QAM on customer retention and satisfaction before focusing on effective QAM practices. At the end of the literature review, a conceptual integrated model of effective QAM practices was developed to address the gaps identified in previous QAM models. To empirically test the conceptual quality administration model, this quantitative study employed the paradigm of positivism and survey research design. The study used the stratified random sampling method to select 150 participants from the eThekweni Metropolitan area in South Africa. One hundred and forty-nine participants completed and returned their questionnaires. In this research, pilot tests were conducted twice with two different groups.

The first group consisted of three academics who were experts in this field and two doctoral students at the College of Law and Management Studies, Durban University of Technology. After making the corrections and considering the suggestions given by the first group, a revised copy of the questionnaire was tested with the second group, who were made up of six managers of SMMEs in the eThekweni Metropolitan area in South Africa. After the pilot test was conducted, Cronbach's alpha coefficients were used to test the reliability, while exploratory factor analysis and confirmatory factor analysis were used for the validation. The formulated hypotheses were tested using Pearson's correlation and multiple regression analysis, and structural equation modelling (SEM) was done via IBM SPSS statistics version 25 and IBM SPSS AMOS version 25.

Results show that the first null hypothesis was rejected, which states that managers' quality management practices have no significance on the survival of SMMEs in South Africa. The data showed that as quality improvement increases, customer satisfaction also increases. This means that quality improvement positively influences CI in an organisation, thus influencing customer satisfaction and retention. Thus, it responded positively to the first research question.

The second null hypothesis that managers' training and development have no significant effect on customer retention and satisfaction in the eThekweni

Metropolitan area was also rejected. This statement was supported by the data, which revealed that an increase in the implementation of quality administration positively influences customer satisfaction. Therefore, managers' training and development directly and significantly affect the survival of SMMEs in South Africa. Thus, this response to the second research question was positive.

The third null hypothesis was rejected as well, which states that managers' use of internal and external factors has no significant effect on customer retention and satisfaction in eThekweni. The results revealed that as customer increases, customer retention increases as well. This implies that managers' use of internal and external factors has a significant, direct, and positive effect on the survival of SMMEs in eThekweni. Thus, this response to the second research question was positive.

The last null hypothesis, that quality management dimensions have no significant effect on customer retention and satisfaction, was also rejected. The study looked at the relationship between demographic characteristics and constructs, which were gender, age group, level of experience, and level of education. These were tested against the four constructs. There was no significant difference between gender, age group, and years of work experience with any of the constructs measured. However, the ANOVA value suggests a significant difference in the level of agreement on customer retention in the organisation across the levels of education. Based on these findings, the four research objectives and formulated hypotheses were met.

6.3 Theoretical implications.

The study on the impact of QAM practices on customer retention and satisfaction within SMMEs in the eThekweni Metropolitan area presents several theoretical implications. The findings contribute to the theoretical advancement of quality management by illustrating the positive association between quality administration practices and customer satisfaction and retention. This challenges the traditional perspectives of quality management as merely operational, suggesting a strategic dimension that directly influences customer loyalty and business sustainability. The research has validated the effectiveness of QAM practices. This enriches the

theoretical landscape by integrating customer satisfaction and retention as crucial outcomes of quality management practices. By employing a mix of quantitative methods (like Pearson's correlation, multiple regression analysis, and structural equation modelling), the study offers a methodological contribution to the field. It showcases how rigorous empirical testing can be applied to validate theoretical models, thereby strengthening the theoretical underpinnings of quality management studies. The research demonstrates a strong link between theoretical constructs and practical outcomes, reinforcing the importance of theory-driven practice in the field of quality management. This integration enhances the robustness of quality management theory by providing empirical evidence of its applicability and effectiveness in real-world scenarios.

6.4 Practical implications.

The practical implications of this study are significant for the survival and growth of SMMEs in South Africa, particularly within the eThekweni Metropolitan area. The study emphasises the necessity for SMMEs to adopt QAM practices. They highlight how they will play an essential role in enhancing customer retention and satisfaction, ensuring survival and competitive advantage in the market.

The findings advocate for robust training and development programs for managers and employees within SMMEs. Such initiatives should focus on quality management to ensure the workforce has the necessary skills and knowledge to drive customer satisfaction and retention. The research highlights the importance of leveraging both internal and external factors to bolster quality management practices.

SMMEs should proactively understand and integrate these factors to improve their quality management strategies and customer-focused outcomes. The study's outcomes should inform policy-making and strategic decision-making within the SMME sector. Policymakers and business leaders should consider these insights when designing and implementing strategies to improve the quality of administration and management practices.

6.5 Value of the study/contribution to knowledge.

This study has contributed to knowledge regarding quality management practices in two significant ways. Firstly, the study draws the attention of scholars to new quality management dimensions, such as customer retention and satisfaction, found in the developed and integrated quality management model. These were not included in previous studies. This study is significant as it has developed and validated a new integrative quality management model which explains the impacts of quality management dimensions on customer retention and satisfaction in eThekweni. In this vein, adopting this new model by SMME practitioners, managers, and owners would greatly assist in reducing business failure in eThekweni, South Africa and around the globe.

While SMME managers may use the model to devise survival strategies based on quality management, practitioners such as policymakers may use the model to create a conducive business environment for SMMEs' survival in South Africa. This study has contributed to knowledge creation by revealing that customer retention and satisfaction are critical and indispensable dimensions of the quality management model. The study has also contributed to a contemporary definition of quality management that managers and academics can adopt for further research. The next section will discuss the study's limitations.

6.6 Recommendations for practice.

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made.

6.6.1 Recommendation 1

The study recommends that managers of SMMEs incorporate quality management practices to increase the chance of customer retention and satisfaction. As quality management practices depict a significant and negative effect on SMMEs' survival, the advice is that owner-managers prioritise this and ensure that modern technology is used.

6.6.2 Recommendation 2

Small and medium micro enterprises in eThekweni need to adopt and implement training and development, which will enhance the continuous growth and customer retention in South Africa. As customers are vital to business survival, managers in

SMMEs must reinforce training and development, especially the fact that a disgruntled customer can result in loss which could eventually lead to the failure of that business.

6.6.3 Recommendation 3

It is recommended that managers of SMMEs incorporate the usage of internal and external factors to enhance customer retention in eThekweni. This is a unique aspect of quality management practices which is not present in many other studies and models. Given this external orientation, the study asserts that managers should not only note the peripheral needs of customers but rather the latent needs as well. This would enable managers to gain competitive advantages over their competitors in the marketplace.

6.6.4 Recommendation 4

It is recommended that managers of SMMEs understand the need for quality management orientation in their respective organisations, primarily because this could have a significant impact on the survival of the organisation. If managers ignore quality management orientation, they are likely to experience challenges when trying to survive in the market.

6.7 Limitations of the study.

There are three key limitations to this quantitative study, as discussed below. Firstly, a major limitation of this study is that data were mainly collected using one method, namely the self-administered questionnaire in a cross-sectional study. The use of the self-administered questionnaire as the main data collection method means that the researcher depended solely on what the SMME managers chose to divulge during the data collection process. Due to high levels of secrecy in the commercial sector, it is possible that some SMME managers were sceptical about divulging certain details for fear that the tax collector or government reinforcement agents may ask themselves as researchers to obtain relevant information from them. Another issue is that SMME managers did not want to disclose their competitive advantage. While a limited level of openness might have been present, the information provided as part of the informed consent served to put some of the SME managers at ease and encouraged them to be as honest and open as possible.

Secondly, this study covered only SMMEs in eThekweni and not the whole of South Africa. This geographical limitation affects the general ability of these results to all SMMEs in South Africa. Given the fact that the research findings suggest that quality management influences customer retention and satisfaction of SMMEs in the eThekweni Metropolitan area of South Africa, it is likely that the research results may differ in other provinces and geopolitical zones. As the model developed in this study focused on retail SMMEs, it would be interesting to test the model in other sectors, such as agri-based or technology-based SMMEs, to gauge its explanatory power across different sectors.

