IMPROVING THE SERVICE QUALITY
OF TAXI OPERATORS IN
THE NELSON MANDELA BAY

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PORT ELIZABETH
I, Xolile Michael Gule, hereby declare that:

- the work in this dissertation is my own original work;
- all sources used or referred to have been documented and acknowledged; and
- this dissertation has not been previously submitted in full or partial fulfilment of the requirements for an equivalent or higher qualification at any other recognised educational institution.

__________________________
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Date
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ABSTRACT

The study focused on the taxi industry as a services industry due to its contribution to the economies of both developed and the developing countries. The purpose of this study was to investigate ways to improve service delivery in the South African taxi industry. This industry is one of the underperforming industries in South Africa with regard to service quality due to over-serviced taxi routes and a lack of information about the needs and desires of the taxi commuters.

The primary objective of this study was to investigate how to improve the service quality of taxi operators in the Nelson Mandela Bay by applying theories and concepts of services marketing and total quality management (TQM). More specifically, the study investigated whether taxi drivers have the required knowledge of services marketing and service quality, and what service quality challenges taxi drivers and commuters face.

The sample consisted of 20 taxi drivers and 101 student commuters using taxis on the Port Elizabeth routes.

The empirical results showed that taxi drivers perform unsatisfactorily on the four TQM elements: leadership, employee involvement, product/process excellence and customer focus. The results also reflected the general perception in the Eastern Cape that taxi service quality is poor.

Of the five service quality dimensions (tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy), the taxi drivers performed the best in reliability and the worst in empathy. The empirical results further suggested that taxi services do not meet the expectations of commuters, as deficits were reported between expectations and perceptions of actual service quality.

The different quality dimensions used in the measurement of taxi service quality and their empirical results could provide a guideline to taxi service leadership and government on the critical aspects of taxi service quality.
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CHAPTER 1

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the scope of the study is discussed. This includes the problem statement, research objectives, methodology, and the outline of the chapters as well as an explanation of the main terminology used in the study.

1.2 THE PROBLEM STATEMENT

The study focuses on the taxi industry as a services industry due to its contribution to the economies of both developed and the developing countries (Lamb, Hair, McDaniel, Boshoff & Terblanche (2004:438). Due to the growing need for services, many new service providers have entered the services market. The new entrants have intensified competition in the services industry. In addition, globalisation has intensified the competitive environment.

Exposure to more information due to technological advances, has contributed to increased customer service expectations (Zeithaml, Parasuraman & Berry 1990). As a result, customers are sometimes more knowledgeable than their service providers with regard to service quality requirements. South African service providers are therefore compelled to meet these heightened service expectations. When designing their business strategies, the service providers must therefore increasingly choose service quality as the basis upon which they differentiate themselves from their competitors (Hitt, Hoskisson & Ireland 2007).

Low service quality levels in many South Africa industries have been reported (Fourie & Pretorius 2005). The situation appears to be even more precarious within some businesses in the informal sector of the Eastern Cape (Ndoni 2009). The taxi industry, operating primarily in the informal sector, is one of the underperforming industries with regard to service quality due to over-serviced taxi routes and a lack of
information about the needs and desires of the taxi commuters (McCaul, 1990; Majek 2003; Fourie & Pretorius 2008). Moreover, a large number of taxi drivers appear to have very low literacy standards (Binge 2003). Many of the taxi drivers are also ignorant about the new Bus Rapid Transport (BRT) project, regardless of the fact that information about the project was available in print and electronic media (Ndabeni 2008).

The BRT forms part of the Integrated Public Transport Plan (IPTP), which is the South Africa government’s strategy to create an efficient and effective public transportation system by coordinating the different public transportation modes. Through the IPTP, the government seeks to integrate taxis, buses and train services into an efficient and effective public transportation system. BRT focuses on the main transportation routes where separate lanes are assigned to buses in order to ensure that commuters are transported to their destination speedily. The new buses to be used in the BRT system meet a number of technical requirements such as safety standards, environmentally friendly vehicles and to cater for the needs of the vulnerable members of our society such as the physically disabled.

Ignorance about the BRT has led to resistance to the project (De Kock 2008). In addition, the IPTP has a narrow focus in relation to service quality improvement. For example, IPTP tends to focus on the service provider as the only determinant of service quality perceptions. According to Palmer (1998), customer involvement in the production and delivery of the service means that both production and delivery roles are critical in determining service quality perceptions. There are also “difficult” customers who have a potential of adversely affecting the quality of the service process if they are not properly managed (Belding 2004). It is also further deduced that a gap exists in knowledge in the area of taxi services. According to Mokonyama (2008), relatively few financial resources are being allocated to transportation research.

Furthermore, the country's economy is currently growing in a manner that has been shedding jobs, a situation that has been aggravated by the start of the worldwide economic recession (Sonjica & Wilson 2008). The taxi industry has been providing
alternative employment to an increasingly number of people, thereby contributing significantly to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (Majeke 2003). An efficient and effective public transportation system is needed for sustainable economic growth because the taxi services industry transports millions of South Africans everyday (McCaul 1990). The taxi industry is also pivotal to the promotion of tourism in the country, especially against the background of South Africa hosting the FIFA Soccer World Cup in 2010.

Many studies have been conducted on the South African taxi industry, which mostly focused on the need for regulation of the industry in order to provide a solution to problems such as overtraded routes and the resultant taxi violence (McCaul 1990; Majeke 2003; Fourie & Pretorius 2005). Although these studies addressed important aspects of quality in respect of taxi services, they seemed to view regulation as the only viable option to increase service quality. These studies are silent on the problems experienced by current taxi associations, necessitating more research in this area (Sonjica & Wilson 2008). Not only would such research contribute towards a better understanding of the taxi service in the Nelson Mandela Bay area but it would respond to the general call of applied research to provide solutions to social problems (Huysamen 1994).

1.3 THE RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1.3.1 Primary objective

The primary objective of this study is to investigate how to improve the service quality of taxi operators in the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality by applying theories and concepts of services marketing.

1.3.2 Secondary objectives

The following secondary objectives are pursued:
- to establish whether taxi drivers have the required knowledge of services marketing and service quality, and
- to identify service quality challenges faced by both taxi drivers and commuters.
1.3.3 Research design objectives

To achieve the above-mentioned objectives, the following research design objectives are pursued:

- To perform a secondary literature review on the South African taxi industry;
- to construct a questionnaire;
- to collect the data from the target sample, using the questionnaire;
- to capture and analyse the raw data; and
- to interpret the findings, draw conclusions and make recommendations to management based on these findings.

1.4 METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

In this section, the research paradigm (approach), sample, measuring instruments and data analyses techniques are briefly explained. A comprehensive discussion on these aspects is provided in Chapter 3.

1.4.1 The research paradigm

The research design used in the study was a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches, referred to as triangulation (Wisker 2005:109). The qualitative component included participant observation, conversations, semi-structured interviews and a literature review. The quantitative part of the study comprised standardised responses to a questionnaire.

1.4.2 The sample

The target population consisted of respondents who use taxis for between three and five days in a five-day working week. The target sample also included mostly black commuters, as they are the population group that is largely dependent on public transportation such as taxis (McCaul 1990; Majele 2003).
Convenience sampling was used to select 20 taxi drivers and 101 student commuters using taxis on the Port Elizabeth routes. The sample selection is explained more extensively in Chapter 3.

1.4.3 The measuring instruments

A questionnaire was constructed to measure elements of total quality management (TQM) and service quality. The TQM elements included leadership, employee involvement, product/process excellence and customer focus (Davis & Heineke 2005). Leadership is critical in an organisation as it gives direction to the productive activities of a firm and it controls resources. However leadership cannot succeed in delivering a high quality product without full commitment of the employees. Efficiency and effectiveness must always underpin the production and delivery of a product or service (Grönroos 2000). According to Palmer (1998), it is virtually impossible to meet or exceed customer expectations without constantly being focused on customer needs. Zeithaml, Bitner and Gremler's (2006) expectation-perception comparison instrument was used to elicit commuters’ expectations and perceived experiences of actual service delivery by taxis. Both the TQM and service quality questionnaire statement were anchored to a 7-point Likert scale ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (7) strongly agree.

Two questionnaires were constructed, one for taxi drivers and another for commuters. The first questionnaire included open-ended questions to taxi operators on their understanding of service quality. The second questionnaire elicited commuters’ expectations and perceived experiences of actual service delivery by taxis.

1.4.4 Data analysis

Thematic analysis (Gomm 2004:185) was used to capture themes, which emerged from the owners’ responses to the open-ended questions. The STATISTICA version 6.1 (2003) computer software programme was used to analyse the data from the commuters’ questionnaires. The instruments were tested for reliability and mean scores, standard deviations and t-tests were calculated.
1.5 TERMINOLOGY

The following are key concepts and names used in the study:

**Services**: Services are defined as the taxi market offering that is largely intangible. Production and consumption take place simultaneously. However, the tangible component of the taxi services is also regarded as critical to quality perceptions of commuters.

**Quality**: The degree to which the taxi market offering meets or exceeds commuter’s expectation.

**Service quality**: The extent to which the tangible as well as the intangible attributes of a taxi service meet or exceed commuter’s expectations.

**Taxi industry**: Taxi industry refers to all individuals and groups who make a living out of providing taxi services. That includes those who are involved in the core business of the taxis, which is transportation of commuters, the administrators, providers of auxiliary services such as vehicle washers and food vendors. Taxi operators who belong to taxi associations and those who work independently whether the latter are registered or not are regarded as part of the taxi industry.

**Taxi operator**: The owner of taxis, specifically drivers, employed drivers and conductors (taxi assistants).

**Taxi associations**: The taxi organisations that the different taxi operators are affiliated to. These taxi organisations vary in size and geographical scope from small district associations to large national associations.

**Red Taxi Association**: An assumed name used for the Port Elizabeth and District Taxi Association in the present study.

**Black Taxi Association**: An assumed name used for the Uncedo Taxi Association in the present study.
1.6 OUTLINE OF THE STUDY

The study is divided into five chapters. The first chapter outlines the scope of the study, the problem statement, and the research objectives, which comprise primary and secondary research objectives, methodology of the study and definitions of terminology used in the study. In Chapter 2, traditional marketing versus services marketing, service quality, total quality management (TQM) and service delivery in the South African taxi industry are discussed. In Chapter 3, the research design, population and sampling frame, measuring instruments and data collection procedure are explained. In Chapter 4, empirical results of both the qualitative and the quantitative components of the study are reported and discussed. In Chapter 5, the final chapter, conclusions are drawn and recommendations for theory and practice are made.
CHAPTER 2
SERVICES MARKETING AND THE SOUTH AFRICAN TAXI INDUSTRY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter the scope of the entire study was provided. Chapter 2 reviews the concept, services marketing, as it applies to the South African taxi industry. This literature review also covers concepts such as service quality and total quality management (TQM). The review focuses on the application of these concepts within the South African taxi industry.

2.2 TRADITIONAL MARKETING VERSUS SERVICES MARKETING

Marketing scholars suggest that the marketing of services is fundamentally different from traditional marketing and therefore deserves specialised and focused treatment (Palmer 1998:2). There is general agreement that traditional marketing comprises the four P’s of marketing: product, price, promotion and place (Palmer 1998; Lamb et al. 2004; Grönroos 2000). Lamb et al. (2004) referred to these four Ps as the “marketing mix”. Smith (2003) defined the marketing mix as a framework that assists in structuring the approach to each market. This therefore means that a firm’s market offering is an outcome of a meticulously planned integration of the four components of the marketing mix.

These four P’s are so inextricably linked, that a change in any one of them is bound to affect the other three (Lamb et al. 2004). The competency in creating the right balance between the four components of the marketing mix is a precursor in exceeding customer expectations and is also a source of an enduring competitive advantage. For example, a change in the quality features of a product would lead to changes in the price customers are prepared to pay for the product.

