Enhancing the Quality-Of-Service Management for Managers and Frontline Employees: The Case of Post Office Services, South Africa

Elsie Mbua Eposi*

Department of Accounting and Finance, Faculty of Economics and Financial Services, Walter Sisulu University, South Africa.
*Email: eposimbua811@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

This study examined the factors that could assist in improving service quality for postal customers who residents and reside in the postal areas in an endeavour to establish an effective service management quality for postal services. A qualitative research method was applied which enhanced the collection of data through semi structured interviews from managers and frontline employees. Data was transcribed and was analysed using Atlas-ti (Version 8.1). Results obtained from the study reveals that effective strategic implementation, effective training and development, motivation, as well as an effective monitoring and evaluation system are the most influential components to use in improving the quality of services within post offices. Other factors identified include maintaining distinctive strategic positioning, using e-business technology to improve efficiency and competitive advantage, maintaining effective support from top management, putting emphasis on the quality of service offer by frontline employer's during operations, and maintaining good parcel system security, creating an effective communication system; consistency in improving services; instilling confidence and trust among consumers; fostering special treatment to consumers; and the provision of high-quality services. Based on the findings, it is recommended that management of the postal sector should provide adequate and quality services to customers, through an effective strategic implementation plan, effective training and development, motivation, as well as an effective monitoring and evaluation system, maintaining distinctive strategic positioning, using e-business technology to improve efficiency and competitive advantage, maintaining effective support from top management, putting emphasis on the quality of service offer by frontline employer's during operations, and maintaining good parcel system security, creating an effective communication system; consistency in improving services; instilling confidence and trust among consumers; fostering special treatment to consumers; and the provision of high-quality services.

Keywords: frontline employees: managers; post office services; service management; strategic implementation and training and development.
JEL Classifications: M1, M11, M19

1. INTRODUCTION

Service quality has become a critical issue in enhancing business in today's highly competitive marketplace (Ross, 2017). More specifically, to survive in a highly competitive service provision environment, it is essential to offer consumers high-quality service. Consumers today demand quality and from their point of view, quality is an integral and expected part of service (Hamari et al., 2017). To pledge transformation in a business environment, there is a need to implement effective service management to accomplish the desired purposes of an organisation. To archive customer satisfaction in an organisation, there is a need to examine the effectiveness of these factors that could improve service management quality for managers and frontline employees in the SAPO in order improve on their parcel services delivery to it postal consumers, and to gain competitive advantages over its competitors. Thus, the identification of these factors by SAPO management could help in achieving consumers' expectations.

The expectations of all SA customers in terms of service quality from SAPO are very high. These high expectations must be met if the organisation is to remain a viable and significant player in the services sector. Quality of service sets organizations apart if they are to remain competitive and differentiate their offerings from competitors (Siddique and Shadbolt, 2016).

The business environment has become more competitive and turbulent, and service industries are increasingly concerned with obtaining sustainable competitive advantage (Quirke, 2017). SAPO is the national postal service of South Africa and a state- owned enterprise. In terms of South Africa law, the post office is the only entity legally allowed to accept reserved mail and as such operates a monopoly (SAPO, 2014). In its vision and mission statement, SAPO is committed to providing an efficient and affordable communication service to all people in South Africa. Despite the monopoly, strategic position, and the competitive advantage that SAPO have over other private entrants, SAPO is yet to take full advantage of this competitive edge by introducing innovation and postal reinvention to their operations and service offerings (Melo, 2013). Although SAPO enjoy the monopoly advantage for the mail service, it still faces serious competition from other competitors in other services like parcel delivery. Despite the mail service already becoming irrelevant in the face of faster alternatives like emails, the parcel postal service of the post office continues to remain pertinent and as such requires reinvention to withstand competition and meet customer expectations. Postal services in developed, developing and underdeveloped countries are experiencing a reduction in traditional letter mail. This is a result of the global reach of the internet, which has made electronic mail possible in some of the most remote corners of the world. While populations and literacy are growing exponentially, the traditional letter is seeing a continued decline. But the parcel delivery services remain a relevant service that cannot be replaced as mail business has been replaced by surge of technology. While traditional letters have decreased in numbers, parcel delivery service has increased significantly. This is due in large part to the development of e-commerce. Online shopping means many of our purchases now arrive on our doorstep.

The South Africa Post Office parcel delivery service is competing with local delivery services as well as global giants such as DHL Express, Courier Guy, Aerospeed Couriers, Diamond Express, Courier It, City Logistics, RAM Hand-to-Hand Couriers', Fast Way, Door-to- Door and Post Net. DHL Express is among the top international courier companies in South Africa. They offer express courier services between SA and the rest of the world. Other competitors have entered the business space and are easily accessible at large shopping centres and residential areas (Manyatshe, 2003). The increase in numbers of different parcel postal services pose serious threats to the SAPO parcel postal services. As such, SAPO must improve on their service quality in other to have a competitive advantage in the market environment. Fleisher and Bensoussan (2015) suggest that competitive advantage is when the organisation has successfully managed to position itself in such a way that it gains an advantage over its competitors in the market (external environment). As a logistics and distribution business, SAPO needs to have a strong marketing function to source and retain business, and operationally it is important to operate on a "Just-in-Time" strategy as key to meeting customer expectations. The SA parcel postal sectors need to entrench their customer base and market position to keep customers using the effective strategy of reaching customers' demand.

Thus, this study examined the effectiveness of factors that could improve service management quality for managers and frontline employees in the SAPO in order to improve their parcel service delivery to postal consumers and to gain competitive advantages over its rivals. The SAPO has experienced poor service delivery and a high level of competition in their parcel postal sectors, which has affected customers' perceptions of service quality and the loss of postal customers.

The SAPO has experienced poor service delivery and high competition in the parcel postal sectors, and this has affected customers' perceptions of service quality and loss of postal customers. Customers of the post office complain of poor service rendered, postal products not reaching the right address, delays due to congestion, and network problems. It is further noted that customer patronage at post offices has significantly declined due to failure to respond to customers' changing needs, who also often complain of long queues in anticipation of services (SAPO, 2014). Customers service delivery at SAPO branches is in decline and this has affected the quality of service and the satisfaction of customers. Furthermore, there is no proper customer service management strategy regarding what needs to be done to improve the customer welfare, as per the SAPO Annual Report (2016). Msosa and Govender (2015) observes that consumers complain of poor service quality such as waiting for several days to receive parcel due to poor postal networks, inability to access services due to congestion and network outage. According to the SAPO Annual Report 2015/2016, clients reported on the uncourteous attitude of some staff, delays in receiving mail, wrong distribution of parcel, inability to enforce decisions, delays in responding to consumer complaints, and the unwelcoming atmosphere of some of the post offices, especially at counter level.