Lastly, the use of single respondents increases the possibility of respondent bias in quantitative research. In this study, only the managers of SMMEs were selected as the participants. In this regard, the study has adopted a managerial view, which ignores the view of stakeholders (staff working in the SMME reception) in the SMMEs, who also play a part in customer retention and satisfaction.

6.8 Suggestions for future research.

For further study, two important areas were determined. The new integrated quality management model was created with a uniform grouping of SMMEs, which is notable in and of itself because it ignores the diversity of SMMEs in South Africa. Consequently, the quality management model that has been developed has limited capacity to explain the behaviour of different SMMEs in other industries, such as agriculture and technology. Because of this, future research must concentrate on SMMEs in various South African sectors to primarily build and enhance a quality management model that would be relevant to SMMEs in settings that are diverse. Given that SMMEs' survival is a crucial issue, this is especially vital. Quality management studies conducted across cultures might provide valuable insights for creating a more robust integrative model of quality management.

Secondly, the current study was retrospective and cross-sectional in terms of design to explore the effects of quality management practices on customer retention and satisfaction of SMMEs. As customer retention and satisfaction is a concept which has a temporal dimension, it is suggested that future studies should be prospective and longitudinal to explore the aspect of SMMEs survival overtime. This

is critical, particularly in view that SMMEs' survival is not an event but rather a process which occurs overtime in a dynamic context. It will be interesting to ascertain whether the model developed in this study would hold in a longitudinal study.

Lastly, there are few empirical studies which focus on quality management practices and SMMEs' customer retention and satisfaction, it is suggested that future researchers generate an inductive theory and provide a context-specific explanation of quality management. In this vein, scholars may use the grounded theory method to induce a theory from the day-to-day experiences of role players involved in quality management activities to ensure the survival of SMMEs.

6.9 Conclusion

This quantitative study aimed to explore how customer satisfaction and retention in eThekweni, South Africa, are affected by quality management methods. A quality management model that was established for the study may have an impact on customer satisfaction and retention. This chapter concluded by outlining the study's limits, potential research topics, and overall worth and illuminating how the goals were achieved. To have a comprehensive understanding of quality management, its components, and how it affects SMMEs, this research study is a critical first step. These are important factors to consider for other important sectors in South Africa and abroad, as well as for the growth of SMMEs in eThekweni.

REFERENCES

- Adeiza, A., Abdullahi, M.S., Abdel Fattah, F.A.M., Fawehinmi, O., Ismail, N.A., Arnaut, M., Aigbogun, O., Adam, I.S. and Ehido, A. 2022. Mediating mechanism of customer satisfaction on customer relationship management implementation and customer loyalty among consolidated banks. *Uncertain Supply Chain Management*, 10(3):819-832.
- Akhtar, I. 2016. Research design. In research in social sciences: Interdisciplinary perspectives. *First Edition*. Social Research Foundation. Kanpur, India.
- Al Dmour, H., Alshurideh, M. and Shishan, F. 2014. The influence of mobile application quality and attributes on the continuance intention of mobile shopping. *Life Science Journal*, 11(10): 172–181.
- Al Manhaway, A. 2021. TQM critical success factors in the hospitality industry and their impact on customer loyalty: A theoretical model. *International Journal of Scientific and Engineering Research*. 4(1): 25-37.
- Al-Dmour, H., Alshuraideh, M. and Salehi, S. 2014. A study of Jordanians' television viewers habits. *Life Science Journal*, 11(6):161-171.
- Alshurideh, M.T., Al-Hawary, S., Mohammad, A., Al-Hawary, A. and Al Kurdi, A., 2017. The impact of Islamic bank's service quality perception on Jordanian customer's loyalty. *Journal of Management research*, 9: 139–159.
- Alvi, M.H. 2016. A manual for selecting sampling techniques in research.
- Andriyani, I. N., Wibowo, L. A., Novalita, D. P., Rahayu, W. P., Kusumojanto, D. D., Sulistyowati, R. and Sudarwanto, T. 2017. Dominant factor analysis of customer perceived value which effect on customer retention: The 1st International Conference on Economics and Business 2017 (UNICEB), Retrieved from <http://digilib.unimed.ac.id/id/eprint/28238>
- Ang, L. and Buttle, F. 2006. Customer retention management processes - a quantitative study. *European Journal of Marketing*, 40(½): 83-99.

- Azhari, N. F. B., Senathirajah, A. R. S. and Haque, R. 2023. The Role of customer satisfaction, trust, word of mouth, and service quality in enhancing customers' loyalty toward e-commerce. *Transnational Marketing Journal*: 11(1).
- Bagga, T. and Bhatt, M. 2013. A study of intrinsic and extrinsic factors influencing consumer buying behaviour online. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Management Research and Innovation*, 9(1): 77-90.
- Balan, O. 2017. Administrative management and mechanisms of its development. *Economic Journal of Odessa Polytechnic University*, (2 (2):6-10.
- Banerjee, K. 2014. How does poor customer service affect a business? [online] LinkedIn.com. Available at: <<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/20140729213717-29954114-how-does-poor-customer-service-affect-a-business>> [Accessed 28 April 2022].
- Baran, M. L. 2016. Mixed methods research for improved scientific study. *Hershey, PA*. IGI Global.
- Bauer, H. H., Falk, T. and Hammerschmidt, M. 2006. eTransQual: A transaction process-based approach for capturing service quality in online shopping. *Journal of Business Research*, 59(7): 66-875.
- Baumgarth, C. 2008. An integrated model of marketing quality (MARKET-Q) in the B-to-B Sector. *Journal of Business Market Management*, 2(1): 41-57.
- Beauchamp, M. B. and Ponder, N. 2010. Perceptions of retail convenience for in-store and online shoppers. *The Marketing Management Journal*, 20(1): 49-65.
- Bennett, R., Härtel, C. E. and McColl-Kennedy, J. R. 2005. Experience as a moderator of involvement and satisfaction on brand loyalty in a business-to-business setting 02-314R. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 34(1): 97-107.
- Berraies, S., Yahia, K. B. and Hannachi, M. 2017. Identifying the effects of perceived values of mobile banking applications on customers. *International Journal of Bank Marketing*, 35(6): 1018-1038.
- Berry, L. L., Seiders, K. and Grewal, D. 2002. Understanding service convenience. *Journal of Marketing*, 66(3): 1-17.

Bi, Y. and Kim, I. 2020. Older travellers' e-loyalty: The roles of service convenience and social presence in travel websites. *Sustainability*, 12(1): 410.

Biedenbach, G., Bengtsson, M. and Marell, A. 2015. Brand equity, satisfaction, and switching costs: An examination of effects in the business-to-business setting. *Marketing Intelligence and Planning*, 33(2): 164-178.

Billups, F.D. 2020. Qualitative data collection tools: Design, development, and applications. *Johnson and Wales University*. The USA.

Biscaia, A. R., Rosa, M. J., Moura e Sa, S., P. and Sarrico, C. S. 2017. Assessing customer satisfaction and loyalty in the retail sector. *International Journal of Quality and Reliability Management*, 34(9): 1508-1529.

Blackwell, R. D., Miniard, P. W. and Engel, J. F. 2001. Consumer behaviour. *Southwestern Thomson Learning*. Ohio.

Bluedorn, A. C. 1982. The theories of turnover: Causes, effects, and meaning. *Research in the Sociology of Organisations*, 1(1): 75-128.

Calvo-Porral, C. and Nieto-Mengotti, M. 2019. The moderating influence of involvement with ICTs in mobile services. *Spanish Journal of Marketing-ESIC*, 23(1): 25-43.

Capistrano, E. P. 2013. Investigating product involvement issues for mobile phone services: A study of Filipino mobile phone users. *Philippine Management Review*, 20: 16.