Product, the first P, is some favourable or unfavourable tangible or intangible market offering (Lamb et. 2004). It is at the centre of a firm’s market offering. It therefore
mean that it will be illogical for a firm to make price, promotion and place decisions without inter alia having a specific product or service in mind.

Lamb et al. (2004) identify the following product levels:

- Core benefit, which is the fundamental value that a customer is purchasing.
- Basic product, which reflects the transformation of the fundamental value into a tangible product.
- Expected product, which relates to customer expectations with regard to the product.
- Augmented product, which refers to a combination of attributes that exceed customer expectations.
- Potential product, which actually addresses improvement changes that a product might go through in the near future.

The second P is pricing. A price is that which is sacrificed in exchange to acquire a product, whether it is a good or service (Lamb et al. 2004). It represents a point of compromise between what a customer is prepared to pay and what the firm is prepared to accept for its product. O Connor and Galvin (2001) highlighted the importance of basing firm’s prices on credible marketing information.

Lamb et al. (2004) differentiate between the following pricing objectives:

- Profit orientated objectives, which include market share pricing (target a percentage of total sales in the industry).
- Sales maximisation, which focuses on rising sales regardless of other factors.
- Status pricing, which was aimed at keeping up with the existing or meeting the prices of competitors.

Promotion, the third P, is fundamentally aimed at making the customer aware that a particular product or firm exists (Lamb et al. 2004). A promotion is targeted at ensuring sales and future sales. Advertising creates, sustains and increase customer awareness about a firm and/or its products and is one of the predominant types of
promotion. Public relations are also an integral part of a promotion strategy. Public relations focus on the evaluating public attitudes and the identification of matters which may invoke public dissatisfaction.

Sales promotion, which provides short term incentives to encourage consumers or intermediaries to buy a product immediately, is the third type of promotion. Last but not least, personal selling is a promotion tactic whereby representatives of the organisation directly sell the product to consumers, and in doing so eliminating intermediaries (Burger 2006).

The final P, namely place or distribution, is where and when the customer buys and consumes a good or service (Smith 2003). Lamb et al. (2004) define place as a business structure of interdependent firms which emanates from production to the final consumer. The various individuals or organisations (intermediaries) which connect the producer to the final consumer constitute the value chain (Hitt et al. 2007). Each intermediary adds value to the product whilst the final cost for the consumer progressively increases.

Apart from single distribution channels, the following channels, among others, have been identified: (Lamb et al. 2004)

- Multiple channels, which refer to two or more channels used to distribute a firm’s product.
- Non-traditional channel, which include the internet, mail order or infomercials.
- Strategic channels, which refer to a firm using the distribution channel of another organisation, because the latter distribution channel is already established.

Traditional marketing has been associated with physical products, which are produced mostly in the absence of a customer. Zeithaml et al. (2006) and Davis and Heineke (2005) however suggest that three other Ps should be added to the current
four as far as the marketing of services is concerned, namely people, physical evidence and process.

*People* include both employees and customers (Zeithaml *et al.* 2006). Providing service to the customer should always inform the marketing initiatives of an organisation (Grönroos 2000:3). Employees, on the other hand, are important in ensuring that a traditional marketing strategy is a success. Strategic human resource decisions about recruitment, training and development must therefore be implemented with the aim of facilitating skills acquisition necessary for delivering on service promises. This is especially true of employees that interface with the customers.

It is furthermore important that customers participate in the production and delivery of a service. Zeithaml *et al.* (2006) assert that the ability of customers to participate meaningfully in the service process is very important in the provision of certain services because the quality of input from the customer determines the quality of the service process and outcome. Zeithaml *et al.* (2006) believe that customers who have been educated and trained in their roles in the service process participate positively in the service. This elevates the customer to a position of partner in the services process (Grönroos 2000).

*Physical evidence* refers to equipment, facility design and employee dress codes of the service provider (Zeithaml *et al.* 2006). These physical aspects of service delivery have been identified as crucial in customer perceptions of quality (Palmer 1998:10). Services are largely intangible and therefore uncertain in respect of purchasing decisions. To reduce uncertainty about a purchase, people tend to rely on tangible aspects as indicators of the potential quality of service they will receive.

Service is a *process* (Zeithaml *et al.* 2006). In other words, it is a flow of activities that constitutes various steps with different degrees of customer involvement (Grönroos 2000). This categorisation of service as a process caused a paradigm shift from the traditional four P’s approach to the marketing of services. The focus shifted to integration across functions as well as across the hierarchical structure of
the organisation (Miller 1998:160). To illustrate this, some activities of the service process are performed in front of the customer, which necessitates that efficiency and effectiveness of the service provider must be demonstrated at all times. Production and marketing functions are therefore integrated in the above-mentioned example. Secondly, the front-line employees’ service performance must demonstrate the vision of the organisation; they must act as part-owners of the company.

The present study subscribes to the total concept of services marketing, which includes the traditional four P’s, as well as the additional P’s (people, physical evidence and process). The study asserts that a focus on all these elements are crucial to improve service quality.

2.3 SERVICE QUALITY

Service quality is an integral part of services marketing (Grönroos 2000). Service quality has multiple indicators (Wagenaar & Babbie 1992). Suan and Combs (1976), cited in Palmer (1998:153), differentiate between instrumental and expressive quality dimensions. The former refers to the physical aspect of a service, while the latter refers to intangible or psychological elements of a service.

Grönroos (2000) distinguishes between technical and functional quality. Technical quality encapsulates elements of quality that are relatively measurable and is usually associated with the outcome of a service, similar to instrumental quality. Functional quality relates to the manner in which the service is produced and delivered (Davis & Heineke 2005). Palmer (1998:153) asserts that functional quality is difficult to measure but stressed that difficulties with measurement do not mean service quality should not be measured. It is important that service quality in all its facets should be measured and improved.

Managers are continuously challenged to measure and improve quality in services. Zeithaml et al. (1990:161) propose five quality dimensions, namely:

- Tangibles: physical aspects of a service
• Reliability: dependability performance
• Responsiveness: promptness and helpfulness
• Assurance: competence, courtesy, credibility and security
• Empathy: understanding of the predicament of customer and the expression of genuine feelings.

Davis and Heineke (2005) suggest that the above-mentioned dimensions of quality can be effective tools in service quality improvement initiatives when they are used in conjunction with TQM principles.

2.4 TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT (TQM)

Davis and Heineke (2005:283) define TQM as a quality improvement system that involves every functional department and all hierarchical levels in an organisation. TQM is designed to facilitate the functional integration and alignment of the organisation's activities and processes through various levels of an organisation (Zeithaml et al. 2006). Important elements of TQM are leadership, employee involvement, product/process excellence and customer focus.

2.4.1 Leadership

Edward Deming, an expert on quality claims that leadership causes 85% of a firm’s quality problems (Davis & Heineke 2005:274). Werner (2004:332) concurs that it is the calibre of the leadership in a company that determines the quality of their employees’ performance. According to Werner (2004), leadership cannot be absolved from ultimate responsibility for quality, even if quality problems could be traced back to faulty equipment or an unskilled labour force. Leadership has the final responsibility to ensure that good equipment and a skilled labour force is available for the production process (Hitt et al. 2007). Leaders should safeguard the interests of the entire firm.

The leadership of a company has a legal responsibility to ensure that a firm creates value for its shareholders (Miller 1998:6). They therefore have the final say on the business strategy pursued by a firm (Hitt et al. 2007:26). Business strategy
determines the organisational structure, policies, procedures and actions required to realise the objectives of the firm. According to Juran (1994:13), the leadership of an organisation therefore finally decides whether quality will be the focus of a company’s marketing policies, procedures and actions. Leadership is therefore a key driver of a total quality management approach.

2.4.2 Employee involvement

Total Quality Management (TQM) cannot successfully be implemented in an organisation, whether product or service orientated, without the genuine involvement of employees (Beckford 2002). Zemke and Woods (1999:209) suggest that the best way to obtain and maintain enduring commitment of employees to high quality performance is to create ownership among employees of the firm. Zemke and Woods (1999) argue that employees would be more willing to engage in productive activities if they had a stake in the firm.

Employees, especially those who are in contact with the customers, called frontline employees, are an important part of the market offering (Palmer 1998). Anderson and Zemke (1998) concur that frontline employees are the epitome of what an organisation stands for as far as quality standards are concerned. Grönroos (2000) however asserts that these employees tend to be at the lowest levels of a company’s hierarchy and therefore lack authority and capacity to make instantaneous value-creating decisions. These employees should be trained and should receive the necessary authority to make autonomous decisions to serve customers effectively. In fact, according to Grönroos (2000) everyone in a service organisation should be a marketer.

2.4.3 Product/ process excellence

The process of improving quality in an organisation can take many forms depending on strategic objectives and resource constraints. According to Juran (1989:30) most quality-enhancing initiatives involve the following:

- Creating new products or service to replace existing ones;
• Changing the technological systems used by the firm; and
• Revamping the production and delivery processes.

Many companies conduct product or service development in response to a current or anticipated drop in sales. Lamb et al. (2004) identified a number of structures that are involved in new product development: new product committees and departments, venture teams and intrapreneurs, and simultaneous development. These structures have the same purpose, namely the development of new products. The structures, however, differ in terms of their composition, lifespan, and the time lapses between idea generation and product roll out. Although these structures were originally meant for production, with some changes they could also be applied to services marketing. The strength of the structures is in the fact that they enable an organisation to respond to customers’ changing needs, thereby enhancing perceptions of quality (Lovelock 2001:3). A new product or service, which satisfies the customer more, has a higher perceived quality (Palmer 1998:10). Developing a new service to improve the overall quality of the core service is also an effective strategy to gain a competitive advantage over competitors (Grönroos 2000:6).

Another way to achieve product/process excellence is the introduction of new technology (Juran 1989:3). The aim of technology is to increase the efficiency of a product or a service. To achieve process excellence, efficiency should precede effectiveness (Gitman 2006:238). Efficiency relates to the minimisation of costs and maximisation of profits, while effectiveness refers to a product or service that performs as it was meant to perform (Snyder et al. 1994:30).

Finally, product/process excellence can be achieved by revamping production and delivery processes to decrease or eliminate failure points (Juran 1989:30). It is important to note that in service marketing some activities take place in the absence of customers whilst others are executed in the presence of customers. In other words, some activities are executed either below or above the line of visibility (Davis & Heineke 2005:225). Managers of service firms often mistakenly tend to concentrate on activities executed above the line of visibility for their quality improvement initiatives (Walker 1990:46). Beckford (2002:152) advises that
managers focus on both above and below the visibility line activities as the efficiency
with which activities below the line of visibility are conducted, determine the level of
performance in activities executed above the line of visibility.

2.4.4 Customer focus

Business strategy not informed by the needs of the customers is bound to fail (Kristin
& Zemke 1998; Hitt et al. 2007; Zeithaml et al. 2006). The needs of every
stakeholder in an organisation must be aligned to the needs of the customer.
Grönroos (2000:3) calls this the customer perspective of services marketing.
Grönroos (2000) suggests that a service offering must be aimed at solving particular
customers' problems successfully every time. Even in challenging economic
circumstances, companies with an integrated customer focus in their service
strategies are more likely to thrive compared to those firms who neglect customer
needs (Walker 1990:5). Although some customer expectations are at times
unrealistic and cannot be satisfied, Belding (2004) suggests that firms should
nevertheless do everything in their power to meet customer expectations.

In conclusion, TQM integrates process activities across functional departments and
facilitates the alignment of quality improvement with the corporate goals, business
strategy and operational objectives of an organisation. It is important that leadership
demonstrates commitment to service quality improvement processes. Leadership
should be aware that it provides the structure, gives direction and makes resources
available, but it is the employees who really implement the organisational business
strategy. Efficient and effective execution of the service process and the satisfaction
of the customer depend largely on the willingness and ability of the workforce to
render the service with distinction. The next section reviews to what extent the
concepts of services marketing; service quality and TQM are applied in the South
African taxi industry.