Frontline employees play an extraordinary role in the execution of service quality as discussed by many authors and researchers (O'Cass and Sok, 2013; Iyer and Johlke, 2015: Wang et al., 2017). Employees who work in consumer service positions in an organisation interact with consumers and ought to ensure that a high level of satisfaction is achieved (Van-Scheers & Botha, 2014: Neha, 2018). However, the capabilities of frontline employees to satisfy consumers depend on the environment in which the organisation operates. Various scholars (Panzar and Menk, 2011; Suleiman, 2016; Hlekane, 2013; Speckman, 2013; Okholm et al., 2018) investigated the challenges of low-quality services rendered to postal consumers, its penalties on service delivery, also recommended potential procedures to solve the challenges. Their findings indicate that postal sectors are operating below expectations, thus several recommendations have been suggested on how to advance the service quality, and these are detailed in following paragraphs of this study.

The South African postal service must strive to eradicate challenges that hamper the organisation's success. The extent of

poor service management and service quality within the postal services in South Africa is quite disturbing. A report delivered through the SAPO in 2016 affirms that the post office sector has been identified as a major contributor to the growth and change of the South Africa economy (SAPO, 2016). However, concerns are raised in the report about the service quality rendered by SAPO to the point where SAPO is operating below its optimal level. Annette, et al. (2016) confirms that the service quality of SAPO is generally perceived as unsatisfactory and failing to meet the expectations of consumers. Many scholars have investigated the causes of poor service delivery of consumer services in local post offices in South Africa but there has been no study investigating the factors that could enhance service management quality for managers and frontline employees in the SAPO in the North-West province. The problem of this study is the increase in poor parcel service delivery rendered to postal consumers by manager and frontline employers in the South African Post Office. This puts the SAPO in a disadvantage position when compared to other competitors. This paper aim to investigate the factors that could enhance service management quality for managers and frontline employees in the SAPO in an endeavour to establish an effective service management strategic to improve parcel postal services and to gain competitive advantages over its competitors in the North-West province. The objectives are designed to:

- Examine how strategic implementation can be used to enhance service management quality with managers and frontline employees in the SAPO in the North-West
- Explore how training and development can be used to enhance service quality with managers and frontline employees in the SAPO in the North-West
- Examine how motivation can be used to enhance service management quality with managers and frontline employees in the SAPO in the North-West
- Establish how monitoring and evaluation can be used to enhance service management quality with managers and frontline employees in the SAPO in the North-West.

2. THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

The Systems Theory underpins this study, and the subsequent section expounds on the concept of Systems Theory.

A system is a unit consisting of several related parts that function as an entity in a dynamic state of equilibrium (Hellriegel et al., 2008). In this regard, an organisation is regarded as a structure with several units that work together within their internal and external environments to achieve their set objectives (Mele et al., 2010; Coetzee and Van Niekerk, 2012). This theory advocates the need to understand the environment, social relationship dynamics, individual lifestyles and perceptions; and individual conditions before making decisions (Hellriegel et al., 2008; Mele et al., 2010). System theorists consider an organisation to be subdivided into different sections or departments to ensure that departments function efficiently and effectively through interrelationships with each other (Mele et al., 2010). The inability of one department to perform as expected will invariably affect the performance of other departments and ultimately that of the entire organisation. Furthermore, systems theorists emphasise

the need for different departments to have extensive knowledge of their visions, developmental programmes (including quality development), knowledge of their environment, management of their relationships with the external environment, adapting to the existing conditions in the marketplace, and courage in handling difficult times (Mele et al., 2010; Luhmann et al., 2013; Salim, 2014). To run a successful organisation, managers need to plan to ensure that the entire system functions and this will only be possible through the interpretation of feedback and analysing business circumstances to find a suitable balance in resolving problems. This is also achieved through adjustments on the implementation of policies, and lastly redefining the organisational structure to promote a suitable performance (Teece, 2010: Goetsch and Davis, 2014; Kerzner, 2017).

Concerning this study, the post office is regarded as a system while the several departments, such as human resources, the mail and parcel unit, the retail unit, the posted bank unit, the supply chain unit, the properties unit, the logistics unit, and others are regarded as sub-systems; and consumers constitute the external environment. There is a need for management of the post office branches to adopt the objects and tactics of the systems theory to ensure that the strategic management of service quality at all branches of the post office is a success. The systems theory posits that there is a need for effective communication between an organization (SAPO in this case) and consumers (residents in this case) as well as efficient service delivery to ensure the organisations do provide the desired level of services to its consumers (Scarso and Bolisani, 2012; Daunton, 2015).

The adoption of this theory would enable the managers of postal branches and frontline employees to interact with consumers in establishing the best method for the handling of service delivery of parcel services. Besides, the theory emphasises the need for organisations to engage in developmental programs in their capacity building; technical improvements to handle service delivery matters competently to achieve consumer satisfaction and service excellence at the branches in the North-West province.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Subsequently is an exposition of literature on service management as recorded by management scholars.

3.1. The Understanding of Service Management

The service management concept emerged from other disciplines such as marketing, operations management, organisational theory, human resources management, and quality management (Forsgren and Johanson, 2014; Cummings and Worley, 2014; Tzortzaki and Mihiotis, 2014). Service management is concerned with more than just delivering services, as mentioed by Osborne et al. (2013). Each service, process, or infrastructure component has a lifecycle, and service management considers the entire lifecycle from strategy through design and transition to operation and continual improvement (Srinivasan, 2014). In the view of Brewster et al. (2016), the inputs to service management are the resources and capabilities that represent the assets of the service provider, while the outputs are the services that provide value to consumers.

Thus, the need for SAPO to coordinate its company resources and capabilities to provide high-quality services to postal consumers. Effective service management is itself a strategic asset of the service provider, providing them with the ability to carry out their core business of providing services that deliver value to customers (Aarikka-Stenroos and Jaakkola, 2012; Cho et al., 2012). Al Ariss and Sidani (2016) confirm that adopting good practice helps a service provider to create an effective service management system. A good practice is simply doing things that have been shown to work and to be effective (West, 2012; Drucker, 2018). For SAPO as a service provider, service management could play a critical role in keeping all postal consumers informed about the services of the post offices they support. It is critical to ensure that the right information is available at the right time. In providing services to customers, the value of the services also depends on how many people are dependent on the service. After a detailed understanding of what service management is all about, the subsequent section deals with the service management functions.