Cardozo, R. 1965. An experimental study of consumer effort, expectations and Satisfaction. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 2(3): 244-249.

Castro, J.A., Alarcón, J.B. and Alarcón, J.B. 2021. Education with public funds for small and medium micro enterprises (SMMEs) in times of pandemic, The case of Chile. In *ICERI2021 Proceedings* (9710-9713). IATED.

Chadwick, C. and Piartrini, P.S., 2019, March. Product quality, convenience and brand loyalty: A case study of Silverqueen's adolescent consumers. In 12th International Conference on Business and Management Research (ICBMR 2018), 111-115. Atlantis Press.

Cheng, B.L., Gaur, S.S. and Rezuan, A.R. 2020. Factors leading to customer retention in the high volume-low volume service context: Evidence from the mobile service industry. *Asian Journal of Business Research*, 10(1):95.

Cresswell, J. and Cresswell, D. 2018. Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches. *Fifth Edition*. Sage publications.

Datta, R. 2018. Decolonizing methodologies: A transformation from science-oriented researcher to relational/participant-oriented researcher. *American Indian Culture and Research Journal*, 42 (1): 115-130.

David, D.N. 2018. Quality management practices and customer satisfaction in middle-level colleges in Machakos county, Kenya. *Unpublished MBA Thesis Kenyatta University*.

Debois, S., 2019. 10 Advantages And Disadvantages Of Questionnaires (blog) Available:

<https://www.scirp.org/reference/referencespapers?referenceid=2789521>.

Erkul, M., Chakraborty, S. and Kaynak, H. 2021. The strategic value of servitisation: A quality management perspective. *Quality Management Journal*, 28(4): 176-189.

Field, A. 2018. Discovering statistics using IBM SPSS statistics. Sage publications.

Flick, U. 2018. Doing triangulation and mixed methods (Vol. 8) Sage.

Galvão, M.B., de Carvalho, R.C., Oliveira, L.A.B.D. and Medeiros, D.D.D. 2018. Customer loyalty approach based on CRM for SMEs. *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*, 33(5):706-716.

Gupta, A., McDaniel, J. and Herath, S. 2005. Quality management in service firms: Sustaining structures of total quality service. *Managing Service Quality*. 15(4), 589-402.

Gutierrez-Gutierrez, L.J., Barrales-Molina, V. and Kaynak, H. 2018. The role of human resource-related quality management practices in new product development: A dynamic capability perspective. *International Journal of Operations and Production Management*, 38(1): 43-66.

Hansemark, O.C. and Albinsson, M. 2019. Customer satisfaction and retention: The experiences of individual employees. *Manag. Managing Service Quality: An International Journal*, 14(1):40-57.

Jovancic, N., 2019. 5 Data Collection Methods for Obtaining Quantitative and Qualitative Data (blog). Available: <https://www.leadquizzes.com/blog/data-collection-methods>.

Kim, G.S. 2020. The effect of quality management and big data management on customer satisfaction in Korea's public sector. *Sustainability*, 12(13): 5474.

Kiprono, D.J. and Genga, P.A. 2018. Total quality management practices and performance of airlines in Kenya: Case of Air Kenya Express Limited. *International Academic Journal of Human Resource and Business Administration*, 3(4): 377-396.

Kumar, R. 2014. Research methodology: a step-by-step guide for beginners: Constructing an instrument for data collection. 4th edition. London. Sage Publications Inc.

Lee, V.H., Foo, P.Y., Tan, G.W.H., Ooi, K.B. and Sohal, A. 2021. Supply chain quality management for product innovation performance: insights from small and medium-sized manufacturing enterprises. *Industrial Management and Data Systems*, 121(10): 2118-2142.

Lemak, D. J. and Reed, R. 2012. Commitment to total quality management: Is there a relationship with firm performance? *Journal of Quality Management*, 2: 67–86.

Lowe, N. 2019. [online] Jognn.org. Available at: <[https://www.jognn.org/article/S0884-2175\(19\)30006-1/pdf](https://www.jognn.org/article/S0884-2175(19)30006-1/pdf)> [Accessed 30 April 2022].

Lucey, T. 2019. Management accounting. *New York*. Continuum.

Malarvizhi, C.A., Mamun, A.A., Prabadevi, M., Nawi, N.B.C., Rasti, A. and Permarupan, P.Y. 2016. Knowledge infrastructure, process, and the effectiveness of manufacturing SMEs in Selangor, Malaysia. *Advanced Science Letters*, 22(5-6): 1730-1732.

Mathebula, H., Emuze, F. and Oladokun, M. 2020. Exploring the Impact of SMME Participation in Township Development Projects. *Supporting Inclusive Growth and*

Sustainable Development in Africa: Sustainability in Infrastructure Development, 1: 299-310.

McKim, C.A. 2017. The value of mixed methods research: A mixed methods study. *Journal of mixed methods research*, 11(2): 202-222.

Mertens, D.M. 2019. Research and evaluation in education and psychology: Integrating diversity with quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods. Sage publications.

Middleton, F. 2019. The four types of validity explained with easy examples. [online] Available a <https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/types-of-validity/#:~:text=There%20are%20four%20main%20types,be%20suitable%20to%20its%20aims%3F%3E> [Accessed 28 April 2022].

Mkhize, P.B. 2019. An assessment of the impact of quality standards on the business performance of small, medium and micro-sized enterprises in KwaZulu-Natal: Selected cases in the Durban Metropolitan area (Doctoral dissertation).

Morgan, R.M. and Hunt, S.D. 2018. The commitment-trust theory of relationship marketing. *Journal of Marketing*, 58(3): 20–38.

Murenga, Y.A. and Njuguna, R. 2020. Total quality management practices and service delivery of small and medium enterprises: Case of Horizons Offices Limited in Kenya. *International Academic Journal of Human Resource and Business Administration*, 3(8): 207-226.

Nabi, N. 2019. Customer expectations of service quality: A study on private banks of Bangladesh. *World Review of Business Research*, 2(4): 172 – 186, 2012.

Ndlazi, S.E., Ogunsola, S.A., Dlamini, B.I. and Nhleko, M.A.N., 2023. Evaluating Small, Medium and Micro-Enterprises' Ethical Management Practises to Ensure Efficient Business Decision-Making in the eThekweni Municipal Area. *Open Access Library Journal*, 10(12):1-18.

Nilsson, L., Johnson, M. and Gustafsson, A. 2001. The impact of quality practices on customer satisfaction and business results: Product versus service organisations. *Journal of Quality Management*, 6(1): 5-27.

Niyi Anifowose, O., Ghasemi, M. and Olaleye, B.R. 2022. Total quality management and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) performance: Mediating role of innovation speed. *Sustainability*, 14(14):8719.

Ntlangani, B.S. 2021. An evaluation of community tourism organisations' role in small, medium and micro enterprises (SMME) tourism development in the eThekwin region (Doctoral dissertation).

Nunden, N., Abbana, S., Marimuthu, F. and Sentoo, N. 2022. An assessment of management skills on capital budgeting planning and practices: evidence from the small and medium enterprise sector. *Cogent Business and Management*, 9(1): 2136481.

Ogunsola, S.A., Potwana, N. and Chikosha, F. 2023. Evaluating managerial competence of small, medium and micro-entrepreneurs to ensure sustainable economic development in the eThekwin municipal area. *Economics, Management and Sustainability*, 8(2):.93-105.

Pallant, J. 2016. SPSS survival manual. McGraw-Hill Education.

Pereira, N.C., Araújo, N. and Costa, L. 2018. A counting multidimensional innovation index for SMEs. Benchmarking: *An International Journal*, 25(1);2-23.

PIETER DE GROEN, W., EGENHOFER, C., MUSMECI, R., KUSTOVA, I., JANSEN, J., BOONEKAMP, P., POZO, B., OLIINYK, I. and GOJSIC, D. 2021. *Technical assistance in assessing the effectiveness of the implementation of the definition of small and medium-sized enterprises for the purposes of Article 8 (4) of the energy efficiency directive*. European Commission.