2.5 SERVICE DELIVERY IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN TAXI INDUSTRY

The purpose of this study is to investigate ways to improve service delivery in the
South African taxi industry. It is therefore important to review the quality of service
delivery in this industry first. Selected elements of service quality, namely leadership, employee involvement, customers focus and product/process excellence with regard to the taxi industry, are discussed next.

2.5.1 Leadership in the taxi industry

For the purpose of this study, leadership refers to the top management of taxi associations and the government officials responsible for public transportation systems. A typical organisational hierarchy in a taxi association is as follows:

- The leadership comprise an executive committee elected among the membership; the taxi owners who are the only people regarded as members of the taxi association; and
- The employees, which include office-based personnel, rank marshals, taxi drivers and conductors.

Currently in South Africa (2009), taxi drivers and owners are disrupting taxi services because they accuse leadership of not acting in the interests of the taxi industry. Dissatisfaction centres mainly on the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system (De Kock 2008), but also bad leadership in the taxi associations in general (Sonjica & Wilson 2008). The BRT system is part of the South African government’s strategy to improve the standard of service quality in the public transportation sector (Beydon 2008). The taxi leadership, on the other hand, accuse taxi owners, drivers and other stakeholders, such as government of not providing the leadership with sufficient support to enable them to make effective decisions (Hitt et al. 2007:25).

There is a general perception that the needs of the taxi association and its leadership often predominate over the needs and aspirations of customers. It is also common for taxi drivers to ill-treat passengers, and there is virtually no recourse for customers within the taxi associations. Despite change initiatives, such as the customer complaints system implemented and enforced by the respective taxi associations’ executive committee, it is important that leadership play a bigger role in addressing
the problems in this industry. The present study investigates issues pertaining to the role of leadership in improving service quality in this industry.

2.5.2 Employee involvement and customer focus in the taxi industry

The concept, employee, is presently a confusing term as far as the taxi industry is concerned. In the narrow context of taxi associations, employees would exclude the association's leadership. However, within the broader context of the government's Integrated Public Transport Plan (IPTP), the leadership of taxi associations could be viewed as the employees. The reason for this is because after the integration of the local public transport service providers into the IPTP, all service providers who remain would be contracted to the municipal government. The taxi drivers claim that this would turn financially independent owners into servants/employees of the local authority under the IPTP system (De Kock 2008).

Some commentators liken the IPTP to the nationalisation and regulation of the bus service in London. Hibbs (2004) argued against the nationalisation or state regulation of bus service in London, because he asserts that individuals with personal interests in the bus service, like the bus operators, would be more likely to run the bus services efficiently than the local government politicians. McCaul (1990) concurs and suggests that taxi overloading and reckless driving, witnessed everyday on South African roads, could be attributed, among other reasons, to the lack of ownership of the system by drivers. According to Zemke and Woods (1999:209), the best way to obtain and maintain enduring commitment of employees to high quality performance is to create ownership among employees of the firm. Issues of ownership should therefore be addressed in the South African taxi industry if service quality is to be improved.

Furthermore, the preceding review indicated that frontline employees are an important part of the market offering. In a taxi service, frontline employees include but are not limited to taxi drivers, conductors, rank marshals and receptionists at the association offices. The taxi driver is probably the most important frontline employee because he or she spends proportionately more time with a customer than any other
frontline employee. Issues of empowerment, training and rewards of frontline employees should therefore be investigated if service quality is to be improved. This appears to be a challenge in the South African taxi industry due to low levels of literacy among taxi drivers (Binge 2003) and the reluctance on the part of taxi owners to share power with drivers they have controlled and sometimes exploited without listening to their concerns for a number of years (Majeke 2003).

2.5.3 Product/ process excellence in the taxi industry

The preceding literature review alluded to the fact that product/process excellence initiatives could involve the development of new products/services, changing technological systems and revamping the production and delivery processes. It appears that the development of new services is a strategy which taxi owners generally pursue. This includes parcel freight services in its long distance operation, security services, and airtime sales over and above the human transportation services.

The introduction of new technology is one of the aims of the Integrated Public Transport Plan (IPTP). The aim is to introduce bigger and safer taxis through a government subsidy scheme, called the national recapitalisation plan (Nelson Mandela Bay Website 2009). Another major technology renewal project is BRT. The South African government’s strategy to obtain the buy-in of local taxi associations into the IPTP appears to encounter resistance (Sonjica & Dimbaza 2008). The present study thus also investigates what influence technological improvements such as the recapitalisation, and BRT has in the delivery of service quality in the taxi industry.

2.6 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the elements of services marketing and service quality were reviewed. A brief overview was given of The South African taxi industry as far as the application of these elements is concerned. Elements of TQM such as leadership, employee involvement, product/process excellence and customer focus were discussed with particular reference to taxi services. The objective of this study is to
investigate how to improve the service quality of taxi operators by applying theories and concepts of services marketing and service quality. In the next chapter the methodology to conduct this investigation is discussed.
CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, the concepts of goods and services marketing and its relation to the South African taxi industry were discussed. In Chapter 3, the research design and methodology employed in the execution of this study are discussed. This includes a discussion of the research paradigm, sampling design, measuring instruments and data analysis.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design used in the study was a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches. This combination of designs is called triangulation (Wisker 2005:109). Wagenaar and Babbie (1992:45) stated that the use of more than one design strategy was found by many researchers to be very effective in addressing a research problem. Different approaches tend to increase the validity of study results.

The qualitative data collection techniques of the present study include participant observation, conversations and semi-structured interviews (Wisker 2005:279). The insights gained in the qualitative process provided the content to be used in the quantitative research questionnaire.

Gomm (2004:6-7) argues that the distinction between qualitative and quantitative research does not provide adequate technical direction in the research process. Gomm contends that the distinction between the two concepts is artificial and that cause and effect research tended to be categorised as quantitative, whilst the study of causal relationships in which data is neither counted nor analysed, using statistics is considered qualitative research. However, Mouton and Marais (1988) and, Punch, (2003) believe significant differences between the two designs exist.
The type of data that was collected was both textual and numeric, reflecting the qualitative and the quantitative components respectively. The degree of control over the research process could be ranked as medium (Gerber 2007). Which aspects of respondents’ behaviour were to be observed was a matter of choice, but an effort to eliminate intervention by other elements that were not the focus of the study was undertaken (Huysamen 1994:50).

The purpose of the research was to identify those aspects of the taxi service that were critical to perceptions of service quality so that improvement strategies could be suggested. Research about the quality of taxi services in the South African context is a relatively uncharted terrain; hence the goal of the study was exploratory (Wagenaar & Babbie 1992:44). Mouton and Marais (1991:43) suggested the objectives of an exploratory research are some of the following:

- To obtain a better understanding of the phenomenon;
- To execute a preparatory study before a more detailed research can be conducted; and
- To establish critical elements for future research.

Another objective of the study was to investigate the causes of poor quality in the taxi services industry in Nelson Mandela Bay municipal area. Wagenaar and Babbie (1992:44) refer to studies, which are aimed at finding probable causes for a social problem, as explanatory studies. The theoretical framework, which underpins this research objective, is the perceived service quality model (Grönroos 2000:73). This model compares a person’s expectations and actual experiences of a service. (Zeithaml et al. 2006:146). The present study therefore investigates the influence of service expectations on perceptions of actual experiences. The expectations assume the position of the X-variable (independent) and perception or experience the Y-variable (dependent). These relationships were statistically measured through quantitative data analysis techniques.
3.3 POPULATION AND SAMPLING FRAME

The population studied in the research were black people using taxis for between three and five days in a five-day working week. The reason for the latter criterion was to eliminate people who used taxis infrequently or irregularly. The reason for focusing on Blacks (black people) was that, because of their socio-economic situation, Blacks are the South African population group that is largely dependent on public transportation such as taxis (McCaul 1990; Majekje 2003).

The sampling frame consisted of students who commute between the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University and their diverse habitats, and to and fro the high schools and the Black townships in Port Elizabeth. This was done for logistical and financial reasons.

3.4 THE SAMPLE

Convenience sampling was used to select 101 students and learners. This sample comprised 41 females and 60 males. They were all between 16 to 25-years old. A convenience sample of 20 taxi drivers was also selected. Sixteen of them (80%) were taxi owners while four (20%) were taxi employees.

Questionnaires were issued to the students and learners, while structured interviews were conducted with the taxi owners and employees. The ages of the latter group ranged from 18 to 60-years.

3.5 MEASURING INSTRUMENTS AND DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

A preliminary phase of the data collection consisted of participant observation and interviews with taxi drivers and commuters. Drivers and commuters were observed and conversations were conducted with them at taxi ranks and in taxi vehicles. This data was interpreted and the emergent information was used to construct a questionnaire for the next phase. The final questionnaire consisted of 44 questions. The questionnaire was pilot tested among five taxi-owners and 20 commuters.
Improvements were made to the questionnaire based on the feedback received in the pilot study.

3.5.1 Observation

The researcher performed the data collection personally as he had more than 20 years experience as a regular taxi commuter. The researcher operated a taxi business for two years between 1997 and 1999, and was an official member of the Black Taxi Association for that period. The researcher negotiated access to its information and membership with the latter taxi association. Although this permission was initially granted, access was later denied. This provided some challenges to researcher which will be discussed later.

The researcher observed the behaviour of both the taxi drivers and commuters. Participant observation took the form of taxi rides and watching the interaction between taxi drivers and commuters from taxi ranks. Conversations were also held with taxi drivers and commuters. Gomm (2004:217) calls this methodology ethnographic research, as it involves a combination of observations and conversations with participants in their “natural” settings. Taxi ranks under the control of the Black Taxi Association as well as those under the control of the Red Taxi Association were visited occasionally over a period of six months.

The following principles guided the data collection via observation:

- Behaviours that were or were not adding value to the service process from the perspective of the customer were identified and recorded.
- An open-minded approach to observation was followed. This was to guard against restricting data collection to only those behaviours in which the author was interested.
- Data that was obtained through conversations was juxtaposed with data acquired through observation. Inconsistent data was subsequently omitted from consideration.
Disguised observation was deemed necessary as participants who were aware of being observed were likely to behave in an artificial way (Huysamen 1994).

### 3.5.2 Structured interviews

A set of questions that measure service quality was drawn from the work of Zeithaml et al. (1990:36). The questions were adapted for use in the taxi service. Information obtained from the observations and conversations with taxi drivers and commuters were used in formulating additional questions for these structured interviews. The questions used in the structured interviews are depicted in Addendum B.

Some resistance from the taxi drivers was anticipated due to a general distrust of researchers (Binge 2003). The research was also conducted at a time of unrest in the taxi industry. More specifically, industry members were protesting against the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system of the government (De Kock 2008). The BRT is a new system aimed at providing a cheaper, safer and more reliable means of public transportation (Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality Website 2009). The BRT system has become a cause for conflict between taxi operators and different spheres of government because the taxi operators believed that the new public transport system was going to result in loss of one third of all taxi drivers’ jobs nationally (Sonjica & Wilson 2008; Majekze 2003).

Access to taxi drivers (owners and employees) was obtained through the executive committee of the Red Taxi Association and rank managers who operate at taxi ranks. One-on-one interviews were conducted with taxi drivers in Xhosa. These responses were translated into English and recorded as accurately as possible on separate interview sheets. Caution was exercised to avoid leading questions and coaxing participants to answer questions in a particular way (Huysamen 1994). Interviewees were encouraged to ask questions where they needed clarity, and they were also requested to answer all questions to the best of their knowledge.

After each interview was completed, the contents of the interview were read to the participants in order to verify that the recorded data reflected exactly what was said.
Participants were informed that their identities would be protected and their names not divulged to anyone. Participants and the rank manager were thanked for their cooperation. The chairperson of the association was also requested to convey the researcher’s appreciation to all those who cooperated in the research. The chairperson was informed that a brief research report would be forwarded to the leadership for the perusal of interested parties.