3.1.1. Service management functions

Service management functions in this study could enable SAPO management, managers and frontline employers to effective deliver services required through the integration and coordination of strategies across the marketing, operations, and human resource functions. The focus here is on the views of scholars concerning the different service management functions in an organisation. In the view of Taneja et al. (2013), functional areas of management mean the totality of all those activities which are performed in an organization. Lovelock and Patterson (2015) state that the operations, marketing, and human resources form the trinity of service management. Cabrera et al. (2016) also note the functional areas of service management to include operations, human resources, and finances. Table 1 below is the concept-analysis conducted to aggregate the service management functions as per literature.

The following section further elaborates on the functions of service management.

3.1.1.1. Operations

Operations focuses on the work undertaken in managing the internal activities of an organisation to ensure that it operates as effectively and efficiently as possible. This is seminal in every organisation. Although marketing has assumed greater importance to service organisation in recent years, it is still the operations function that dominate line management. As such, the management

of operation functions is quite important. Reid and Sanders (2019) assert that operations management has played a critical role in transforming high-contact services into low-contact, technology-mediated ones turning personalized interactions into impersonal service encounters (Slack and Brandon-Jones, 2018). There are two quite different spheres of activity for operations in services organisation. On the one hand, the services encounter customers and on the other hand back-desk operation of the organisation (Gupta and Starr, 2014; Mellat-Parast et al., 2015). In the case of SAPO, these activities include, for example mail, operational logistics, banking, retailing, supply chain, and human resources to ensure smooth service delivery. These two spheres must cooperate tightly, and good operations management is the key to that. By implication, SAPO operation management needs to ensure that operations managers and frontline employers cooperate with the postal consumer to ensure improved and smooth service delivery.

3.1.1.2. Marketing

Marketing is referred to as a means of creating superior value and delivering high levels of customer satisfaction (Baker, 2014). Pour et al. (2012) state that marketers should endeavour to understand customers' needs and wants, carefully study competition, make products available at places convenient to customers, communicate effectively and efficiently, and finally, offer superior value at a reasonable price. Schindler *et al.* (2012), however, states this does not mean organisations ignore making high revenue since more revenue will make available additional beneficial services. Phadtare (2014) holds that the focus of marketing is customer needs and wants. Through these, an organisation is also obliged to offer solutions to clients, not just tangible goods, and services. By implication, SAPO needs to provide a solution to it consumers, at any given point if they are dissatisfied with the service offer. In the context of a service, marketing is not only the bridge between productions consumptions but rather must manage the customer contact of the other functions of the organisation, for example, operations and human resources (Grönroos, 2001: Bettencourt et al., 2014; Lovelock and Patterson, 2015). The emerging view of service marketing is increasingly customer-oriented, with a clear focus on retaining existing customers instead of winning new ones (Rust and Huang, 2014; Mfarinya, 2018). By implication, as much as SAPO may want to grow and expand its market in the face of intense/fierce competition with the hope of gaining new customers, it must prioritize the need to retain existing customers. One way of doing this is to improve the quality of service offered to exist customers.

3.1.1.3. Human resources

Human resources is a strategic approach to managing employment relations which emphasises that leveraging people's capabilities and it is critical to achieving sustainable competitive advantage (Huczynski and Buchanan, 2010). Here the concern is for SAPO integration and the behaviour of people in the workplace based on ability, motivation, role perception, and situational contingencies. The human resource department is an important part of an organisation and performs the following functions: (1) recruitment, (2) employee relations, (3) safety, (4) training and development, and (5) compensation and benefits (Werner and DeSimone, 2011). These functions are explained as human

Table 1: Concept-analysis of service management functions

Source	Operations	Marketing	Human resources
Robbins et al. (2012)	√	√	√
Golden and Taneja (2010)	√	√	√
Pradeesh (2011)	√		√
Yarimoglu (2014)	√	√	√
Lovelock and Patterson (2015)	√	√	√
Cabrera et al. (2016)	√	√	√

resources for the purpose of this study, explaining that an organisation without a proper setup for human resources is bound to suffer from serious problems while managing its regular activities. For this reason, SAPO ought to put a lot of effort and energy into setting up strong and effective human resources within their business environment. The subsequent discussion presents the service management process as explained by different authors in business management.

3.1.2. Service management process

The aim of the service management processes is to transform the service provider's resources into valuable customer services (Stauss et al., 2010). In a competitive business environment, management needs to implement the customer service management process to proactively respond to situations before it exerts a negative impact on customers (Alkhafaji and Nelson, 2013). Setia and Patel (2013) and Bhattacharjya et al. (2016) confirm that it is this proactive perspective that makes the customer service management process different from the customer service activity in logistics. Thus, the need for SAPO to ensure the effective flow and storage of goods, services, and related postal activities are in place to meet consumer requirements. The service management processes according to Boniface et al. (2010), Axelos.com (2011), Iqbal et al. (2011), Sanker (2012), Myitstudy.com (2013), Lloyd et al. (2013), Bernard (2014), Priyadharshini et al., (2018) and Spencer (2018) include service strategy, service design, service transition, service operations, and continual service improvement. Table 2 provides a concept-analysis of the service management process.

The subsequent sections expound on the service management process according to various authors of management as illustrated in Table 2.

3.1.2.1. Service strategy

The main goal of the service strategy (SS) phase is to develop the ability to achieve and maintain a strategic advantage, by defining the perspective, position, plans, and patterns regarding its services and the management of those services that enable an organisation to achieve its business outcomes (Richard et al., 2012; Al Mourad and Hussain, 2014). The adoption of service strategy would enable the SAPO to design, develop, and implement effective service management system that will help give out high service quality to its post office consumers, as well as enable SAPO to consistently outperform competitive over time, across business cycles, through industry disruptions, and changes in leadership.

3.1.2.2. Service design

Service design, in the views of Reason and Smart (2015) and Bason (2016), is regarded as the stage that designs appropriate and innovative organisation services focusing on processes, policy, and documentation, and meeting current business agreements. Service design in this study would offer SAPO a new way to understanding and approaching their development and delivery, designed to work for consumers and management, instead of seeing them as an optional step in product development.

In summary, service design is a systematic way of improving a business through innovation, branding, and the relationship between customer, management, and its employees. Service design could enable SAPO to obtain improvements in its processes to improve service quality and offer a better service to its customers (Tuulaniemi, 2011). The ideal end-result for a business is to create and maintain a holistic service experience that gives customers a positive, valuable, and effortless experience. This would ultimately differentiate the business and bring value (Koivisto and Miettinen, 2009; Miettinen et al., 2016).

3.1.2.3. Service transition

Service transition focuses on testing, building, and the deployment of new changed protocols as well as checking and tracking progress against requirements. It provides guidance and ensures that the newly changed services are well managed, introduced, deployed, and transferred (Kuller et al., 2010).