Powell, T. C. 2014. Total quality management as competitive advantage: A review and empirical study. *Strategic Management Journal*, 16(1): 15–37.

Ross, J.E. 2017. Total quality management: Text, cases, and readings. Routledge.

Rowley, J. 2014. Designing and using research questionnaires. *Management Research Review*, 37(3): 308-330.

Samaan A. 2021. The effects of customer expectation and perceived service quality on customer satisfaction. *International Journal of Business and Management Invention*, 3(8):

- Samson, D. and Terziovski, M. 2018. The relationship between total quality management practices and operational performance. *Journal of Operations Management*, 17(4): 393–409.
- Saunders, M. and Thornhill, P. L. A. A. 2019. Research business methods for business studies. *Eighth Edition*. Pearson.
- Saunders, M., Lewis, P. and Thornhill, A. 2016. Research methods for business students (Vol. Seventh). Harlow: Pearson Education.
- Sekaran, U. and Bougie, R. 2018. Research Methods for Business. *Seventh Edition*. Wiley.
- Shannon-Baker, P. 2016. Making paradigms meaningful in mixed methods research. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 10(4): 319-334.
- Sonandi, A., Ladzani, M.W. and Nealer, E.J. 2021. Lack of business planning: A barrier to successful implementation of total quality management in South African agricultural small-, micro and medium-sized enterprises.
- Tan, C.C., Praditmon, W., Pattanadeekul, A. and Chimwan, S., 2019. Intercepting stimulus-organism-response model, theory of planned behaviour and theory of expectancy confirmation in the study of smartphone consumer behaviour: A Thai university student perspective. *Asia Pacific Journal of Religions and Cultures*, 3(2):27-48.
- Tian, H., Iqbal, S., Akhtar, S., Qalati, S.A., Anwar, F. and Khan, M.A.S., 2020. The impact of transformational leadership on employee retention: mediation and moderation through organisational citizenship behaviour and communication. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 11:513537.
- Toke, L.K. and Kalpande, S.D. 2020. Total quality management in small and medium enterprises: An overview in Indian context. *Quality Management Journal*, 27(3): 159-175.
- Tombs, M. and Pugsley, L. 2020. Understand research philosophies and paradigms in medical education. *Centre for Medical Education*. Cardiff University.

Tu, Y.T. and Chih, H.C., 2011. The effect of service quality, customer perceived value and satisfaction on loyalty. *Journal of Economics and Behavioral Studies*, 3(3):198-212.

Van Ho, P. 2011. Total quality management approach to the information systems development processes: An empirical study. (Doctoral Dissertation). *Virginia State University*. Virginia, U.S.A.

Watson, J. 2019. The impact of TQM adoption on SME financial performance. *Annual conference of the Small Enterprise Association of Australia and New Zealand*. 28(1): 101-112.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Appendix A: Letter of Information



Title of the Research Study: Exploring Quality Administration Management Practices on Customer Retention and Satisfaction:

Case study of Small Medium Micro Enterprises at eThekweni Metropolitan area

Principal Investigator/s/researcher: Nkosingiphile Trevor Mchunu: Postgraduate Diploma in management sciences specialises in Business administration.

Co-Investigator/s/supervisor/s: Dr. Nduduzo Andrias Ngxongo: PhD in Hospitality and Tourism

Brief Introduction and Purpose of the Study: The main purpose of the study is to assess the effectiveness of quality administration management practices on customer retention and satisfaction. More importantly, the study seeks to examine the role of management in customer retention and satisfaction.

Greetings: Dear Manager/supervisor

Please introduce yourself to the participant: I am a 2nd-year master's student at DUT doing research for my MASTER OF MANAGEMENT SCIENCES IN ADMINISTRATION AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT.

Invitation to the potential participant: I would like to invite you, in your capacity as a business owner, supervisor, manager and employee, to participate in the research as per the above title of the study.

What is Research? Research can be defined as a systematic investigation into and study of materials and sources to establish facts and reach new conclusions.

Outline of the Procedures: This study will adopt the use of self-administered questionnaires for data collection. The distribution of questionnaires will take place in non-contrived settings with minimal interference from the researcher. Lastly, as and when necessary, follow-up information will be requested to conclude the study.

Risks or Discomforts to the Participant: You will not be forced to take part in the study without your permission or consent thereof. Should the participant feel any form of discomfort in participating in the study, their wish will be respected, and there are no risks that may impact the health of the participants whatsoever, as there are no medical or scientific procedures involved with the data collection process of this research study.

Explain to the participant the reasons they may withdraw from the Study: Should you wish to withdraw your participation in the study, there will be no consequences involved, and participants may do so. The researcher may also choose to disqualify participants should they be found guilty of not being honest and providing misleading information. Honesty is of paramount importance to the conduct of this study.

Benefits: The respondents' concerns and views will be able to be heard when the study has been completed. Business sectors will be able to understand what other people are saying about the effectiveness of quality administration management and how to close the gaps in business.

Remuneration: There will be no form of remuneration involved in participating in this research study. Participation is solely voluntary and not considered compulsory at all.

Costs of the Study: You will not be expected to cover any expenses related to the conduct of this study. The costs involved in this study will be the responsibility of the researcher.

Confidentiality: You will remain strictly anonymous, and the researcher will access the data collected and the supervisor directly involved in this study. Data will be handled in such a way that it does not infringe on or impact your well-being, and should there be a need to discard data after the study has been concluded, this will

be done based on university procedures so as not to expose the participants and the information they provided or whatsoever.

Results: The research results will be available upon request and will be shared via mail. Alternatively, they can be accessed from the DUT online repository.

Research-related Injury: Since this study is not a scientific or medical research type of study, there will be no injury sustained by the participants as there are no experiments or medical procedures that might require medical samples to be drawn from the participants. This research study is that of a social science.

Storage of all electronic and hard copies, including tape recordings: Only the researcher will have access to all data collected and intended for this research study. Electronic data will be stored on Google Drive until the results of this study are provided by the examiners.

Persons to contact in the Event of Any Problems or Queries: (Supervisor and details), please get in touch with the researcher (cell no 074 350 0153 or via email 21335138@dut4life.ac.za), my supervisor, Dr Ngxongo (tel no **031 373 5515**) or the Institutional Research Ethics administrator on 031 373 2375. Complaints can be reported to the Acting Director of Research and Postgraduate Support at researchdirector@dut.ac.za

Appendix B: Appendix B: Consent letter



Full Title of the Study: Exploring Quality Administration Management Practices on Customer Retention and Satisfaction: Case Study of Small Medium Micro Enterprises at eThekweni Metropolitan area

Names of Researcher/s: Mr NT Mchunu

Statement of Agreement to Participate in the Research Study:

- I hereby confirm that I have been informed by the researcher, _____
(Name of the researcher), about the nature, conduct, benefits and risks of this study - Research Ethics Clearance

Number: _____

- I have also received, read and understood the above-written information (Participant Letter of Information) regarding the study.
- I am aware that the results of the study, including personal details regarding my sex, age, date of birth, initials, and diagnosis, will be anonymously processed into a study report.
- In view of the requirements of research, I agree that the data collected during this study can be processed in a computerised system by the researcher.
- I may, at any stage, without prejudice, withdraw my consent and participation in the study.
- I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and (of my own free will) declare myself prepared to participate in the study.

- I understand that significant new findings developed during this research, which may relate to my participation, will be made available to me.

Full Name of Participant	Date	Time	Signature	/	Right
--------------------------	------	------	-----------	---	-------

Thumbprint

I, NT Mchunu (name of the researcher), herewith confirm that the above participant has been fully informed about the nature, conduct, and risks of the above study.