A thematic analysis was applied to interpret the data captured during the interviews. The responses were organised into the following themes:

- Knowledge of service quality attributes (questions (i) and (ii) in Annexure B). The aim of this theme was to establish whether taxi drivers understood the concept of service quality from the perspective of the customer.
- Service challenges (questions (iii) and (iv) in Annexure B). The aim was to determine what were the challenges facing taxi drivers in their quest to render superior service to customers, fellow drivers, taxi commuters, taxi associations and the government.
- Level of control (Question (v) in Annexure B). The aim of this question was to determine whether the drivers felt they had any level of control over service quality decisions. It is widely believed that feelings of control over a situation reduce anxiety and promote customer satisfaction (Arussy 2005). The taxi drivers, as employees of members of the taxi association, are internal customers, so the theoretical pronouncements are relevant to them as well.

3.5.3 The questionnaire

An instrument was constructed to measure the respondents’ expectations and actual experiences about a service in accordance with the service quality model (Grönroos 2000:73; Zeithaml et al. 2006:146). The instrument consisted of two sections, namely one section that elicited respondents’ expectations about service quality and one section that elicited the respondents’ perceptions about the actual service quality rendered by taxi drivers. The five service quality dimensions were measured by 18 indicators respectively. These service quality dimensions include service tangibles,
reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy. The indicators were anchored to a 7-point scale ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (7) strongly agree.

A total quality management (TQM) instrument was constructed to measure issues of leadership, employee involvement, product/process excellence and customer focus (Davis & Heineke 2005). One questionnaire statement on each of the TQM elements were anchored to a 7-point scale ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (7) strongly agree.

In the demographic section of the questionnaire respondents were required to indicate their gender, residential address and age. The questionnaire was tested for internal reliability and this rendered an acceptable Cronbach’s alpha of 0.61 (Tharenou 1993; Pierce & Dunham 1987). The data was analysed by calculating sums, mean scores, standard deviations, ANOVAs (analysis of variance) and t-tests.

3.6 SUMMARY

In this chapter, the research design of the study was discussed. This included the research paradigm and methodology (sample and measuring instruments). The data collection methods and analyses were also described. In the following chapter, the empirical results are reported and discussed.
CHAPTER 4

EMPIRICAL RESULTS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 3, the research design and methodology employed in the study were explained. In Chapter 4, the empirical results are reported and interpreted. The empirical results are evaluated against insights acquired from a review of relevant literature and the research objectives.

The primary objective of this study was to investigate how the service quality of taxi operators in the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality could be improved. To achieve this objective, the following secondary objectives were investigated:

- to establish whether taxi drivers have the required knowledge of services marketing and service quality, and
- to identify service quality challenges faced by both taxi drivers and commuters.

In order to achieve these research objectives the following analyses were conducted: structured interviews with taxi owners and employees (qualitative information); and a mail survey involving taxi commuters (quantitative information). The empirical results of these analyses are reported in the following sections.

4.2 RESULTS OF THE QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSES

During the structured interviews, the taxi drivers (owners and employees) were asked the following questions:

- What is service quality from a commuter’s perspective?
- What are the characteristics on which commuters would judge the quality of taxi services?
The empirical results are reported next.

4.2.1 The attributes of service quality

Table 4.1 shows that sixty percent (60%) of the respondents regarded service quality as speed of service provision. This however did not include speeding. This could however be a reason why taxi drivers speed on the road.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SERVICE QUALITY ATTRIBUTE</th>
<th>NUMBER OF RESPONSES (N = 20)</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Speed of service provision</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consistent availability of service</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Headway time</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical condition of vehicle</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People skills of taxi personnel</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Only one respondent identified consistent availability of service as the most important aspect of service quality. This was strange as consistent availability of service was an attribute that was identified by the Algoa Bus Company as critical to their customers’ perceptions of service quality (Beydon 2008). Algoa Bus Company was therefore regarding the reliability of their bus service as one of their sources of competitive advantage.

Only one respondent mentioned headway time as one of the key service quality attributes. Headway time refers to the time that lapses between the departure of one taxi and the arrival of the next one. Algoa Bus Company, the main competitor of the taxi industry locally, regarded headway as the main advantage the taxi industry had over the bus service (Beydon 2008).

Other features of service quality cited by taxi drivers as being crucial to good customer service perceptions related to the physical condition of the taxi vehicles.
and the attitude of drivers towards commuters. Participants between the age of 18 and 39 tended to rank the tangible aspects of service, like the physical condition of taxi vehicles, higher than they did people skills. Taxi drivers in the age group 40 to 60 ranked people skills higher than they did the tangible features.

The results show that the respondents did not have a single definition of service quality in respect of service to their customers. They defined service quality using dimensions of service quality and performance indicators. They had some idea of what was required by their customers, but had a limited understanding of service quality in general. There was generally also a reliance on the technical aspects of a service, rather than the quality of human interaction. This could be due to a lack of strategic leadership on the part of the taxi associations (Juran 1989).

### 4.2.2 Service quality challenges

Respondents were also asked what the challenges were in their quest to deliver a quality service. The themes around this question were as follows:

- Commuter misbehaviour such as refusal to pay taxi fare.
- Unrealistic demands: requesting the taxi driver to exceed the speed limit when commuters are late for work.
- Dissatisfaction with taxi association leadership:
  - “They are reluctant to leave their ivory towers and come to listen to the concerns of the ordinary taxi drivers”,
  - “they sold us out to the government as far as BRT is concerned”,
  - “the leadership discipline taxi employees for alleged transgressions against commuters without a proper hearing”,
- The general existence of poor human relations, and
- The government and taxi leadership are viewed as corrupt.
- The government’s “divide and rule tactics”. They perceive government as using its position of power and its resources to drive a wedge between the taxi leadership and its followers.
• Dissatisfaction with municipal traffic police. Respondents believe that the traffic police deliberately targeted them for persecution.

Respondents also offered various suggestions to address these challenges. Respondents aged from 18 to 39 years exhibited a relatively high degree of intolerance towards “difficult” customers. Unlike their older counterparts of 40 years and above who were more accommodating, they however, tended to suggest cruder tactics such as forcing a misbehaving customer off the taxi vehicle. Respondents over 40-years also supported swift action such as fines or dismissal against taxi drivers who were ill-treating customers. The more senior taxi drivers should mentor the younger ones in respect of people skills.

The majority of the respondents demonstrated a lack of understanding the different spheres of government. Many taxi drivers confessed a lack of understanding about the way the BRT system was envisaged to operate. There is also a general lack of understanding on how government policies were formulated at various levels and departments in government. This ignorance was reflected in negative statements made by some participants against the executive mayor of Nelson Mandela Bay area. Many participants held the executive mayor personally responsible for the 'misfortunes' the industry was about to suffer as a result of the BRT project. Furthermore, although the majority of the younger taxi drivers feel that they are being persecuted by the municipal traffic police, those over the age of 40 said that they were prepared to cooperate with traffic police if the police were prepared to exercise fairness in the execution of their duties.

The above-mentioned challenges have a detrimental effect on the ability of taxi drivers to render high quality service to their customers. The fact that the majority of drivers surveyed did not openly admit that the actions of some taxi drivers were a cause of poor quality service, is a concern; this, against the background that taxi drivers have been widely accused of reckless driving, speeding, and rude and violent behaviour towards commuters and the public in general (Fourie & Pretorius 2005).
4.3 RESULTS OF THE QUANTITATIVE DATA ANALYSES

Another research objective of the study was to investigate the causes of poor quality in the taxi services industry in Nelson Mandela Bay municipal area. The theoretical framework, which underpinned this research objective, was the perceived service quality model (Grönroos 2000:73) which compares a person’s expectations and actual experiences about a service. This research objective required a statistical assessment of the influence of service expectations on perceptions of actual experiences. The following statistical analyses were therefore conducted:

- Assessing the reliability of the measuring instruments.
- Calculating descriptive statistics (sums and percentages) for all questionnaire responses.
- Conducting analyses of variance (ANOVAs) to assess the differences between the means of groups.

The results of these analyses are reported next.

4.3.1 Reliability of measuring instruments

The Cronbach’s alpha of the measuring instruments were calculated using the STATISTICA Version 6.1 (2003) computer software program. The results are depicted in Table 4.2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attributes</th>
<th>Expectations</th>
<th>Cronbach alpha</th>
<th>Perceptions</th>
<th>Cronbach alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tangibles</td>
<td>E1-E4</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>P1-P4</td>
<td>0.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reliability</td>
<td>E5-E9</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>P5-P9</td>
<td>0.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsiveness</td>
<td>E10-E13</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>P10-P13</td>
<td>0.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assurance</td>
<td>E14-E17</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>P14-P17</td>
<td>0.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathy</td>
<td>E18-E22</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>P18-P22</td>
<td>0.59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2 shows that most of the measuring instruments exhibit acceptable reliability of above 0.50. The measuring instruments of empathy, expectations and perceptions on actual responsiveness did not produce acceptable reliability.
Findings around the latter latent variables should therefore be treated with caution. As for the rest of the measuring instruments, the Cronbach's alpha coefficients provided the basis to proceed with all subsequent analyses.

4.3.2 Descriptive statistics

The overall results are presented first, followed by the results of the male and female sub-groups. The male and female sub-groups were analysed separately in order to discern possible trends or patterns.

4.3.2.1 Overall results

The results are presented as follows in Table 4.3: the first column on the table comprises the ratings on the Likert 7-point scale with zero as the minimum and 6 as the maximum. Quality dimensions are arranged horizontally at the top of the table and below that the number and percentage of responses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>TANGIBLES</th>
<th>RELIABILITY</th>
<th>RESPONSIVENESS</th>
<th>ASSURANCE</th>
<th>EMPATHY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of responses</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Number of responses</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Number of responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>8,2</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>5,9</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>15,1</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>5,6</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>12,4</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>12,1</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>23,0</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>16,0</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>20,3</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>16,8</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>10,9</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>16,4</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>10,1</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>27,2</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>404</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>505</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>404</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The empirical results show that, for tangibles, over 43% of all possible scores were located on points 3 and 4 on the scale and 64% of all scores fell between points 3 and 6. This indicates that a fair number of respondents did not view the tangible features of a taxi service, like the physical condition of the taxi vehicle, as poor.

On the reliability dimension, 44% of the total possible scores fell on points 5 and 6 on the scale and over 76% of all possible scores were distributed between points 3 and 6. The fact that a large number of respondents have assigned high scores to
reliability suggests that most respondents view taxi services as a dependable service.

On responsiveness, over 40% of the total possible scores fell on points 3 and 4 on the scale, and 63% of all possible scores were distributed between points 3 and 6 points. The implication is that a fair number of taxi commuters are happy with the service’s ability to respond to customers’ needs quickly and effectively. On close scrutiny, however, responsiveness obtained the highest number of zero ratings, namely 14%. This result suggests that these respondents did not view frontline personnel (those in close contact with the consumer) in the taxi service as helpful to passengers.

On the assurance dimension, 38% of all possible responses fell on points 3 and 4 on the scale, and 60% of all possible scores were distributed between points 3 and 6. This means that six out of ten commuters view drivers and their conductors to be competent in their jobs. This is surprising considering the fact that there is a general feeling among the public that taxi drivers are bad drivers. One might argue that most drivers can drive well but it is their bad attitude on the road which adversely affects their driving for example. If courtesy is considered as part of the assurance attribute it is also surprising to note that six out of every ten respondents considered taxi drivers and their conductors to be courteous towards their customers. This may be interpreted as suggesting that only a small number of taxi drivers and conductors are rude towards their customers.

On the empathy dimension, 39% of all possible scores were located on points zero and 1 on the scale, and 48% of all possible scores were distributed between points 3 and 6 on the scale. A significant proportion of respondents gave a very low score to this dimension. This could mean that 39% of respondents view taxi services as providing a service that is insensitive towards the needs of their customers and reluctant to make an extra effort to ensure that their customers felt valued.