Mesquida and Mas (2015) posits that the service transition stage gets inputs from the service design stage and provides output to the service operation stage. Service transition could help the SAPO management to plan and manage the organisational service in its lifecycle. This would enable SAPO to deliver value to itself and its customers. The main goals and objectives of this phase are helping organisations to plan and manage service changes, setting up customer expectations, reducing the gap in predicted and actual performance through minimizing errors and risks associated with changing production into services (Foxit, 2011; Lamichhane, 2019).

3.1.2.4. Service operation

In the view of Peltier (2016), service operation deals with the management of day-to-day operations of organisation services ensuring consumers that the processes and activities are operated well on a usual basis. Ivanov et al. (2017) explain that service operation describes best practices for managing services in supported environments. It includes guidance in achieving

Table 2: Concept-analysis of the service management process

Source	Service strategy	Service design	Service transition	Service operation	Continual service improvement
Boniface et al. (2010)	√	√	√	√	√
Axelos.com (2011)	√	√	√	√	√
Iqbal et al. (2011)	√	√	√	√	√
Sanker (2012)	√	√	√	√	√
Myitstudy.com (2013)	√	√	√	√	√
Lloyd et al., (2013)	√	√	√	√	√
Bernard (2014)	√		√	√	√
Priyadharshini et al., (2018)	√	√	√	√	√
Spencer (2018)	√	√	√	√	√

effectiveness and efficiency in the delivery and support of services to ensure value for the consumer, and the service provider. By implication, service operation would enable SAPO to encompass the day-to-day activities, processes, and infrastructure responsible for delivering value to consumers. Therefore, no customer wants to pay for a service that does not perform as expected (Bai et al., 2019).

3.1.2.5. Continual service improvement

Continual service improvement (CSI) focuses on the processes of improving the quality of services (Lloyd, 2011). It is important to note the difference between continuous and continual improvement. Continuous improvement focuses on constantly improving at the same level. Continual improvement, on the other hand, focuses on a sequence of improving quality as a succession in different time scales with progression to higher levels (TSO, 2011). Considering the current challenges in relation to service quality in SAPO, one might be tempted to think they are unintentionally operating on the continuous improvement axis. It would require SAPO to plan and allocate resources with the vision of continual service improvement to enhance service quality (Slack and Brandon-Jones, 2018). In this study, continual service improvement would able SAPO management to identify and execute opportunities to make postal processes and services better and to objectively measure the effects of these efforts over time.

In summary, the service strategy component takes customer requirements and continual service improvement requests as input and defines and delivers service level packages as output to the service design component. Through this process, the service strategy component considers factors such as strategies, policies, procedures, and resources, and constraints. The service design component in its part takes service level packages as input and works to deliver a service design package as an output. In this process, the component considers solution design, architectures, standards, and service design improvement requests from continual service improvement component. Similarly, the service transition and service operation components create links and perform similar input-output relationships by considering relevant factors. The continual service improvement component interacts with all components and provides improvement proposals accordingly. The improvement proposals could be on strategic, design, transition, and/or operational issues. After this examination and understanding of what the service management process is all about, the subsequent section elaborates on the research methodology.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted in the North-West province of South Africa and the participants were selected from five post offices in the North-West Province. This study adopted the qualitative research method and data was collected from participants using semi-structured interviews. Bryman and Bell (2015) and Saldana (2016) affirm that the qualitative approach enhances the acquisition of extensive understanding through interactions with respondents thus encouraging the use of interviews as a data collecting instrument. The adoption of the qualitative method therefore enhanced understanding of the historical occurrence of the problem under investigation. This enabled the investigation of these factors that affect service management

strategic for postal services to achieve anticipated objectives. The participants of this study consisted of three branch managers, one area manager and ten frontline employees in the South Africa Post Offices making a total of fourteen respondents. Purposeful sampling enabled selecting participants based on specific criteria. Thus, participants were selected purposively to collect comprehensive information due to their vast knowledge in postal matters. The interview guidelines for this study consist of Section A biographical information, while section B which comprised of four sub-sections, focused on the research objectives and questions of this study. The intention was to interview more participants but due to time constraints, and the inability to secure appointments with postal managers and frontline employees, the quest to reach out to more participants was limited. All the interviews were recorded together with field notes and were transcribed into comprehensible text. Afterwards, a thematic analysis was used to arrange data into meaningful sections to represent major responses from the respondents according to each research question. During the data collection stage, the study carefully and continually abided by all ethical guidelines.

5. PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

The responses from all the participants were carefully documented and arranged using Atlas.ti. The analysis of the results presented below indicate the following factors that could enhance high service management quality for postal services this include strategy implementation, training and development, motivation and monitoring and evaluation. The biographical data of participants compels this study to deduce the following: The majority of the participants hold a position as branch managers and frontline employees while a minority of the respondents are area manager. More participants have work experience from 7 years to 27 years, while a minority have work experience from 5 years below. The biographical data submits that more participants have worked for a long period and have experience of postal services in their postal branches. The next discussion elaborates on the qualitative findings of this study.

5.1. Using Strategic Implementation to Enhance Service Quality with Managers and Frontline Employees

On approaches on how to use strategic implementation to enhance service quality with managers and frontline employees in SAPO, participants had a mixed feeling on the strategic plan that was put in place by the post office management, and they submitted that this is not working. They are of the view that managers do not consider strategy implementation as a priority, and they do not consider the yearly objectives before formulating their own strategic plan. On the other hand, the study established that frontline employees are not part of the strategic planning, making it difficult for them to implement the strategic plan effectively due to their lack of understanding of the strategic plan. The findings further indicate that frontline employees implement the strategy according to the orders given by their branch managers or area managers and not according to the policy.

...As not part of the strategic planning I am not happy, I wish to be part of the planning meeting so that I will not face difficulties to implement the strategic plan of our post office.

On the relevant factors that have to be considered when implementing strategies by manager's respondents indicated the following: Financial resources, staff competencies on strategic implementation, high skills, a system in place, need to assign the tasks to the appropriate departments of the organization, evaluate the current staffing structure, determine the key managerial tasks and responsibilities, consider budget, resources, labour as well as equipment and tools. On the other hand, the findings affirmed that frontline employees are not part of the strategic planning process, making it difficult for them to know those relevant factors. Also, the frontline employees implement strategies as per the branch managers and area manager's instructions. Essentially, the post office needs to consider the following factors: the need for management to create an appropriate organisational structure that supports the implementation system, more financial resources, materials, equipment, and labour.