Full name of researcher	Date	Signature
-------------------------	------	-----------

.....
-------	-------	-------

Full name of witness (if applicable)	Date	Signature
--------------------------------------	------	-----------

.....
-------	-------	-------

Full name of legal guardian (if applicable)	Date	Signature
---	------	-----------

.....
-------	-------	-------

Appendix C: Appendix C: Gatekeeper's Letter



**DURBAN CHAMBER
OF COMMERCE AND
INDUSTRY NPC**

11 December 2023

Mr N T Mchunu
12 Esther Roberts
Glenwood

Dear Mr Mchunu

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

This letter serves to confirm that the Durban Chamber of Commerce and Industry NPC hereby acknowledges and approves the research to be conducted through the Durban Chamber of Commerce and Industry NPC for the completion of Masters Studies, research to be performed on: **Exploring Quality Administration Management Practices on Customer Retention and Satisfaction: Case study of Small Medium Micro Enterprises at EThekweni Metropolitan area.**

Please note that the data collected must be treated with due confidentiality and anonymity. This information is also provided by the Durban Chamber of Commerce and Industry NPC on the condition that a copy of the final research output will be given to the Durban Chamber of Commerce and Industry NPC for information purposes.

Yours sincerely



Yolan Nagoor
Manager: Policy and Advocacy
Durban Chamber of Commerce and Industry NPC
T: 031 335 1000

A: 101 Isaiah Ntshangase Road, Durban 4001 | P.O BOX 1506, Durban 4001, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa | Reg. No: 2015/448265/08
T: +27 31 335 1000 | E: info@durbanchamber.co.za | membership@durbanchamber.co.za | W: www.durbanchamber.co.za

President: PSS Maharaj | Deputy President: M Lethoko | 1st Vice President: JD Bhana | 2nd Vice President: KE Macilwaine | Vice President Finance: BF Scott |
Immediate Past President: NG Ward
Non-Executive Directors: MM Khumalo, TS Cibane, WH Pelser
Executive Directors: PD Phili (CEO), MJ Raftery (CFO), ZL Khomo (CGO)

Sample: Gatekeeper Letter to FREC chair

To:

Sample: Gatekeeper Letter for Outside DUT

To:

Branch manager

127 Johannes Nkosi St

Greyville, Berea

South Africa

4001

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT YOUR PREMISES

Dear

I am Nkosingiphile Trevor Mchunu, a Master's student at the Durban University of Technology, identified by student number 21335138. My academic pursuit is centred around my thesis titled "Exploring the Effectiveness of Quality Administration Management Practices on Customer Retention and Satisfaction: A Case Study of Small and Medium Enterprises in the eThekweni Metropolitan Area."

I kindly seek your permission to involve a portion of my research in which I aim to include your Small and Medium Enterprises (SMMEs) database as willing participants. Enclosed, you will find a copy of my thoroughly developed research proposal, containing a comprehensive set of tools for data collection and consent forms, all integral to the research process. Furthermore, I am pleased to share an official endorsement letter from the Faculty of Accounting and Informatics Research Committee (FREC), underscoring the ethical and academic soundness of this proposed research project. Your thoughtful deliberation of this request is sincerely valued.

I plan to visit your Durban Chamber of Commerce and Industry premises at 127 Johannes Nkosi St, Greyville, Berea, 4001, on dates that suit your availability. During the visit, I will outline the purpose of my research, address any queries, and extend an invitation to participate. Participation is entirely voluntary, and all shared information will be treated confidentially, ensuring anonymity. Upon securing written consent, I will proceed to distribute the questionnaires, a process that is expected to last around 15 minutes.

Should you need additional information, feel free to reach out to me through my mobile number at 0743500153 or via email at 213351388@dut4life.ac.za. For inquiries concerning this research, my supervisors can be contacted via email at supervisor nduduzon3@dut.ac.za or through their office phone number, 031 373 8508. Your time and attention are greatly appreciated.

Kindly affix your signature below as an acknowledgment of your consent for me to proceed with the proposed research.

Yours sincerely

NT Mchunu

DUT Masters student

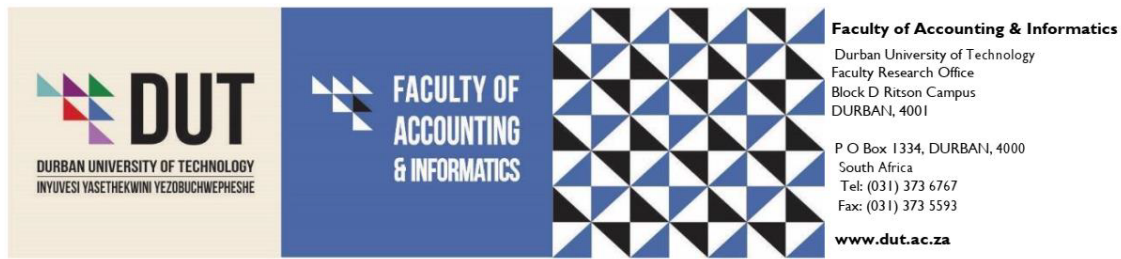
Approved by:

FREC Chair

Date

Faculty of Accounting and Informatics Research Ethics Committee

Appendix D: Appendix D: Ethics clearance



19 October 2023

Student: N Mchunu
Student Number: 21335138
Degree: Master of Management Sciences in Administration and Information Management
Email: 21335138@dut4life.ac.za
Supervisor: Dr NA Ngxongo
Supervisor email: NduduzoN3@dut.ac.za

Dear Student

EXPLORING QUALITY ADMINISTRATION MANAGEMENT PRACTICES ON CUSTOMER RETENTION AND SATISFICATION: CASE STUDY OF SMME's AT ETHEKWINI METROPOLITAN AREA

I am pleased to inform you that **FREC APPROVAL** has been granted to your proposal:

PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS IS NOT A FINAL APPROVAL LETTER. THE APPROVED DOCUMENTS WILL BE SENT TO DUT-IREC FOR ETHICS CLEARANCE.

- Applications will be allocated for quality checking and issuing of Provisional Approval with an ethics clearance number.
- Full Approval will only be issued once the applicant has met all DUT-IREC conditions i.e. submission of gatekeeper permission letter/s and/or piloting of data collection tool.

Yours Sincerely,

Dr. MV Thuraisingham
Faculty Research Ethics Committee Chairperson
Tel: +27 33 845 8804
Email: mariat@dut.ac.za





Institutional Research Ethics Committee
Research and Postgraduate Support Directorate
2nd Floor, Berwyn Court
Gate 1, Steve Biko Campus
Durban University of Technology
P O Box 1334, Durban, South Africa, 4001
Tel: 031 373 2375
Email: lavishad@dut.ac.za
http://www.dut.ac.za/research/institutional_research_ethics
www.dut.ac.za

5 February 2024

Mr N T Mchunu
12 Esther Roberts
Glenwood

Dear Mr Mchunu

Exploring Quality Administration Management Practices on Customer Retention and Satisfaction: Case study of Small Medium Micro Enterprises at EThekweni Metropolitan area

Ethics Clearance Number: IREC 221/23

The DUT-Institutional Research Ethics Committee acknowledges receipt of your notification regarding the piloting of your data collection tool.

Kindly ensure that participants used for the pilot study are not part of the main study.

In addition, the DUT-IREC acknowledges receipt of your gatekeeper permission letter.

Please note that **FULL APPROVAL** is granted to your research proposal. You may proceed with data collection.

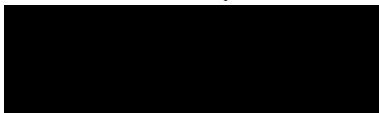
Any adverse events [serious or minor] which occur in connection with this study and/or which may alter its ethical consideration must be reported to the DUT-IREC according to the DUT-IREC SOP's.

Please note that any deviations from the approved proposal require the approval of the DUT-IREC as outlined in the DUT-IREC SOP's.

It is compulsory for a student or researcher to apply for recertification on an annual basis. The failure to do so will result in withdrawal of ethics clearance. It is the responsibility of the researcher and the supervisor to apply for recertification.