Overall, the distribution of scores for tangibles, responsiveness and assurance were comparable, with more than 60% of respondents rating this dimension between 3 to
6 points. Reliability was the dimension that obtained, proportionately, the highest ratings. Empathy, by comparison, demonstrated the lowest distribution of scores.

### 4.3.2.2 Results of the male sub-group

On the tangibles dimension, 49% of all possible scores ranged between points 3 and 4 on the scale, and 65% of all possible scores were distributed between points 3 and 6 (see Table 4.4). Compared to the overall results (see Table 1), there was an increase of over 5% in the range for points 3 and 4 on the scale. The increase indicates that almost 50% of all possible scores fell on points 3 and 4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>TANGIBLES</th>
<th>RELIABILITY</th>
<th>RESPONSIVENESS</th>
<th>ASSURANCE</th>
<th>EMPATHY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of responses</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Number of responses</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Number of responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In comparison to the overall statistics, more males appeared to be satisfied with the physical elements of the taxi service, like the physical appearance of taxi drivers and the conditions of the taxi vehicles. The distribution of scores on points 3 and 4 was more or less the same as the percentages for the entire sample (64%). There were 8.5% of responses with a zero-rating compared to only 5.5% of responses with a 6-point rating. The result suggests there were more “very unhappy” responses compared to “very happy” responses. It would seem that according to the male subgroup, the tangible aspects of the taxi service could benefit from a structured revamp.

On reliability, 42% of the total possible scores were located on points 5 and 6 on the scale, and 78% of the responses ranged between points 3 and 6. The finding
suggests that a considerable number of male taxi commuters surveyed view taxi services as accurate in performance and dependable.

On responsiveness, 44% responded to points 3 and 4 on the scale and 69% of all responses ranged between points 3 and 6. According to the male respondents, the responsiveness dimension was fairly well executed. Stated differently, the taxi service did not fare badly with respect to providing a prompt and helpful service according to the number of the male participants.

On the assurance dimension, 40% of all possible responses fell on points 3 and 4 on the scale and around 67% of all possible responses were distributed between points 3 and 6. It seems that male respondents view taxi service as demonstrating acceptable competence and courtesy towards customers compared to the overall results of the sample.

On empathy, 35% of all possible responses fell on points 0 and 1 on the scale, and 50% of all possible responses were distributed between points 3 and 6. This generally suggests a low rating for the empathy dimension. Around 50% of male respondents therefore believe that taxi frontline employees were insensitive toward the needs and aspirations of customers.

Ratings of the various quality dimensions indicated that tangibles, responsiveness and assurance performed moderately as far as the male respondents were concerned. For them, the taxi service is performing better on reliability than any other dimension. However, on the empathy dimension, service quality perceptions were relatively poor for males.

4.3.2.3 Results of the females sub-group

On tangibles, around 50% of all possible responses were points 3 and 4 on the scale and 64% of all possible scores were distributed between points 3 and 6 (see Table 4.5). The percentage distribution for females was similar to that of their male counterparts, 49% and 65% respectively. The percentages indicated that the
majority of male and female participants viewed the tangible aspects of the taxi service positively.

On the reliability dimension, over 44% of all possible scores were placed between points 3 and 4 on the scale and over 75% of all scores were distributed between points 3 and 6. This indicates that the female respondents view taxi services as dependable and reliable in respect of performance.

**TABLE 4.5 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS – FEMALES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>TANGIBLES</th>
<th>RELIABILITY</th>
<th>RESPONSIVENESS</th>
<th>ASSURANCE</th>
<th>EMPATHY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of responses</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Number of responses</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Number of responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>27.0</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On the responsiveness dimension for females, around 38% of all possible scores were placed on points 3 and 4 on the scale, and around 59% of all possible scores were distributed between points 3 and 6. The percentages for males on the same dimension were 44% and 69% respectively. Females therefore view taxi service providers as being less helpful and lacking in promptness when executing services as compared to males.

On the assurance dimension, responses for points 3 and 4 on the scale accounted for around 37% of the possible scores, and 55% of all possible scores were distributed between points 3 and 4. For male participants, the distribution of scores was 40% and 67% respectively. This result suggests that female participants view frontline personnel in the taxi service as less competent and lacking in credibility as compared to their male counterparts.

On the empathy dimension, around 42% of all possible scores for females fell between points 0 and 1 on the scale, and 47% of all possible responses were
distributed between points 3 and 6. More than 50% of female respondents felt that taxi services perform unsatisfactorily on the empathy dimension.

In summary it can be said that the perceptions of taxi service quality were moderate in respect of the tangibles, responsiveness and assurance dimensions for both male and female participants. The service quality rated highest on the reliability dimension for females and males, and empathy obtained the worst rating compared to any other single dimension for both groups.

4.3.3 T-tests

T-tests were calculated to assess the differences between male and female perceptions regarding service quality. The following null (H0) and alternative hypotheses were formulated:

\[ H_{01}: \text{The is no significant difference between male and female perceptions regarding service quality in the taxi industry in Port Elizabeth municipal area} \]

\[ H_{A1}: \text{The is a significant difference between male and female perceptions regarding service quality in the taxi industry in Port Elizabeth municipal area} \]

### TABLE 4.6 RESULTS OF T-TEST

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Males ( n = 60 )</th>
<th>Females ( n = 41 )</th>
<th>Mean Difference</th>
<th>t (99)</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P1</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>-0.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P2</td>
<td>24.8</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>0.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P3</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>1.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P4</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>1.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P5</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>1.10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The critical value of t for the probability level of 0.05 and degrees of freedom (d.f.) of 99 should be 1.980. T-values of bigger than 1.980 and smaller than -1.980 are therefore required to reject the hypothesis that male and females differ significantly on the perceptions regarding service quality in the taxi industry. Table 4.6 shows that the null hypothesis cannot be rejected in all five cases above. Males and
females therefore do not significantly differ with regards to their perceptions of these three variables.

The assumption that made earlier that presupposed that females have different tastes and preferences to their male counterparts is not supported by empirical evidence as revealed by the study. This could suggest that gender does not affect perceptions of quality but the sample was not big enough to produce a result which could be generalised to all situations. However the knowledge that was gleaned from the results does create better insight into the taxi service. It is against this background that a conclusion will be made and recommendations forwarded in the following chapter, Chapter five is based on these results.

### 4.3.4 TQM results

The Total Quality Management (TQM) instrument measured the following elements: leadership, employee involvement, process excellence and customer (commuter) focus. Four questions were asked and anchored on a Likert type 7-point scale, ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (7) strongly agree. The empirical results are reported below. Only scores below 50%, in other words low ratings on the latent variable, are reported.

**Questionnaire statement:** *The taxi leadership resolves complaints speedily and satisfactorily*

**TABLE 4.7 LEADERSHIP RATING**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scores</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>23.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>55.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Over 55% of all scores on the ability of taxi leadership to resolve commuter’s complaints speedily and satisfactorily range between a score of zero (0) and three (3) on the scale. This means that respondents are generally dissatisfied with how taxi leadership deals with complaints.

Questionnaire statement:  *A taxi driver is willing and flexible to assist me when I experience a problem in a taxi*

**TABLE 4.8 EMPLOYEE INVOLVEMENT RATING**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scores</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>26.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>60.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Regarding employee involvement in improving the quality of service, more than 60% of respondents rated taxi drivers below average (below 3.5 on a 7-point scale). This indicates that more than 60% of the respondents are not satisfied with taxi drivers’ involvement in improving service quality.

Questionnaire statement:  *Driving skills of taxi drivers are of a high standard*

**TABLE 4.9 PROCESS EXCELLENCE RATING**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scores</th>
<th>Number of responses</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>16.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>16.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>21.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>59.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The empirical results reveal that more than 59% of respondents rated taxi drivers below average on process excellence (as measured by driving skill). This means that almost 60% of respondents view taxi drivers’ driving skill as questionable.

Questionnaire statement: The taxi driver is prepared to make slight changes to the route to accommodate me where possible

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 4.10 CUSTOMER FOCUS RATING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scores</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.10 shows that more than 76% of respondents rate taxi drivers below average as far as customer focus is concerned. Accommodating commuters’ individual needs was used as the measure of customer focus in this study.

To summarise: The empirical results reported above reveal that taxi drivers perform unsatisfactorily on the four TQM elements. The results are also congruent with the general perception in the Eastern Cape that taxi service quality is generally poor.

4.3 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the qualitative results on service quality attributes of taxi services and service quality challenges were reported. This was followed by the results of the quantitative data analyses: reliability of the measuring instruments, descriptive statistics on the entire sample as well as male and female sub-groups, t-tests and TQM results. In the following chapter these results are interpreted and discussed in terms of the implications thereof. Recommendations for the taxi industry are also presented.
Chapter 5

Discussion of Results, Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, the qualitative and quantitative data collected was presented and discussed. In this chapter, conclusions will be drawn and recommendations made.

5.2 Discussion of Results

The primary objective of this study was to investigate how service quality of taxi operators in the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality could be improved. Findings based on the empirical results will be revisited first before the discussion, conclusion and recommendations will be suggested.

5.2.1 Results from the structured interviews with taxi drivers

Taxi drivers were interviewed with the objective of eliciting their understanding of critical taxi service quality attributes and also what challenges they are facing in their quest to render high quality service. On critical service quality attributes the following findings emerged:

- 60% of respondents regarded service quality as tantamount to speed of service.
- 5% of interviewees identified constant availability of taxi services as the most critical aspect of service quality.
- 5% of those polled mentioned headway time as one crucial component of a taxi service package.
- 15% of the respondents cited physical condition of a mini bus taxi as one of the major determinants of a high quality taxi service.
• 45% of drivers interviewed regarded people skills as an important part of a taxi service offering.

These findings suggest that taxi drivers have a low level of understanding of what service quality is about. This gap in the knowledge and skills with regard to service quality will most likely translate in delivery of sub-standard taxi service quality.

The taxi drivers identified the following challenges to the delivery of an efficient and effective taxi service:

• Commuter misbehaviour and commuter’s unrealistic demands.
• Reluctance by the taxi associations’ leadership to communicate with them and address their concerns.
• Government’s “divide and rule” tactics when dealing with the taxi industry.
• “Persecution” of taxi drivers by municipal traffic police.

Against the above-mentioned background it is recommended that taxi drivers be empowered to handle commuter misbehaviour. Providing them with relevant information about the industry (from taxi associations and government) and training them in people, driving and business skills will improve their service delivery and potentially reduce the challenges in this regard.

5.2.2 The service quality dimensions

The empirical results revealed the following:

• Tangibles: 64% of all scores fell between points 3 to 6 on the scale which suggest that a fair number of respondents did not view physical conditions of taxi vehicles as poor.
• Reliability: 76% of all scores were distributed between points 3 to 6 on the scale, indicating that the majority of respondents view taxi services as dependable.
• Responsiveness: 63% of all scores fell between points 3 to 6 on the scale, which mean that a fair number of commuters were satisfied with the taxi services providers ability to respond to customer needs quickly and effectively.
• Assurance: 60% of all scores were distributed between points 3 to 6 on the scale, which suggest that 6 out every 10 commuters view taxi drivers as competent in doing their job.

• Empathy: 39% of all scores were between points 0 to 1 on the scale, whilst 48% of all scores were distributed between points 3 to 6 on the scale. This empirical result suggests that 39% of respondents surveyed view taxi drivers to be insensitive towards the needs of their commuters.

The empirical results suggest that reliability appears to be a source of competitive advantage of the taxi service, whilst the empathy dimension needs to be improved. When expectation scores were subtracted from perception scores taxi services quality overall was rated negatively by commuters. This suggests that taxi services do not meet the expectations of its commuters. The different quality dimensions used in the measurement of taxi service quality and their empirical results could provide a guideline to taxi service leadership and government on the critical aspects of taxi service quality.