> *...We have to look at the people: Two enquiries must be answered: "Do you have enough people to implement the strategies?" and "Do you have the right people in the organization to implement the strategies?" The number of people in your workforce is an issue that is easier to address because you can hire additional manpower. The tougher part of this is seeing to it that you have the right people, looking into whether they have the skills, knowledge, and competencies required in carrying out the tasks that will implement the strategy, but our post office management does not consider this factor.*

Findings on challenges experienced in strategic implementation by managers and frontline employees were similar: Lack of resources, lack of clarity about the strategic plan, thus, it becomes difficult for them to implement, this affects daily functioning, lack of effective communication of the policy, lack of ownership on the part of the "implementers, little attention is paid to strategy implementation by management, stock problem, a limited budget to run the post offices, staff shortage, system problem, lack of equipment, delay in the delivery postal product, lack of performance tracking and monitoring system as well as lack of a good performance management system, lack of the understanding of the strategic plan that is been formulated by top management, lack of proper infrastructure, proper communication system, low salary, the complaints from consumers of not receiving good services at all times, due to the above challenges. Findings on strategy implementation as it concerns employees suggest the respondents had mixed feelings. The employees are not part of the strategic planning; they lack understanding of the strategic plan making it difficult to implement. While findings by frontline employees indicate that staff implements the post office strategy plan as instructed by their post office manager not using the original postal policy, limited staff to deliver services to consumers as well as attend to their complaints, the inefficiency postal system to reach out to customers as well as customer's dissatisfaction towards postal services most of the time. The findings on strategy implementation by managers and frontline employees as it concerns customers revealed that customers do not like new changes, the issue of bringing in additional documents frustrate customers without advance notification as well as changing the closing time from 17h00 to 16h30, limited staff as well as limited products to serve customers.

5.2. Using Training and Development with Managers and Frontline Employees Revealed that

Frequencies of training and development by managers and frontline employers show that training and development were only carried out whenever there was a need, as such training is not a priority to the organisation. Another is that training and development are carried out on Wednesday morning before opening time, and this is just internal training. Finally, only one staff member received external training in the year 2019. Findings on the view on training and development by managers revealed that this helps to improve employee performance and it enhances the promotion of employees. The training and development reinforce needed skills to attain post office objectives. In addition, the respondents enjoy training and development sessions, particularly the Wednesday's sessions, this according to them enables employers to know what is to be done and it was an avenue to table their challenges. It was evident that training and development help to orientate new employers in an organisation.

> *...they provide adequate training and development only when there is a need. KPOBM also attest that training and development is not a tradition for our post office year program. This indicates that training and development is not a priority to the organization.*
> *...From all indication, staff performances are not too good, our post office needs more training and development programs in other to improved staff skills, knowledge and performance.*

Finally, the findings indicated that training and development is a major prerequisite for any organisation that strives to achieve maximum productivity through the effective performance of its employees. Frontline employees revealed that training and development helps to increase staff knowledge of the service and product, act as a problem solver to an organisation, as well as increases productivity and efficient work. The training and development help to increase promotion and group employers with similar knowledge as well as help to prepare employers to live up to future challenges. The training and development enable employers to learn new things, and to improve performances, increase employer's growth, build staff performance, and increased job satisfaction among employees.

> *...It helps in staff development, improves skills and also improves the knowledge of employees in an organisation. Also, its help to increase the company output and also led to the promotion of organisation staff.*
> *...I am sure the fact that we do not go for training and development all the time is because of a lack of resources. All top managers don't look at tanning and development as being an essential component of this organization.*

Findings on the proportion of training and development of managers and frontline employees confirmed that most of the respondents affirm that just one staff member went for external training and development within the last 12 months. Apart from the internal post office training programme organized by the managers, staff does not go for any other external training and development programme. With regards training and development by managers and frontline employees, similar challenges revolve around the fact that there is a lack of sufficient training resources, limited interest

from management to organise training and development in the post office. Likewise, the time factor was another problem, employees reported to tight work schedules, lack of external training and development programmes, lack of skill and knowledge from employers that affect high-quality work performance in the post office. Lack of external training and development program and the time slot for the Wednesday morning training is too short as well as lack of food during the training and development programs and training and development opportunities are limited.

5.3. Using Managers' and Frontline Employees' Views on Motivation

Findings on the concept of' motivation by manages and frontline employees revealed that motivation is related to the provision of excellent service, meeting deadlines, and providing effectively post-office activities. Giving staff members the opportunities to grow from one stage to another led to motivation. Further, motivation stimulates people to work to the best of their capabilities. Motivation takes people to a higher level, gives them opportunities to grow, and foster education. Indeed, motivation is what makes staff accept their jobs. Also, motivation accounts for an individual's intensity, direction, and persistence of effort toward attaining a goal, factors that make bring about happiness at the workplace, as well as an internal and external influencer that stimulate desire and energy in people to be continually interested and committed to a job.

Findings on three motivators at work by managers and frontline employees, it emerged that staff meeting deadlines, mentoring, and coaching as well as learning new things makes them feel motivated. Ensuring customer satisfaction and good financial incentives led to motivation at work. Good work and perseverance, archiving company objectives, bring in creative ideas to improve work performance, job promotion, excellent job performance, safety environment, completing a difficult project, be a problem solver, respect from managers and employees as well as enough working resources.

> …Salary increase make my staff happy, while making my customers satisfied by giving them the right services at the right time and place and seeing my staff happy increases performance and end up making a good profit at the end of the day.
> …When I don't meet deadlines, when the systems are down when staff are not ready to work, as well as storage of staff at our post office demotivate me.
> …When our customers are not satisfied with our services, when I don't meet datelines and when my salary cannot cover my daily expenses.

On factors that demotivate managers and frontline employees at work the study established the inability to meet datelines, system issues such as network problems, not reaching customers' expectations, staff shortage, uncooperative staff, and delay in delivering postal services are real issues in the postal services. Lack of work recognition, lack of stock, lack of resources, difficulties in understanding the strategy plan, when customers were not satisfied with our services, inability to complete a project, no respect from managers, and working for years no job promotion are other mitigating factors.

> …When most of our systems were down and we could not serve our customers, all we sell is system is down.
> …When there are so many customers on the queue who needs help but cannot be helped due to staff shortages.
> …This happen when it was the time for payment of SASSA grants seeing our parents waiting for hours all because of a shortage of staff or the system is not functioning well.

Findings on factors that trigger demotivating incidents or events by managers and frontline employees at work include the experience of a shortage of stock, system failure that makes it impossible for services to go through, lack of stock to serve customers as well as poor attitude from frontline employees. delay in postal orders, when experiencing a shortage of staff, limited resources in given out postal services, difficulties in understanding the strategy plan, when customers were not satisfied with our services, unable to complete a project, working for years no job promotion, and when deadline could not be met.