Please note that you are required to submit a Notification of Completion of Study form together with an abstract to the DUT-IREC office on completion of your study.

Yours Sincerely



Prof J K Adam
Chairperson: DUT-IREC

Appendix E: Appendix E: Participants Questionnaire

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETION:

- Use a tick to indicate your answer.
- Avoid choosing more than one answer per question from the options provided in the scale.
- Write clearly in the spaces provided.
- Name of the organisation: _____

QUESTIONNAIRE:

Section A

1. Are you aware of the impact of Quality Administration management on customer retention and satisfaction?

Yes NO ☐ ☐

2. Does Your Company/organisation practice Quality Administration Management?

Yes NO ☐ ☐

Section B

3. Customer retention

To what extent do the QAM practices influence the following customer retention aspects in your organisation? Using a scale of 1-5, where 1= strongly agree; 2=Agree; 3=Neutral; 4=Disagree; 5=Strongly Disagree

A measure of customer retention	1	2	3	4	5
	SA	A	N	D	SD
Acknowledge Good Customer Service					
Often Recommend your organisation.					
Share Information About your organisation.					
Volunteer as a Spokesperson for your organisation					
Value for Money					
Rarely Dissatisfied with Services					

4. Customer satisfaction

The statements below relate to the influence of quality administration management practices on customer satisfaction. Using a scale of 1-5, where 1= strongly agree; 2=Agree; 3=Neutral; 4=Disagree; 5=Strongly Disagree

statement	1	2	3	4	5
	SA	A	N	D	SD
Quality management strategies encourage consumer loyalty to the firm.					
Quality administration management methods encourage client retention.					
Teamwork is promoted through quality administrative management techniques.					
Job satisfaction is a result of quality administration management methods.					

5. Continuous improvement

The statements below relate to the influence of continuous improvement on customer retention and satisfaction. Using a scale of 1-5, where 1= strongly agree; 2=Agree; 3=Neutral; 4=Disagree; 5=Strongly Disagree

statement	1	2	3	4	5
	SA	A	N	D	SD
Continuous improvement results in more engaged staff, who are more likely to retain and satisfy customers.					
Continuous improvement results in improved customer service, which ensures client retention and satisfaction.					
A culture of continuous improvement has been demonstrated to increase staff engagement and decrease attrition rates, resulting in customer retention and satisfaction.					
Continuous improvement benefits an organisation by providing it with the people, procedures, and technologies it requires to deliver services in ways it was before incapable of doing.					
Continuous improvement allows the business to offer a greater number of clients and grow its services beyond its current capabilities.					

6. Implementation of Quality Administration management

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements. Using a scale of 1-5, where 1= strongly agree; 2=Agree; 3=Neutral; 4=Disagree; 5=Strongly Disagree,

statements	1	2	3	4	5
	SA	A	N	D	SD
In the organisation, there is evidence of high management participation in quality problems.					
The top management is the driving force behind quality management initiatives.					
The management offers all of the resources required for high-quality programming.					
The senior management is involved in the quality management initiatives.					
All stages and levels of quality management processes are overseen by senior management.					
In the organisation, strict quality management practices are used.					

Section C

- Please indicate your gender.

Male		Female	
------	--	--------	--

- Please indicate your age.

Under 30 years		31-35 years	
36-40 years		41-50 years	
51-60 years		More than 60 years	

- Please Indicate years of experience.

Less than 4 years		5 to 9 years	
10 to 19 years		Over 20 years	

- Please indicate your level of education.

No formal education		High School	
Diploma		Postgraduate degree	
Undergraduate degree			
Higher certificate			

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND EFFORT IN PARTICIPATING



INCWADI YOLWAZI

Isihloko Socwaningo Locwaningo : Ukuhlola isinqubo zokuphatha ukuphathwa kwekhwalthi ekugcinweni kwamakhasimende nokwaneliseka: Ucwaningo oluyisibonelo Lwamabhisinisi Amancane Aphakathi Aphakathi Kwase-EThekwini Metropolitan.

Umphenyi Omkhulu/s/umcwaningi: Nkosingiphile Trevor Mchunu: Postgraduate Diploma in management sciences, special in Business Administration. Co-Umphenyi/s/umphathi/s: UDkt. Nduduzo Andrias Ngxongo: PHD in Hospitality and Tourism

Isingeniso Esifushane kanye Nenhloso Yocwaningo : Inhloso enkulu yocwaningo ukuhlola i ukusebenza yezinqubo zokuphatha ukuphathwa kwekhwalthi ekugcinweni kwamakhasimende nokwaneliseka. Okubaluleke nakakhulu, ucwaningo lufuna ukuhlola indima yokuphatha ekugcinweni kwamakhasimende nokwaneliseka.

Ukubingelela : Umphathi/umphathi othandekayo

Zethula kumhlanganyeli: Ngingumfundi owenza unyaka wokuqala e-DUT ngenza ucwaningo lwe-MASTER OF MANAGEMENT SCIENCES IN ADMINISTRATION AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

Isimemo kulowo ongase abe umhlanganyeli : Ngithanda ukukumema, esikhundleni sakho njengabanikazi bamabhisinisi, umphathi, abaphathi nabasebenzi ukuthi babambe iqhaza ocwaningweni ngokwesihloko esingenhla socwaningo.

Luyini Ucwaningo: Ucwaningo lungachazwa ngokuthi a uphenyo oluhlelekile kanye nocwaningo lwezinto zokwakha nemithombo ukuze kutholwe amaqiniso futhi kufinyelele eziphethweni ezintsha

Uhlaka Lwezinqubo: Lolu cwaningo luzosebenzisa uhlu lwemibuzo oluzilawulayo lokuqoqwa kwedatha. Ukusatshalaliswa kohlu lwemibuzo kuzokwenzeka kuzilungiselelo ezingaqukethwe ngokuphazamiseka okuncane okuvela kumcwaningi. Okokugcina, njengoba, futhi uma kunesidingo, ulwazi lokulandelela luzocelwa ukuze kuphothulwe ucwaningo.

Isingozi noma Ukungakhululeki Kumbambiqhaza: Ngeke uphoqekele ukuthi ubambe iqhaza ocwaningweni ngaphandle kwemvume yakho noma imvume yakho. Uma umhlanganyeli ezwa noma yiluphi uhlobo lokungakhululeki ekubambeni iqhaza ocwaningweni, isifiso sakhe sizohlonishwa futhi azikho isingozi ezingase zibe nomthelela empilweni yabahlanganyeli noma yini, njengoba zingekho isinqubo zezokwelapha noma zesayensi ezihlelekile nenqubo yokuqoqwa kwedatha yalolu cwaningo locwaningo

Chaza umhlanganyeli ngezizathu zokuthi angase ahoxe Ocwaningweni: Uma ufisa ukuhoxisa ukuhlanganyela kwakho ocwaningweni, ngeke kube nemiphumela ehlelekile futhi ababambiqhaza bangenza kanjalo. Umcwaningi angase futhi akhethe ukuhoxisa ababambiqhaza uma betholakala benecala lokungathembeki nokuhlinzeka ngolwazi oludukisayo. Ukwethembeka kubaluleke kakhulu ekuziphatheni kwalolu cwaningo

Isinzuzo:: Abaphenduli' ukukhathazeka nokubukwa kuzokwazi ukuzwakala uma ucwaningo seluqediwe. Imikhakha yamabhisinisi izokwazi ukuqonda ukuthi abanye abantu bathini mayelana nempumelelo yokuphathwa kwekhwalithi kanye nendlela yokuvala isikhala kwezamabhisinisi.

Umholo:: Ngeke kube khona uhlobo lomholo oluhilelekile ekubambeni iqhaza kulolu cwaningo locwaningo. Ukubamba iqhaza kungokuzithandela kuphela futhi akubhekwa njengempopo nhlobo.