5.2.3 The TQM elements

On the various TQM elements the following empirical results were obtained:

• Leadership: 55,4% of scores fell between points 0 to 3 on the scale.

• Employee involvement: 60,9% of the scores were distributed between points 0 to 3 on the scale.

• Process excellence: 59,2% of the scores fell between points between points 0 to 3 on the scale.

• Customer focus: 76,5 % of the scores were distributed between points 0 to 3 on the scale, which seems to mirror the low rating of taxi service along the empathy dimension of service.

The empirical results on the TQM elements suggest that the respondents were generally dissatisfied with leadership, employee involvement, process excellence and customer focus as measured in this study. This means that the respondents were generally dissatisfied with how leadership attended to complaints, their
willingness to assist when commuters re-experienced problems, their process of
driving and their willingness to accommodate special requests from commuters
especially as far as allowing for slight route changes. These results highlight areas
in which taxi drivers can improve to increase their service delivery.

5.2.4 General comments on improving taxi services

The marketing of taxi services should be conducted through a process approach that
takes into account the importance of the TQM elements, namely leadership, driver
involvement, commuter focus and service process excellence (Juran 1989). Everyone in a taxi association must view excellent service and good relations with
commuters as the main determinants for the industry's survival and growth (Grönroos
2000). The total quality results have shown that the perceived quality of the taxi
service was poor. The findings were supported by previous studies about taxi
service (Fourie & Pretorius 2005).

The government appears to be failing in its attempts to implement its plan of
formalising the industry and thereby uplifting service quality standards. The wave of
taxi unrest directed at the BRT project has the potential of not only stalling
implementation of the project but also, could lead to further deterioration of the taxi
services’ quality standards because of violence against commuters (Sonjica & Wilson
2008).

The government is accused of being responsible for the breakdown in
communication between it and the various taxi associations. The government stated
early in its engagement with taxi associations that if negotiations with the
associations failed, an open tender process would be used to award contracts to
operators of the planned public transport system. Taxi owners view the latter
statement as negotiating in bad faith (Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality Website
2009) and claim that government wanted to remove taxi associations from the public
transportation system which will lead to job losses (Majeke 2003; Ndabeni 2008).

Allegations of corruption against government and some members of taxi associations
are not new. Similar allegations were made as far back as the late 1980s (McCaul
The allegations, however, have to be viewed seriously, especially when looking at the poor record government officials have with regard to corruption.

Taxi associations’ leadership are also responsible for the deterioration of service quality levels in taxis. The main reason, according to many taxi drivers surveyed, for a certain taxi association's leadership being forcefully removed from office, was an allegation of corruption related to the BRT project. It was also clear that the leadership of the taxi industry is bent on holding onto a business model that has deprecating profitability and has not devised creative strategies for turning the situation around (Fourie & Pretorius 2005). The low scores on the empathy dimension of service quality appeared to indicate that taxi drivers were exploited and unwilling to demonstrate compassion to their commuters (Majeke 2003).

The leadership of the taxi associations did not do enough to empower itself and its members (Arussy 2005). The leadership should have foreseen the pitfalls of the public transport strategy and raised the issues in appropriate forums instead of resorting to violence and intimidation later in the process (Sonjica & Dimbaza 2008). The high number of taxi drivers who expressed ignorance about the BRT project, bears testimony to the leadership's failure to provide followers with very critical information (Beckford 2002; Ndabeni 2008).

The taxi service process appears to have been configured with internal efficiency rather than external efficiency in mind (Davis & Heineke 2005). The needs of taxi commuters have been ignored to a large extent as compared to those of taxi associations (McCaul 1990). The negative scores on the total quality measurement are one example. Even in the struggle between government and taxi associations, the needs of the users of the service have not been properly addressed, and researchers have argued that in public transport, the needs of all three stakeholders should be integrated (Mokonyama 2008). Government and taxi leadership could do much more to improve the quality of the taxi services, thereby improving the quality of life of a significant part of the South African population. Aspects of taxi service offering, which are critical to perception of quality, are discussed next.
5.2.5 Critical aspects of a taxi service offering

Werner (2004) stated that quality of performance is a function of both ability and willingness. This is true for the leadership, taxi drivers and commuters because if each stakeholder knows his or her role in service production and delivery, and each desires to perform at his or her best, quality problems in the taxi services would potentially be reduced or eliminated. The belief in the fundamental role of ability and willingness has influenced the way the data was discussed.

5.2.5.1 The role of government

The government had engaged the taxi industry at national, provincial and municipal levels on the question of regulation of the taxi industry. However, the focus of discussion was on the municipal level of government because this level was usually responsible for the implementation of policies formulated at higher levels of government. Municipal government was, therefore, the target of the anger and frustration of taxi owners and drivers during incidents of taxi unrest (De Kock 2008).

McCaul (1990) maintained that government has been in dialogue with the taxi industry for many years, with the view to improving the quality of service and make the industry safer for commuters. Government's solution to the taxi industry's problems, like violence, was the regulation of the entire public transportation system. Many scholars concurred with the view that regulation of the taxi services would solve many of its problems (Majeke 2003; Fourie & Pretorius 2005). Hibbs in his study on the privatisation of buses on the outskirts of London (2004) warned that regulation had become “politically correct thinking” with a potential of ultimately forcing some bus operators out of business. This statement indicated that regulation was not without its problems.

Government is willing to include taxi association representatives in their initiatives to regulate the taxi industry and thereby improve the level of service quality. The invitation issued to taxi association representatives to be part of the steering committee on the BRT strategy is one example to that effect (Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality Website 2009). Outsourcing of the various aspects of the regulation
process to consultants and information sharing sessions conducted with representatives of foreign governments could also be viewed as an attempt to capacitate the government and other stakeholders. However, taxi unrest had erupted with violent overtones in the area. The question that arises is why after such extensive consultation and deliberation?

Relations between municipal government and the taxi industry have not been very amiable for some time. The statement made by many participants during the interviews, was to the effect that the government had a vendetta against taxi drivers and that government was using traffic police to “persecute” them. This supports the idea that relations are poor. On the other hand, it could be argued that interviews were conducted at a time of heightened emotions caused by misunderstandings between municipal government and taxi associations over the BRT project. The heightened emotions could have clouded participants’ judgement (Ndabeni 2008). If that is the case, the question remains, why taxi associations and government are at loggerheads after extensive consultations with taxi associations in particular?

5.2.5.2 Taxi leadership

Almost all of the taxi drivers interviewed expressed ignorance of the BRT project. Ignorance was not confined to the taxi drivers of the Red Taxi Association alone because drivers from different taxi associations were quoted in the media as having no understanding of the BRT project (Ndabeni 2008). It was the responsibility of the taxi leadership to inform followers about the project, not to reduce its implementation to merely a vehicle-for-job loss.

It transpired from interviews that most taxi drivers did not understand what service quality is and what it encompassed. Becker and Wellins (1990) asserted that frontline employees must be empowered to obtain a true understanding of quality from the customers’ perspective. It is the responsibility of the taxi leadership to ensure that taxi drivers possess the requisite skills and understanding of customer needs. It was not surprising to discover a lack of a business direction because not a single one of the drivers interviewed knew the vision of their taxi association. The vision of the
taxi association, if there was a vision, was not visible at the offices of the taxi associations.

Challenges faced by the taxi industry necessitate the adoption of a vision and the development of a business strategy that is based on a customer focus and a passion for service, aimed at creating and sustaining leadership's good relations with both taxi drivers and commuters (Grönroos 2000). Anderson and Zemke (1998) argued that employees are the internal customers of an organisation and are part of the service offer, so it is important that employees' needs not be neglected if a firm aims to succeed in business. For example, taxi drivers who do not believe that excellent service quality is the main determinant of the survival and growth of a taxi association are more likely to continue to provide customers with sub-standard quality service.

Taxi leadership cannot perform its responsibilities effectively if it does not possess the requisite knowledge and skills for management and leadership. One taxi driver interviewed suggested that some of the leaders might not have been motivated by corruption when they committed their associations to the BRT project, but rather, they lacked understanding of the relevant concepts of the project. The inclusion of a minimum of two university graduates in the newly appointed leadership of the Red Taxi Association could have been motivated by such considerations.

The training and development of the taxi leadership is a matter of urgency to increase the level of professionalism in the taxi services. Without the necessary training and development, the taxi industry cannot effectively bargain with government and other stakeholders because it will continue to negotiate from a position of weakness. The training sponsored by government for the taxi industry requires evaluation because it has yet to deliver on what it promised to deliver, which was empowerment of the taxi industry (Nelson Mandela Website 2009).
5.2.5.3 Taxi commuters and service quality

Many taxi drivers surveyed pointed at commuters as one of the causes for poor taxi service quality. However, in conversations with commuters, the commuters alleged that some taxi drivers were treating passengers very badly. Huysamen (1994) asserted that in social sciences it is almost impossible to find any problem with only one or two causes. It is therefore understood that various stakeholders contributed to the depreciating standards of service in taxis. The question raised is were customers aware of their responsibilities in the taxi service process and were they willing to perform those responsibilities.

In a high-contact service like the taxi service where customers participate in the production and delivery of service, it is mandatory for customers to be able to play their roles effectively in order to ensure high service quality (Grönroos 2000). Customers must have clear, explicit and realistic expectations about the taxi service. This is important because some taxi drivers reported that commuters put them under pressure to exceed the speed limit when late for their destinations. Other drivers recounted incidences where they were supposed to transport commuters who could not even speak and tell the driver their drop off points due to the excessive amount of alcohol they had consumed.

It was clear that some customers are difficult to serve, but to survive in a highly competitive market, it is necessary to “win the customer from hell” (Belding 2004:5). Customers have to be assisted in converting implicit expectations to explicit ones; expectations that are unrealistic must be adjusted to be realistic. Education about what the taxi service is able and willing to offer would be a good start. Some people believed that difficult customers constituted a small percentage of the total customer population and therefore a firm could survive without them. This notion is questionable, especially in an industry with overtraded routes (Fourie & Pretorius 2008). By managing expectations of service, customer perceptions of quality could be improved (Grönroos 2000). Difficult customers could be changed into pleasant customers. The customer will always be the judge of whether the taxi industry is effective in the performance of its services.
It is therefore important that the taxi associations sensitise their commuters to an awareness of their critical role in providing feedback to the taxi associations about the quality of taxi services. It was disturbing to hear from some taxi commuters that they saw no need to complain about poor service because they knew that nothing was going to be done about their complaints. Other customers reported that they did not know the offices of the Red Taxi Association, even when standing a few meters away from the Red Taxi Association offices on Govan Mbeki Avenue. Customers need to be encouraged to provide negative as well as positive feedback to the taxi leadership; the emphasis must be on not only the right to complain, but also, on improvements in performance.

Lines of communication between taxi leadership and taxi commuters could be improved in a number of ways. Apart from education directed at ensuring that taxi commuters are aware of their rights and responsibilities, the contact details of the leadership should be accessible. Some of the ways in which that could be done would be to put the contact details on stickers and attach them to taxi vehicles or disseminate leaflets containing the details at taxi ranks. If these leaflets could be given to taxi commuters in the presence of the taxi leadership, it would demonstrate top management commitment to customer care (Juran 1989).

Drivers below the age of 40 reported that they were unhappy with the stringent measures the Red Taxi Association leadership was implementing against drivers who allegedly treated customers in an unsatisfactory manner. These drivers claimed that they were not given a fair hearing against the complaints of what they referred to as difficult customers. That hearings were held could be seen as a demonstration of a commitment to superior customer care by the leadership of the association, but many customers were not making effective use of the service. It is only when customers are able and willing to perform their roles in the service process that invaluable mechanisms like stringent sanctions against poor service can be used efficiently.