5.4. Using Managers' and Frontline Employees' Views on Monitoring and Evaluation Revealed that

The branch manager and area manager monitor and evaluate activities of its staff members only, when need be, while on the other hand frontline employees confirmed that there are no systems designed for monitoring and evaluation. Essentially, branch managers and area managers only carry out monitoring and evaluation when need be. Findings on commencement of monitoring and evaluation by managers and frontline employees revealed that: the commencement of monitoring and evaluation in the post offices is done only when managers feel the need to do so, to make sure workers are on the right track. Findings on design and implementation of monitoring and evaluation systems revealed that: branch manager and area manager have no structure design for monitoring and evaluation. While on the other hand frontline employees reveal that respondents have no idea how monitoring and evaluation is being designed and implemented, all they witness is how they are monitored and evaluated by their managers during some working hours.

> …Since as we have no structure monitoring and evaluation system, we as managers design and implement how we monitoring and evaluation our organisation performance.
> Staff don't like to be monitor and evaluated upon their performances, which at the time make them put on attitudes.
> …Most of the time when we have so many customers in front of us as teller, our managers always moving around checking what we are doing.

Findings on challenges encountered with regards to monitoring and evaluation and suggested strategies to overcoming the challenges by manages and frontline employees revealed that: branch manager and area managers spend more time looking at what staff are doing to ensure efficiency, on the other hand, the finding revealed that frontline employees do not like to be monitored nor evaluated, because it creates tension and misbehaviour between managers and staff in the postal branches. The findings further reveal few respondents have no problem of been monitored or evaluated. To overcome those challenges managers, suggest the need for training programs to explain to employers the importance of

monitoring and evaluation and make staff understand that it is part of their job description, as well as management, should design a structured monitoring and evaluation system. While on the other hand frontline employees suggest staff must accept that it is a part of the manager's job, they need to earn their manager's trust by working hard and timely. On the part of the managers, they need to develop confidence in their staff. In addition, the finding suggests a proper system or unit should be created for this particular purpose.

6. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

6.1. Strategic Implementation of Service Quality with Managers and Frontline Employees

Concerning the strategic implementation of service quality with managers and frontline employees, both managers and frontline employees in this study indicated similar challenges: poorly defined strategy, lack of effective communication of the policy, lack of ownership on the part of the "implementers, little attention is paid to strategy implementation by management, stock problem, a limited budget to run our post offices, lack of financial resources, staff shortage, system problem lack of equipment, delay in the delivery postal product, lack of performance tracking and monitoring system as well as lack of a good performance management system.

This suggests the lack clarity about the strategic plan, making it difficult for staff to implement them, the lack of resources to implement the strategic plan effectively, lack of the understanding of the strategic plan that is been formulated by top management, lack of proper infrastructure, poor system, low salary, and complaint of not always receiving good services. This conforms to the research conducted by Ndambiri (2015), who investigated the barriers encountered in the execution of a strategy where two factors often hinder the implementation of a formulated strategy, namely: the organisation's vision and an organisation's business processes. Concerning vision, she stated that there is often a problem linking the organisation's vision to the strategy. She stated that managers have a problem linking what needs to be done to where they want to go. This happens when managers are unable to draw the bigger picture concerning strategy, structures, and processes. This also happens when the people involved in strategy implementation do not understand the vision. The missing of targets brings about disconnect often found in the vision, the strategies, and objectives. The business processes include the structures and the programmes that are designed to facilitate the operation of an organization like control systems, reward and disciplinary systems, resource distribution, and allocation and structures.

Besides these challenges to the strategic implementation of service quality with managers and frontline employees, a new concept arises from the empirical study. This study established that management should include frontline staff in their company strategic planning meeting since they are in direct contact with the postal consumers and are in a better position to advise management on the strategies to improved service quality. Management needs to employ more staff, improve on the networking system, and also create a channel to inform customers about recent changes that come up all the time in order to always keep its customers satisfied and establish an information and effective feedback system. And finally, they should open a post office training centre in all the five postal branches and employ training experts in the centre, enabling employees to gain weekly or monthly training at the same time still performing their duties.

6.2. Training and Development to Enhance Service Quality with Managers and Frontline Employees

The results from the managers and frontline employers verified that most of the respondents confirmed the important role of training and development on their performance and productivity. They submitted that this brings new potentials for managers and employees when performing a task and resulted in increased performance and productivity. This consolidates the view of Taris and Schaufeli (2014) who affirm that training has implications for productivity, health, and safety at work and personal development. According to responses on the frequency on training and development, respondents and participants expressed mixed feelings with some mentioning that T&D are only carried out whenever there is a need, some mentioning no T& D, while others mentioned T&D is carried out on some specific days. Thus, post office managers and frontline employees should have compulsory training development programmes that should be consistent across all postal branches for all employees in order to improve the knowledge and understanding of annual business strategy and objectives. This finding is consistent with Elnaga and Imran (2014) where it was disclosed that to develop the desired knowledge, skills, and abilities of the employees, to perform well on the job, requires effective and compulsory training and development programmes that may also affect employee motivation and commitment. This explains that training and development face serious of threats with managers and frontline employees such as lack of resources as well as management having limited interest in training and development, hectic employee schedules that makes them not to have time for most training and development programmes, lack of external training and development programmes for staff development, lack of commitment, lack of training programs and lack of training resources, lack of skill and knowledge from employers that affect high-quality performance in the post office.

This gels with the study of Ngirwa (2009) which noted that training and development are poorly undertaken and effected by many organisations. Thus, employers, managers, and decision-makers should endeavour to create an enabling training environment and favourable training policies that will give every worker the opportunity to attend training. Management should also take into consideration the training need of each worker and act as appropriate. The managers and frontline employers could improve training and development following needs analysis, allocating a budget for training and development. Essentially, management should take training and development as an important component in the organisation, need to send staff members for further education and training and development programs all the time. This is line with the view of Whelan and Carcary (2011) and Nwokeiwu (2013) who affirm that training and development enhance the ability of an organisation to be knowledge-intensive and equally enables employees to take up new tasks efficiently.

From the above discussion, the study verified that for management to reap the full benefits of training initiatives as well as development programmes, training needs should be executed more professionally in conjunction with individual workers and human resource personnel. Everyone should agree on what the training lacks and what attitudes ought to be changed. Lastly, training and development should be part of the strategic plan, effective and consistent across all postal branches in a bid to improve high service quality.

6.3. Motivation to Enhance Service Quality with Managers and Frontline Employees

Employee motivation has a strong influence on the effectiveness of an organisation (Khan et al., 2019). The results on the concepts motivation from managers and frontline employees show that in general, the respondents attribute similar perceptions that motivation refers to, increase salary, meeting deadlines, excellent service, personal growth, improve skills, and a work-life balance, flexibility of work and a good relationship with their supervisors and colleagues. Thus, post office management must have clear goals, priorities, and objectives at work plus sufficient working facilities. This would inspire managers and frontline employees to give the best effort and meet the set goals every day. Above all, they are happy with what they are currently doing and glad to recommend their organization as a great place to work with others.