Isindleko Zokufunda : Ngeke kulindeleke ukuthi ukhokhe noma yisiphi isindleko ezihlobene nokuziphatha kwalolu cwaningo. Isindleko ezihiilelekile kulolu cwaningo kuzoba yilezo zesibopho somcwaningi .(.

Ukugcinwa kuyimfihlo: Uzohlala ungaziwa, futhi idatha eqoqiwe izofinyelelwa umcwaningi kanye nomphathi ohileleke ngokuqondile kulolu cwaningo. Idatha izosingathwa ngendlela yokuthi ingaphuli noma ingabi nomthelela enhlalakahleni yakho futhi uma kunesidingo sokulahla idatha ngemva kokuphuthulwa kocwaningo, lokhu kuzokwenziwa ngokusekelwe ezinqubweni zenyuvesi ukuze kungavezi ababambiqhaza nolwazi abalunikeze noma yini

Imiphumela: Imiphumela yocwaningo izotholakala uma iceliwe futhi izokwabiwa ngeposi. Kungenjalo, zingafinyelelwa endaweni yokugcina ye-inthanethi ye-DUT

Ukulimala okuhlobene nocwaningo: Njengoba lolu cwaningo kungelona uhlobo locwaningo lwesayensi noma lwezokwelapha, ngeke kube khona ukulimala okugcinwe ababambiqhaza njengoba kungekho ukuhlola noma isinqubo zezokwelapha ezingase zidinge amasampula ezokwelapha ukuthi athathwe kubahlanganyeli. Lolu cwaningo locwaningo lungokwesayensi yezenhlalo .(.

Ukugcinwa kwawo wonke amakhophi e-elektronikhi naqinile okuhlanganisa nokuqoshwa kwekhasethi: Umcwaningi kuphela ozoba nokufinyelela kuyo yonke idatha eqoqwe futhi ehloselwe injongo yalolu cwaningo. Idatha ye-elektronikhi izogcinwa ku-Google Drayivu kuze kube yilapho imiphumela yalolu cwaningo inikezwa abahloli

Abantu ongaxhumana nabo Esimeni Sanoma lyiphi Isinkinga noma Imibuzo: (Umphathi nemininingwane) Ngicela uthinte umcwaningi (iseli ku 0740350 0153 noma nge-imeyili btnmchunu@gmail.com), umphathi wami, uDkt. Ngxongo (fonela inombolo 031 373 5515.) noma umlawuli we-Institutional Research Ethics ku-031 373 2375. Isikhalazo zingabikwa kuMqondisi Obambile: Ucwaningo kanye Nokwesekwa Kweziqu Zokuthweswa Isiqu kumqondisi research@dut.ac.za



IMVUME

Isihloko Esigcwele Socwaningo: kokuhlola isinqubo zokuphatha ukuphathwa kwekhwalithi ekugcinweni kwamakhasimende nokwaneliseka: Ucwaningo oluyisibonelo lwamaBhisinisi Amancane Amaphakathi Aphakathi nendawo endaweni ye-EThekwini Metropolitan

Amagama Omcwaningi/abacwaningi: Mnu NT Mchunu

Isitatimende Sesivumelwano Sokubamba iqhaza Ocwaningweni Locwaningo:

Ngalokhu ngiyaqinisekisa ukuthi ngitshelwe umcwaningi (igama lika umcwaningi), mayelana nemvelo, ukuziphatha, isinzuzo kanye nezingozi zalolu cwaningo - Ukucaciswa Kwezimiso Zokuziphatha Zocwaningo

Inombolo: __,

•Ngithole, ngafunda futhi ngaqonda ulwazi olubhaliwe olungenhla (Incwadi Yomhlanganyeli ye

Ulwazi) mayelana nocwaningo.

•Ngiyazi ukuthi imiphumela yocwaningo, okuhlanganisa imininingwane yomuntu siqu mayelana nobulili bami, ubudala, usuku lokuzalwa, ama-initials kanye nokuxilongwa kuzocutshungulwa ngokungaziwa kube umbiko wocwaningo.

•Ngenxa yezidingo zocwaningo, ngiyavuma ukuthi idatha eqoqwe phakathi nalolu cwaningo ingacutshungulwa ohlelweni lwekhompyutha ngumcwaningi.

•Ngicela, nganoma yisiphi isikhathi, ngaphandle kokubandlulula, ngihoxise imvume yami nokubamba iqhaza ocwaningweni.

•Ngibe nethuba elanele lokubuza imibuzo futhi (ngenkululeko yami yokuzikhethela) ngisimemezele ukuthi ngikulungele ukubamba iqhaza ocwaningweni.

•Ngityaqonda ukuthi okutholakele okusha okubalulekile okuthuthukiswe phakathi nalolu cwaningo okungenzeka

ukuhlobana nokubamba iqhaza kwami kuzokwenziwa kutholakale kimi.

.....
.....

Igama Eligcwele Lomhlanganyeli Usuku Isikhathi Isiginesha/ Isithupha
sokudla

Mina, NT Mchunu (igama lomcwaningi) ngityaqinisekisa ukuthi umhlanganyeli ongenhla waziswe ngokugcwele mayelana nemvelo, ukuziphatha, kanye nezingozi zocwaningo olungenhla.

Igama eligcwele lomcwaningi Usuku Isiginesha

.....
.....

Igama eligcwele lofakazi (uma likhona) usuku isiginesha

.....
.....

Igama eligcwele lomnakekeli osemthethweni (uma likhona) usuku
isiginesha

.....
.....



Faculty of accounting and informatics

Department of Information and Corporate Management

Nkosingiphile Trevor Mchunu

21335138

Durban University of Technology

Ukuhlola Imikhuba Yokuphatha Ikhwalithi Ekugcinweni Kwekhasimende
Nokwaneliseka

Umhlanganyeli othandekayo

Ngingu Nkosingiphile Trevor Mchunu, umfundi we-master's eDurban University of Technology. Umenywe ngomusa ukuthi ubambe iqhaza ocwaningweni locwaningo olunesihloko esithi "Exploring Quality Administration Practices on Customer Retention and Satisfaction". Inhloso yocwaningo ukunquma umthelela omuhle wokuphathwa kwekhwalithi. Uhlu lwemibuzo olufakiwe lwenzelwe ukuqoqa ulwazi.

Ukubamba iqhaza kwakho kulolu cwaningo kungokuzithandela ngokuphelele. Ungase wenqabe ngokuphelele noma ushiye ungenalutho noma yimuphi umbuzo ongafuni ukuwuphendula. Azikho isingozi ezaziwayo zokubamba iqhaza ngale

kwalezo ezihlangatshezwana nazo ekuphileni kwansuku zonke. Impendulo yakho izohlala iyimfihlo futhi ingaziwa. Idatha evela kulolu cwaningo izogcinwa ivikelekile futhi ibikwe kuphela njengesamba esihlanganisiwe esihlanganisiwe. Akekho omunye ngaphandle komcwaningi ozokwazi isimpendulo zakho kulolu hlu lwemibuzo.

Uma uvuma ukubamba iqhaza kulolu cwaningo, sicela uphendule imibuzo kuhlu lwemibuzo ngokusemandleni akho. Kufanele kuthathe cishe imizuzu eyi-15 ukuqeda. Sicela ubuyisele uhlu lwemibuzo ngokushesha ngangokunokwenzeka uma usuqedile.

Uma unemibuzo mayelana nalolu cwaningo locwaningo, zizwe ukhululekile ukuxhumana nomphathi wami wocwaningo uDkt. Ngxongo ku Nduduzon3@dut.ac.za.

Siyabonga ngosizo lwakho kulo mzamo obalulekile.

Oqotho owakho

Trevor Mchunu

UHLU LWEMIBUZO LWABAHLANGANYELI

IMIYALELO YOKUQEDWA:

- Sebenzisa umaka ukukhombisa impendulo yakho.
- Gwema ukukhetha impendulo engaphezu kweyodwa embuzweni ngamunye ezinkethweni ezinikezwe esikalini.
- Bhala ngokucacile ezikhaleni ezinikeziwe.
- Igama lenhlangano: _____

IMIBUZO:

Isigaba A

- Sicela ukhombise ubulili bakho.