In high-contact services like the taxi industry, customers have more demanding roles and responsibilities (Palmer 1998). It was observed that some commuters struggled
with the basic roles they were supposed to play in the service process, like the use of signs denoting various destinations. Commuters’ difficulties sometimes resulted in quarrels between taxi drivers and commuters, with commuters disembarking from the taxi halfway or being delivered to the wrong destination. The experience clearly must be unpleasant for customers. Research has revealed that customers tell others about their bad service experiences more often than they do about their good experiences (Zeithaml et al. 2006). It could be argued that boarding the wrong taxi was a customer’s mistake, but to a customer, that would not matter because it’s frustration would be directed at the service provider. Creative strategies and tactics must be implemented that would ensure a customer effortlessly participates in the service process.

Effective participation by taxi commuters in the service process would not only promote high service performance, but also ensure that excellent standards are not a once off event but an established standard. That is, of course, if other stakeholders are doing their part. Lovelock (2001:13) maintained that it is difficult to standardise a service in which a customer was highly involved in its production and delivery process. It should however, not be impossible to standardise a service.

Many customers were aggrieved by the violence, intimidation and inconvenience they were caused by the taxi unrest (De Kock 2008). They reported that they felt they were being used in the ongoing conflict between the taxi industry and the municipal government without being presented with the true facts. One commuter blamed the taxi associations for being selfish because they blocked taxi commuters from using other modes of transport when taxi drivers were on strike. Informing customers in good time about the possibility of disruption in service has been proven to reduce the negative impact of the disruption on service quality perceptions (Davis and Heineke 2005). The municipal government and the taxi industry’s leadership should genuinely consult the community, especially on public transport issues that are likely to affect them not only during the crisis, but also, before the crisis erupts.

In the taxi industry, customer participation is critical to the effective performance of a service; therefore, a customer must be encouraged and enabled to achieve high
service performance. To some extent, a customer must be treated as part of an association and resources expended for their education and training in service production and delivery (Lovelock 2001). The slave mentality reminiscent of the apartheid era when Africans were prepared to accept sub-standard performance must be eradicated. Service recovery strategies like customer complaints mechanisms have to be made accessible to almost all members of the community, especially taxi commuters. Disruptions to services of whatever nature must be communicated to taxi commuters in good time.

The perceptions of service quality of taxi commuters were very low, as reflected by the negative scores on total quality (Annexure F). The perception scores for three quality dimensions were average, with the best scores attained on reliability and the worst scores obtained on the empathy dimension. Overall, the service performance should have been average, but it was not. The findings suggested commuters’ expectations of service were higher than the quality experienced, hence the negative quality scores overall (Zeithaml et al. 2006).

Firms often profess that their employees are their most valuable assets, but very few of them reflect that belief in their strategic and operational initiatives (Anderson & Zemke 1998). The taxi services are no different: front-line employees, specifically taxi drivers, are most often not well taken care of (Majeke 2003). How owner-drivers, regarded as employees for the purpose of the discussion because they interact with customers under the name of their taxi association, and taxi drivers influence service quality will be discussed next.

5.2.5.4 Service quality and taxi drivers

Observation of activities of the Black Taxi Association and the Red Taxi Association revealed that a growing number of taxi owners were not employing people to drive their vehicles but were driving them. One taxi owner recounted incidences in which drivers defrauded taxi owners until they became bankrupt, only to see their former drivers purchase new vehicles. McCaul (1990) highlighted this type of fraud as one of the challenges facing the industry. Bankruptcies show that taxi drivers are not
always innocent victims of exploitation by owners, as some researchers suggest (Majeke 2003).

Taxi drivers play a critical role in taxi service quality and represent a link between commuters and taxi associations (Grönroos 2000). The way drivers conduct themselves in front of their customers is usually viewed as a projection of the vision of a particular taxi association. It is common for taxi commuters to refer to a particular taxi association as rude and violent and not make a distinction between an association and its drivers. It is important that taxi drivers be able and willing to deliver high service quality to customers the first time and every subsequent time thereafter. Leadership and front-line employees need to appreciate the pivotal nature of their services to customer retention (Lovelock 2001).

Some drivers interviewed either did not understand the value of quality, or had a very limited view of it. Most of those who were confident about the quality concept were convinced that commuters defined high quality as speed of service. A number of drivers appeared to be unaware that their customers were no longer satisfied with technical quality but demanded that functional quality be improved as well (Davis & Heineke 2005). Stated differently, it was no longer the ability of the service to transport a commuter from one point to the other that was the critical factor in service quality evaluations but how the customers felt they were treated en route to their destinations. Taxi drivers need to be equipped with knowledge of what is expected of them in the service process to be able to perform at their best.

It emerged from interviews that certain drivers believed they had very little control over the level of service quality they were providing to their customers. Among Employed drivers identified taxi owners as one source of their frustration. This allegation was in line with pronouncements by some researchers that taxi drivers are victims of exploitation at the hands taxi owners. Employed drivers complained about low wages and no benefits. A number of people have suggested that should government intervene by imposing better service conditions and higher wages (Fourie & Pretorius 2008). The logic is that better wages and conditions of service would help control driver frustration, thereby eliminating reckless driving, speeding,
and rude and violent behaviour on the road (Majeke 2003). For some drivers, this was not a solution; drivers wanted more.

Some drivers have aspired to become taxi owners for a long time in order to claim a significant stake in the industry (McCaul 1990). Grönroos (2000) argued that employees should be encouraged to become part owners of companies so that they could discharge their best performances in the productive initiatives of the firm. Whilst it is true that ownership would engender feelings of control over service quality standards, the type of ownership that taxi drivers envisage is problematic.

The taxi industry is becoming unprofitable, mainly due to increasingly overtraded routes (Fourie & Pretorius 2005). Mokonyama (2008) maintained that for the taxi services to survive and grow, taxi services must make business sense to taxi operators. The problem is how taxi services can make business sense if they continue to produce more taxi owners than the industry can profitably sustain. It is therefore believed that better wages and working conditions coupled with attractive exit plans for both owner-drivers and employed drivers would be the best alternative. With fewer taxi drivers in the system, wages and working conditions could be improved, further increasing the motivation of taxi drivers. When taxi drivers feel valued and appreciated, they are more likely to pass these virtues on to their commuters.

Owner-drivers as well as employed drivers claimed that taxi association leadership tended to be distant from its membership. Taxi drivers are therefore deprived of the opportunity to discuss the challenges they are facing, like the threat posed by BRT and “harassment” by traffic police. One taxi driver referred to the recent forceful removal of the Red Taxi Association’s leadership from office as a culmination of frustration that had affected both their work and family lives. Dervitsiotis (2001) maintained that quality improvement must go beyond the product or service and improve the quality of work and family life as well. Taxi drivers surveyed believed quality improvement programmes in public transportation services, like the BRT, were a threat to their livelihoods from which the taxi leadership should protect them.
Juran (1989) asserted that ongoing communication between leadership and followers is critical to the success of quality improvement initiatives. Apart from the scheduled meetings with taxi owners, more time must be allocated by the leadership to listen to the needs of everyone in the industry, especially the taxi drivers. It was understandable that key decisions in public transport are beyond the power of the taxi association leadership, but that does not absolve the leadership from its responsibility to listen and sympathise with the feelings of its internal customers, the taxi drivers (Belding 2004:103).

Open lines of communication would not benefit the drivers only; the leadership would also obtain a “fresh” mandate from time to time to inform its engagement with government and other stakeholders. Hibbs (2004) maintained that public transport operators are the ones who understood the needs of commuters more than do local government bureaucrats. This could only be true of the taxi service if the leadership continuously engaged taxi drivers who are the link between the leadership and the taxi commuters (Anderson & Zemke 1998).

A need exits for taxi drivers to understand and accept that they are also responsible for the poor service quality in taxis. It is generally believed that a first step to a solution of a problem is acknowledgement by the relevant parties of the existence of a problem and acceptance of responsibility for the problem. Only a few older taxi drivers were prepared to admit that taxi drivers were causing great discomfort to their commuters. Many younger taxi drivers had excuses for their deviant behaviour towards commuters and other road users. Some older drivers suggested that they should be given the responsibility to mentor the younger drivers. Mentorship is effective in honing people’s skills and establishing business networks (Berry 2007). Mentorship has to be combined with formal driver training, and should include training in aspects of customer care and advanced driving skills.

5.2.5.5 The service process and quality

Grönnroos (2000) suggested that a service is made up of a number of activities which, when accurately performed, result in heightened quality perceptions. Grönroos argued that, according to the relationship framework, high performance on individual
activities would not only satisfy a customer but also pave a way for a long-term relationship between a firm and its customer (Lovelock 2001). In the saturated market in which taxis are operating, retaining existing customers is very important. In conversations with taxi commuters, it was alleged that some taxi drivers and their assistants, called the conductors, were not only rude, but also, do not show respect for the elderly during the service process. It was also reported that the scheduling of taxis to different routes was chaotic. In subsequent taxi rides taken by the author, those allegations were positively confirmed.

Davis and Heineke (2007) maintained that a service is made up of activities that are performed in the presence of customers as well as their absence. Examples of activities performed in the absence of the customer are service design and demand management; these activities determine the effectiveness of activities performed in front of the customer. Chaos occurs at some taxi ranks during peak hours, which indicates a need for more effective design of the service process aimed at optimal demand management. An operations manager working in conjunction with rank marshals stationed at various taxi ranks should know which taxi ranks and taxi routes are busy, and when they are busy to be able to reroute taxi vehicles accordingly.

It was observed that some taxi commuters, especially the elderly, did not understand the different signs normally used to stop a taxi. For example, a commuter intending to board a taxi to “town” is expected to point his/her arm in front of his/her body, whilst a commuter to a destination such as Korsten is expected to point behind him or herself. Some commuters have made mistakes in respect of these signs; at times, the error has led them to be verbally abused by taxi drivers. If the destinations of all taxis were written on the front of a taxi in big, bold letters, many drivers and commuters would potentially not be inconvenienced.

It is important to identify and eliminate irritants in the service process (Palmer 1998). Some young taxi drivers and their conductors tend to refer to elderly commuters as ‘abahlali’ (roughly translated to mean community members), instead of mama and tata (mother and father respectively), as expected in Xhosa culture, this can be construed as disrespectful. Service quality improvement will not be successful if it is
not rooted in the culture of the customers (Grönroos 2000). The level of cleanliness of some drivers and conductors was found to be unacceptable. The physical appearance of the front-line employees is one of the tangible aspects of a service that is crucial to service quality valuations (Zeithaml et al. 1990). High standards of cleanliness are essential for taxi drivers and their conductors.

A number of irritants identified by taxi commuters are prevalent in the taxi service and require redress (Arussy 2005). These include some types of music played on taxis, which sometimes have very rude lyrics, offensive sexual content and other uncomfortable characteristics. The very high volume at which some taxi drivers play their music was also mentioned as a cause of concern for taxi commuters and other road users. Speeding, reckless driving, and the vulgar language used by some taxi drivers were added to the list of irritants. It could be argued that in most cases taxi commuters do not complain about these aspects of service. However, that dissatisfaction was expressed to other commuters and the dissatisfaction about these issues indicates that the behaviour of drivers and conductors is problematic.

The taxi association must make it easy and meaningful to lodge a complaint against representatives of the association. Palmer (1998) stated that the contact personnel essentially represent the vision of an organisation to its customers, hence the use of the word representative. It was suggested that the contact details of the leadership be displayed at taxi ranks and on taxi vehicles, friendly and competent staff be employed at taxi association offices, and easy access for commuters to the taxi leadership should be ensured. Speedy resolution of complaints and follow up procedures to ensure customer satisfaction might also increase perceptions of service quality. Grönroos (2000) asserted that a service process does not end when service delivery is completed; service delivery also includes any form of service recovery related to that particular service.