Some components that motivate managers as well as frontline employees at work this include mentoring and coaching, learning new things, financial incentives, bring in creative ideas to improve work performance when customer and employers are satisfied, salary increase and ensuring customers are satisfied, seeing my customers happy, job promotion, safety environment, completing a difficult project, be a problem solver. This is consistent with the study of Gaebler Ventures (2006) showing ten different motivational factors that are important for increasing motivation both for managers as well as employees: high wages, job security, promotion potential, good working conditions, interesting work, personal loyalty of supervision, tactful discipline, appreciation of work done, help with personal problems and feeling of "being in on things."

The qualitative results indicated that the motivation of managers and employees are indeed a major component to SAPO development and success. Thus, the motivation of SAPO managers and employees can be achieved through the empowerment of managers and employees. Motivation helps SAPO management to indicate the degree to which the employees are involved in decision-making processes, the existence of a mutual connection between the employees and the company, and the authorization over the task they are working on. High employee involvement shows a higher level of employee motivation and satisfaction. Therefore, SAPO ought to engage employees in meetings and discussions and letting them know that their ideas and contributions are listened to and appreciated. SAPO should therefore ask for employee help in setting goals, both managers and employees should be part of the decision process of setting department goals, giving them space to experience and be aligned with the corporate culture, delegating them a higher responsibility level for the task they oversee, and the freedom in making choices and decisions regarding their specific

tasks. Furthermore, having repetitive tasks every day is a reason for demotivation, boredom, and a lack of enthusiasm. Thus, it is recommended for companies to implement job rotation to keep the employees' interest and satisfaction with work.

From the above discussion, a typically new concept arises from the empirical study. It was found in the study that one of the most effective ways to motivate your customer service team is to increase employee morale. Praising your employees is an efficient way to do this. The great thing about praise is that it's free and easy to do. Praise your employees' involvement as well as their improvement.

6.4. Monitoring and Evaluation to Enhance Service Quality with Managers and Frontline Employees

The monitoring and evaluation paradigm explains the effectiveness of managers and frontline employees gained by postal consumers for adequate services provided by SAPO. Due to the continuous increase in consumers' complaints of poor service quality in the North-West post offices, this construct was added to this study to investigate if the post office does have an effective monitoring and evaluation system to provide effective services to their postal consumers. Some branch managers monitor and evaluate activities of staff, and that is done from Monday to Friday. There were other indications that monitoring, and evaluation is performed to ensure workers are on the right track. On the other hand, the frontline employee's findings reveal that staff are involved in monitoring and evaluation as coordinated by their branch and area managers, and this is executed from Monday to Friday in one post office as workers carry out their daily activities. Monitoring and evaluation are carried out when the manager sees the need. Thus, the need for effective monitoring and evaluation that should be consistent across all postal branches. Meredith and Mantel (2011) confirm that monitoring and evaluation as an observation system for the project managers to verify whether the project activities must be executed according to plan and ought to be deployed to establish whether means are used correctly and efficiently.

The findings also indicated that the branch manager has no prepared system for monitoring and evaluation. The system is designed according to the resources they have in place since the post office does not have a structured mechanism. On the other hand, staff has no idea how monitoring and evaluation is designed and implemented, all they witness is how they are monitored or evaluated by their managers during working hours. Thus, the need for a good design monitoring and evaluation system by management, not managers, and this must be in the strategic management yearly plan. In the study of Govender (2011) they affirm that monitoring and evaluation system is described as a powerful tool that is used by governments and private organisations in improving results. They further explain that to make the monitoring and evaluation system work properly one must identify the individual components and ensure that these components are working thereby ensuring the working of the whole system. This is also in line with the study of Mackay (2007) who affirm that there is no one model of building monitoring and evaluation system as it all depends on the various reasons for which such systems are designed.

From the qualitative results, it was deduced that the post offices do not have an effective monitoring and evaluation system to enhance the strategic management of service quality for postal services. Thus, post office managers designing their own monitoring and evaluation system due to their available resources is not a problem, but the system should guarantee the effectiveness of the monitoring and evaluation system, managers must clearly allocate tasks for monitoring and evaluation, at every level of management.

The findings indicate some of the challenges on monitoring and evaluation from managers and frontline employees, respondents and participants expressed mixed feelings such as branch manager spending more time looking at what staff are doing to ensure efficiency. Staff in the study were not comfortable with such monitoring as it creates tension and misbehaviour between managers and staff members. Staff essentially resent monitoring and evaluation as they see this as engendering tension at times and leading them into making mistakes when working. In solving these challenges, managers suggested that management ought to prepare monitoring and evaluation instrument in the work environment to gauge performance of its staff members.

To overcome those challenges, frontline employees suggested that monitoring and evaluation become part of a manager's job and that managers nurture confidence in frontline employee's job. Managers were exhorted always to do the job correctly and design a proper system or unit for this particular purpose. This is consistent with the findings of Wu and Ko (2013) who provided a list of issues that could impede the implementation of effective monitoring and evaluation processes based on both bottom-up and top-down approaches to implementation. Three broad categories of issues were identified as possible barriers for effective monitoring and evaluation, including support barriers, issues of poor implementation incentives, as workers were not involved during design were less willing to buy-in at the implementation stage. Analytical competence barriers may include poor design, changing priorities, and feasibility issues regarding some of the components of the system. For instance, given that components of the system may be linked together, if some components could not be implemented, they may impede the functionality of the other components. Operational capacity barriers may include funding and budget limitations, weak coordination capacity, and issues such as an unclear specification of roles, responsibility, and accountability. Thus, Wu and Ko (2013) affirm that if the issues discussed above hinder the successful implementation of the monitoring and evaluation system if not addressed properly. Thus, the SAPO monitoring, and evaluation system should be integrated into the organizational budget and plans to promote transparency and accountability. SAPO staff should view monitoring and evaluation as a tool that helped them, rather than a burden, making the staff more co-operative in executing duties.

From the above discussion, it was found in the study that for management to achieve high performance, SAPO management must establish a culture of M&E within the five postal branches in the NWP province. This can only be achieved if top management, as well as frontline employees, support and become accountable for M&E. It is also recommended that further education and training needs be given to many frontline employees as well as managers in aspects of monitoring and evaluation so as to effectively utilize the M&E tools and findings. The SAPO management has to do follow-up visits in the various postal branches and service units so they can determine whether M&E is being done properly.