Owesilisa		Owesifazane	
-----------	--	-------------	--

- Sicela ukhombise iminyaka yakho.

Ngaphansi kweminyaka engu-30		Iminyaka engu 31-35	
Iminyaka engu 36-40		Iminyaka engu 41-50	
Iminyaka engu 51-60		Iminyaka engaphezu kuka-60	

- Sicela Ubonise iminyaka yesipiliyoni

Ngaphansi kweminyaka engu-4		Iminyaka ewu-5 kuye kweyi-9	
Iminyaka eyi-10 kuye kweyi-19		Ngaphezu kweminyaka ewu-20	

•Sicela ukhombise isinga lakho lemfundo

Ayikho imfundo ehlelekile		Isikole samabanga aphezulu	
Idiploma		Isiqu ze-Postgraduate	
Isiqu ze-Undergraduate			
Isitifiketi esiphezulu			

Isigaba B

1. Ingabe uyawazi umthelela wokuphathwa Kwekhwalithi Ekugcinweni kwamakhasimende nokwaneliseka?

Yebo Cha ☐ ☐

1.Ingabe Inkampani Yakho/inhlangano yenza Ukuphathwa Kwekhwalithi Yokuphatha?

Yebo Cha ☐ ☐

Isigaba C

3. Ukugcinwa kwekhasimende

Isinqubo ze-QAM zinethonya elingakanani isici ezilandelayo zokugcinwa kwamakhasimende enhlanganweni yakho? Kusetshenziswa isikali sika-1-5, lapho i-1= ivuma khona ngokuqinile; 2= Ukuvuma; 3=Okungathathi hlangothi; 4=ukungavumelani; 5=Ukungavumelani ngokuqinile

Isilinganiso kwamakhasimende	sokugcinwa	1	2	3	4	5
		SA	A	N	D	SD
Vumela Isevisi Yekhasimende Elihle						
Ngokuvamile Ncoma inhlangothi yakho						
Yabelana Ngolwazi Ngenhlangothi yakho						
Ivolontiya njengoMkhulumeli wenhlangothi yakho						
Inani Lemali						
Akuvamile Ukunganeliseki Ngezinsizakalo						

4. Ukwaneliseka kwekhasimende

Isitatimende ezingezansi zihlobene nomthelela wezinqubo zokuphatha ikhwalithi ekwanelisekeni kwamakhasimende. Kusetshenziswa isikali sika-1-5, lapho i-1= ivuma khona ngokuqinile; 2=ukuvuma; 3=Okungathathi hlangothi; 4=ukungavunelani; 5=Ukungavumelani ngokuqinile

isitatimende	1	2	3	4	5
	SA	A	N	D	SD
Amasu okuphatha ikhwalithi akhuthaza ukwethembeka kwabathengi enkampanini.					
Isindlela zokuphatha ikhwalithi zikhuthaza ukugcinwa kwamakhasimende.					
Ukusebenzisana kuthuthukiswa ngamasu okuphatha asezingeni eliphezulu.					
Ukwaneliseka komsebenzi kuwumphumela wezindlela zokuphatha isinga.					

5. Ukuthuthukiswa okuqhubekayo

Isitatimende ezingezansi zihlobene nomthelela wokuthuthuka okuqhubekayo ekugcinweni kwamakhasimende nokwaneliseka. Kusetshenziswa isikali sika-1-5, lapho i-1= uvuma khona ngokuqinile; 2=uvuma; 3=Okungathathi hlangothi; 4=ukungavumi; 5=Ukungavumelani ngokuqinile

isitatimende	1	2	3	4	5
	SA	A	N	D	SD
Ukuthuthukiswa okuqhubekayo kubangela isisebenzi ezibambe iqhaza kakhulu, okungenzeka ukuthi zigcine futhi zanelise amakhasimende.					
Ukuthuthukiswa okuqhubekayo kubangela isevisi yamakhasimende ethuthukisiwe, eqinisekisa ukugcinwa kwamakhasimende nokwaneliseka.					
Isiko lokuthuthukisa okuqhubekayo liye laboniswa ukuze kwandiswe ukuzibandakanya kwabasebenzi kanye nokunciphisa amazinga okunciphisa, okuholela ekugcinweni kwamakhasimende nokwaneliseka.					
Ukuthuthukiswa okuqhubekayo kuzuzisa inhlangothi ngokuyinikeza abantu, isinqubo, nobuchwepheshe obudingayo ukuze ilethe isinsizakalo ngezindlela ebikade ingakwazi ukuzenza.					
Ukuthuthukiswa okuqhubekayo kuvumela ibhisinisi ukuthi linikeze inani elikhulu lamakhasimende futhi likhulise isinsizakalo zalo ngaphezu kwamakhono alo amanje.					

6. Ukuqaliswa kokuphathwa kwekhwalithi

Sicela ubonise isinga ovumelana ngalo nezitatimende ezilandelayo. Kusetshenziswa isikali sika-1-5, lapho i-1= uvuma khona ngokuqinile; 2=ukuvuma; 3=Okungathathi hlangothi; 4=ukungavumi; 5=Ukungavumelani ngokuqinile,

isitatimende	1	2	3	4	5
	SA	A	N	D	SD
Enhlanganweni, kunobufakazi bokubamba iqhaza okuphezulu kwabaphathi ezinkingeni zekhwalthi.					
Abaphathi abaphezulu yibona abaqhuba isinhlelo zokuphatha ikhwalthi.					
Abaphathi banikeza zonke isinsiza ezidingekayo ezinhlelweni zekhwalthi ephezulu.					
Abaphathi abakhulu babambe iqhaza ezinhlelweni zokuphatha ikhwalthi.					
Zonke isigaba namazinga ezinqubo zokuphatha ikhwalthi zenganyelwe abaphathi abaphezulu.					
Enhlanganweni, kusetshenziswa isinqubo eziqinile zokuphatha ikhwalthi.					

Appendix F: Editor's Letter.



Website: www.chiefeditors.net

Email: info@chiefeditors.net or boldwin@chiefeditors.net

Cell: 063 022 3162 or 072 492 6144

Dear Sir/madam

Re: Confirmation of editing and proofreading

This letter informs the responsible authorities that our team proofread and edited the work authored by **Nkosingiphile Trevor Mchunu (21335138)** to the best of its ability. Our editing involves spelling check, punctuation, grammar, sentence construction, word reduction, cross reference citations, basic formatting (general layout), presentation style, indexing, and other mechanics of the English language. No technical alterations have been made.

Corrections were made using track changes, which have been clearly outlined for the author's reference. It is the onus of the author to accept or reject the suggested changes.

Please do not hesitate to contact us on the details provided above for more information.

Disclaimer: The editor will not be held responsible for any errors introduced due to the changes made after editing.

Yours,

[Redacted Signature]

B. Mutsvene (Coordinator)

Affiliation: International Affiliation of Writers Guilds (IAWG)

IAWG



TMchunu21335138_ChaptersOnlyReport_31/05/2024

ORIGINALITY REPORT

10%	8%	1%	4%
SIMILARITY INDEX	INTERNET SOURCES	PUBLICATIONS	STUDENT PAPERS

PRIMARY SOURCES

1	Submitted to University for Development Studies Student Paper	1%
2	rajpub.com Internet Source	1%
3	Submitted to Accra Business School Student Paper	1%
4	ir.jkuat.ac.ke Internet Source	1%
5	researchspace.ukzn.ac.za Internet Source	<1%
6	core.ac.uk Internet Source	<1%
7	dspace.cbe.ac.tz:8080 Internet Source	<1%
8	repository.up.ac.za Internet Source	<1%
9	www.udsspace.uds.edu.gh Internet Source	<1%