Any taxi association that commits itself to customer orientation and demonstrates this orientation through service that takes the interests of the broader community into consideration can differentiate itself from the competition and potentially earn an above average income (Dervitsiotis 2001). However, internal customers must be
taken care of first. It has emerged from the semi-structured interviews with taxi
drivers that they lack knowledge about the key quality attributes that were used by
their commuters to evaluate taxi service quality. Taxi drivers believe they have no
control over their work situation, so they are discouraged from making a positive
impact on service quality. They identified the government, the taxi leadership and
the customers as impediments in inhibiting their efforts towards quality improvement.

Based on the quantitative data, it has been established that, overall, service quality in
the taxi industry is poor, and the findings supported the assumption about the poor
level of taxi service quality. Close scrutiny of the data suggests that reliability had
the highest score, while empathy had the lowest score. Although these results
provide insight into taxi service quality perceptions, caution must be exercised when
using the results: the results cannot be generalised to the greater population
because the null hypothesis could not be rejected. Recommendations to improve taxi
service quality will then be suggested next.

5.3 STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE TAXI SERVICE QUALITY

It is suggested that the municipal government, with the support of other stakeholders
like the Port Elizabeth Regional Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PERCCI), the
transport Sector Education and Training Authority (SETA), and the Nelson Mandela
Metropolitan University’s business school assist the taxi industry in formulating a
“Code of Good Practice”. It is important that the code include, amongst other issues,
the envisaged behaviour of taxi drivers towards public transport commuters, other
road users, and society in general. It is important that mechanisms exist to ensure
that the taxi leadership does enforce the code on its members.

Government could use its resources like recapitalisation to motivate taxi associations
to commit themselves to the code by, for example, giving preference to signatories of
the code with respect to transport subsidy applications. PERCCI could also assist by
persuading its membership to award transport contracts for their workers to taxi
associations who are not only signatories to the code but were proven to be
effectively using it.
The transport SETA, in conjunction with the NMMU business school, could be charged with the task of facilitating the training of drivers on customer service, advanced driving skills, and other aspects of the taxi services operations. It is important that basic business-management training be offered to taxi leadership first and later rolled out to include all incumbents of the taxi industry who are able and willing to participate in the programme. Government should subsidise these capacity improvement initiatives.

In the short-term, it is important that quality improvement programmes be handled by the taxi industry with the support of the government. A taxi association that can differentiate its business based on service quality can position its services as superior to those of other taxi associations and have a better chance of succeeding in establishing a brand in the taxi industry. Benefits of a branded service are immense. In the medium and long term, implementation of the regulation processes, not projects, should continue with the genuine commitment from all parties.

A more comprehensive study of the perceived quality of taxi services is required. It is important that such a study test the assumptions that females and males perceive taxi service quality differently because the assumption could not be adequately supported by the results of this study. The gap approach to services marketing would be more appropriate; discrepancies between various elements in the taxi industry, as defined by TQM, could be identified and bridged with this approach (Zeithaml et al. 2006).

A larger and more representative sample would be required so that the results of future studies can be generalised to the bigger population from which the sample has been drawn (Gay 1992). Future studies could include other population groups, like the Coloureds. In addition, it is important that all 10 taxi associations in the Nelson Metropolitan Metro be included. To circumvent access problems encountered with taxi associations (e.g. the Black Taxi Association) access to a sample would have to be negotiated with the Taxi Forum. The Taxi Forum proved to be very powerful in the taxi industry unrest (De Kock 2008).
The questionnaire needs to be properly tested so that internal and external validity can be improved. The t-test on this study sample yielded a result that was below 70%; the percentage has to be improved to enhance the credibility of the results. In cases where one-to-group methods of questionnaire administration are conducted, more research assistants would be required to guard against participants who tend to help each other in completing questionnaires. Closer monitoring of respondents would enhance the validity of the research results.

More time and financial resources would be required for the study; an obvious constraint of this study that had adverse effects on the quality of the data collected. Funding could be obtained from stakeholders like government. Government has more to gain from a comprehensive study on taxi service quality, thus committing financial and any other resources at its disposal to such investigations would be more rewarding than the damage caused by a failure of the current regulation process.

It is important that future research be conducted to investigate a more statistically relevant research procedure in order to ensure that the validity problems identified by some researchers in respect of the disconfirmation theory be reduced or eliminated (Grönroos 2000). The aim of such a study would be to make sure that expectations are not measured twice, which some scholars claim that the disconfirmation theory does (Grönroos 2000). Another focus of a future study would be to establish ways of incorporating more independent variables. This would enable researchers to attribute perceptions of taxi services to the antecedents more accurately.

5.4 **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

The study had some limitations which could be addressed by future research. The sample size was small which has implications for the generalisability of the findings to the larger population from which it was drawn. The fact that only Black commuters were surveyed is another limitation because they are not the only consumers of taxi services. Only taxi ranks used by 2 out of 10 taxi associations in the Nelson Mandela Bay municipal area were visited during the course of the research study. The
quantitative questionnaire did not go through rigorous testing as it should have. Time and financial constraints also posed a challenge to the research process.

It is suggested that a more comprehensive and representative sample, reflecting the demographics of taxi commuters across racial lines need to be drawn. All the 10 taxi associations in the area will have to be included in the study and items which constitute a quantitative questionnaire need to be subjected to rigorous testing in order to improve validity of research results. More time and financial resources will have to be made available.

5.5 CONCLUSION

The study adopted a combination of a TQM and SERVQUAL approach as a basis for improving taxi service quality. This means that the role of leadership, employee involvement, process excellence and customer focus have been identified as critical considerations in the repackaging of the taxi service market offering. Empowerment of both the employees of the taxi association as well as taxi commuters in their respective roles in the production and delivery of the taxi service is seen as the key to efficient and effective service.

The above-mentioned contributions provide a framework for the understanding and improvement of taxi services in the Nelson Mandela Bay municipal area. Areas of improvement were also suggested for future studies.
LIST OF SOURCES


ANNEXURE A

RESEARCH ACCESS FORM

Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University

This is to certify that Mr Xolile Michael Gule is a student studying towards his Magister in Business Administration at the above-mentioned university.

His research topic is titled: Improving service quality of taxi operators in the Nelson Mandela Bay municipal area.

The objectives of the study are:

- To determine the current level of service quality offered by taxis in the above-mentioned area;
- to establish what is service quality from the perspective of the leadership, workers and commuters; and
- to suggest strategies that can be used to improve service quality in taxi services.

Declaration: The researcher commits himself to keep any ‘classified information’ confidential according to the code of ethics of the university.

Access to information/ membership is hereby granted by:

Name of the association: ........................................................
Surname and Name : ............................................................
Official position: ...............................................................  
Place: ......................................................................................
Date: .......................................................................................
Student Name: .................................................................
Date: .......................................................................................


ANNEXURE B

QUESTIONNAIRE TO TAXI DRIVERS

Please provide a tick in the relevant block below:

Note:

1. Leadership includes an occupant of an official position in a taxi association executive council.

2. Owner refers to a registered member of a taxi association.

3. Administrative includes office-based staff (for example, a receptionist) or staff based at taxi ranks (for example, rank marshals).

4. Operator refers to taxi drivers and conductors.

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(i) What is service quality from the view of the commuter?

(ii) In order of importance, please list those features of a taxi service that are used by customers to judge service quality (focusing on owners and drivers)

(iii) What are the problems that you are continuously faced with in your quest to deliver a quality service?
(iv) What steps did you take to control or improve quality of your service? (focusing on owners and drivers).

(v) Apart from the Public Transportation Plan, do you as an association have any strategies in place that will ensure that you deliver the best service in 2010? If not explain why. If yes, please briefly elaborate on the strategies.

Questions adapted from Zeithaml, V., Parasuraman, A. & Berry L. 1990:36.
ANNEXURE C

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR COMMUTERS

Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University


(Nceda gcwalisa icandelo A la le questionnaire apho ubonisa iminqweno yakho kwinkonzo yeetaxi.) Emva koko gcwalisa icandelo B apho ubonisa khona izimvo zakho ngendlela oyibona ngayo inkonzo oyifumeneyo yeetaxi eNelson Mandela Bay ngalo mzuzu.

Imiyalelo: Nceda gcwalisa le questionnaire engqamene nomgangatho wenkonzo zeetaxi. Ukuba ekuqulathwe zezi zivakalisi zilandeya kubaluleke kakhulu kwindlela ozivavanya ngayo ezi nkonzo nceda rhangqa inombolo 7. Okanye ukuba azibalulekanga rhangqa inombolo 1.

PART A
EXPECTATIONS (IMINQWENO YAM KWINKONZO YETAXI.)

1 Taxi drivers, conductors and rank marshals are clean and smartly dressed.

2 Minibuses and midibuses are in good working condition.

3 Taxi ranks have a modern appearance.
4 Rank marshals and taxi drivers have good working cell phones. 

5 Taxis are available at taxi ranks and pick-up points whenever needed. 

6 A taxi driver always transports me to my destination as I have requested. 

7 He/she drops me at the right spot. 

8 A taxi driver or conductor gives me a correct change. 

9 The normal taxi route is not unnecessarily changed by the driver. 

10 A taxi driver is willing and flexible to assist me when I experience a problem in the taxi. 

11 Alternative means of transport is organised quickly when a taxi breaks down or is impounded by traffic cops. 

12 Receptionists at the offices of the taxi association are willing to answer my questions. 

13 Taxi association's leadership resolves commuter complaints speedily and satisfactorily. 

14 Driving skills of taxi drivers are of high standard. 

15 Taxi drivers and conductors display a warm and friendly attitude towards passengers. 

16 The taxi fare is the right price for the services I am receiving from the taxi association.
17 My life and property are safe when I use a taxi service.

18 The offices of the taxi association are located such that they can be easily reached by many people.

19 It is fairly easy to talk directly to the association’s leadership.

20 The taxi driver offers a good explanation whenever the service is disrupted.

21 I am recognised by the driver as a regular passenger.

22 The taxi driver is prepared to make slight changes to his route to accommodate me where possible.

**PART B**

**PERCEPTIONS (UMGAGATHO WENKONZO ENDIZIFUMENEYO.)**

1 Taxi drivers, conductors and rank marshals are clean and smartly dressed.

2 Minibuses and midi-buses are in good working condition.

3 Taxi ranks have a modern appearance.

4 Rank marshals and taxi drivers have good working cell phones.

5 Taxis are available at taxi ranks and pick-up points whenever needed.
6 A taxi driver always transports me to my destination as I have requested.

7 He/she drops me at the right spot.

8 A taxi driver or conductor gives me a correct change.

9 The normal taxi route is not unnecessarily changed by the driver.

10 A taxi driver is willing and flexible to assist me when I experience a problem in the taxi.

11 Alternative means of transport is organised quickly when a taxi breaks down or is impounded by traffic cops.

12 Receptionists at the offices of the taxi association are willing to answer my questions.

13 Taxi association’s leadership resolves commuter complaints speedily and satisfactorily.

14 Driving skills of taxi drivers are of high standard.

15 Taxi drivers and conductors display a warm and friendly attitude towards

16 The taxi fare is the right price for the services I am receiving from the taxi association.

17 My life and property are safe when I use the taxi service.
18 The offices of the taxi association are located such they can be easily reached by many people.

19 It is fairly easy to talk directly to the association's leadership.

20 The taxi driver offers a good explanation whenever the service is disrupted.

21 I am recognised by the driver as a regular passenger.

22 The taxi driver is prepared to make slight changes to his route to accommodate me where possible.
### CRONBACH ALPHA

**Summary for scale: Mean=21.7800 Std.Dv.=7.10609 Valid N:10**  
Cronbach alpha: .802985 Standardized alpha: .80456  
Average inter-item corr.: .454752

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**Summary for scale: Mean=12.7100 Std.Dv.=5.45374 Valid N:10**  
Cronbach alpha: .392788 Standardized alpha: .397578  
Average inter-item corr.: .117589

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Summary for scale: Mean=12.5842 Std.Dv.=5.78147 Valid N:11
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Average inter-item corr.: .220936
## ANNEXURE E:

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