7. CONCLUSION

Regarding the poor postal services as well as poor parcel service offered to postal consumers in the North-West province, this study perused the factors as well as suggestion that could be applied by managers and frontline employees to improved service quality for postal services. The decline in postal service (parcel) to postal consumers, highly competitive market as well as poor service delivery to postal consumers, due to limited postal recourse motivated this study. However, most studies conducted in this field focus on investigating the causes of poor service delivery, but this study investigated the factors as that could enhance effective services delivery for postal consumers by managers and frontline employees also the roles of managers and frontline employers were examined as a key factor to improve postal services and to gain competitive advantages over its competitors.

The study further deduced the four numerous factors that are normal factors that needs to be implemented by all orgainsations effectively, but SAPO neglect those factors and thus lead to poor service quality offer to postal consumers. These items were strategic implementation, training and development, motivation, and monitoring/evaluation dimension which are believed to affect service quality performance in the SAPO, which can be a cause of consumer dissatisfaction as well as low competitive advantages over its competitors. The study also indicated that SAPO need to create room for improvement of parcel postal services, by achieving competitive advantage. This involves building on the proven principles of effective strategy. Main success factors include maintaining distinctive strategic positioning, using e-business technology to improve efficiency and competitive advantage, maintaining effective support from top management, putting emphasis on the quality-of-service offer by frontline employer's during operations, and maintaining good parcel system security. Additional factors include the core competencies of a good strategic manager include consistency, openness to communication, and being a visionary in the organisation. Thus, all the above strategies and success factors discussed here can help managers and frontline employees to develop and integrate postal service quality into their overall organisation.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations applicable to the postal management and frontline employees of departments. The following recommendations are made to postal management who should ensure effective collaboration in an endeavour to achieve effective service quality over its competitors as well as frontline employees who need to ensure postal consumers received effective service delivery:

- The SAPO need to create room for improvement despite the successes, there is still room for improvement of parcel postal services. First, interest, achieving competitive advantage involves building on the proven principles of effective strategy. Main success factors include maintaining distinctive strategic positioning, using e-business technology to improve efficiency and competitive advantage, maintaining effective support from top management, putting emphasis on the quality-of-service offer by frontline employer's during operations, and maintaining good parcel system security.

- It is recommended that post office management needs to provide frontline staff members with all the available resources, such as materials and equipment, and effective operating system that do not fail its employees in giving out services to members of the public, good infrastructure, postal security as well as good working environment.

- It is recommended that the post office management should provide support for effective strategic implementation that should include frontline employees on the post office strategic planning meeting since they are the one doing the day to day running of the business and having direct contact with postal consumers, this will be in the best position to advise management of the postal challenges that they as employers encounter as well as postal consumers. This will help managers come up with an effective strategic plan to help achieve postal objectives as well as reaching excellent customer satisfaction. It is recommended that management should implement effective training and development program that would help to develop postal staff members. Also, management should create a unit for effective training and development programs that can be done three times a year and create opportunities for staff members to improve on their educational level. Managers should also implement an effective motivation system that consistently motivate its employees, items of performance bonus at the end of the years for those will perform above their maximum and to promote them to a higher level, as well as increase on staff salaries, and the most important for managers to always acknowledge extra effect or ideas given by staff members to help reach its company goals and objectives. Also, there is a need for an effective mentoring and evaluating system that would help to monitor and evaluate employee's performance as the results revealed that lack of proper mentoring and the evaluating system as well a very little mentoring of these inexperienced employees. The implementation of an effective monitoring and evaluation system could reduce the work of managers moving up and down at the various postal branches to monitor and evaluate its staff members. Since all the staff members indicated that the abovementioned factors which are normal factors that are applicable in most organisations effectively, SAPO do not implement them affectively. Thus, SAPO management needs to take the implement the above factors and suggestion into consideration in order to improve customers services and to gain competitive advantages over its competitors.

- It is recommended that adopting the prescripts of strategic management of service quality and systems theory advocates the need for group cohesion and collaboration with all staff members as well as all the various units in the post office to work together in other to delivery high service quality and to gain competitive advantages over its competitors in the marketplace.

- It is recommended that SAPO should adopt the structured nature of the systems theory to enable it to function effectively without much friction. Chains of command and lines of authority should be clearly spelt out because of the inevitable subsisting relationships between subsystems. Recommendation is hereby made for SAPO to adopt the systems approach to guarantee orderliness and constancy of operations.

- The study recommends that the post office should conduct service quality assessments not only from a customer perception but perceptions of both managers and employees. Post offices need to bring to reduce the differences between the management, employee, and customers' expectations by conducting continuous service quality assessments and acting on the results obtained in order to improve service quality.

- Finally, all the challenges faced by the postal managers and frontline employees that restrict then in carrying out their activities should be reported immediately to the regional managers of the post offices in charge of complaints about action to be taken.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This paper aims to investigate the factors that could enhance service management quality for managers and frontline employees in the SAPO in an endeavour to establish an effective service management strategic to improve parcel postal services and to gain competitive advantages over its competitors in the North-West province. This study identified important factors that hinder the post office to reach its target objectives as well as giving out excellent services to consumers in other to satisfy them. All the above mentioned factors had led to the decline in postal revenue, loss of postal consumers as well as poor service quality. Concerning these findings, it is recommended that another study should examine the strategy post office management could use to overcome those factors that hinders managers, frontline employees as well as consumers in other provinces of South Africa, or a comparison study between South Africa and other countries across the world, is recommended by the study. This study was restricted to the two selected districts of Ngaka Modiri Molema and Doctor Kenneth Kaunda in the North-West province, and the local municipalities where fieldwork was conducted are: Mafikeng (Molopo post office), Zeerust (Zeerust post office), Lichtenburg (Itsoseng post office), Klerksdorp (Freemanville post office), and Potchefstroom (Noordbrug post office). Participants in this study were postal managers and frontline staff from five branches in the North-West provinces.

REFERENCES

Aarikka-Stenroos, L., Jaakkola, E. (2012), Value co-creation in knowledge intensive business services: A dyadic perspective on the joint problem

solving process. Industrial Marketing Management, 41(1), 15-26.

Al Ariss, A., Sidani, Y. (2016), Comparative international human resource management: Future research directions. Human Resource Management Review, 26(4), 352-358.

Al Mourad, M.B., Hussain, M. (2014), The impact of cloud computing on ITIL service strategy processes. International Journal of Computer and Communication Engineering, 3(5), 367-371.

Alkhafaji, A.F., Nelson, R.A. (2014), Strategic Management: Formulation, Implementation and Control in a Dynamic Environment. Binghamton, NY: The Haworth Press Inc.

AXELOS. (2011), Managing Successful Projects with Prince 2. London, UK: AXELOS.

Annette, B. Mahalaxmi, K.R. & Joseph, A.V. 2016. Influencing the Intensity to pay for private labels: The tole of quality perception and consumer loyalty in Indian context-a quantitative modelling. Asian Journal of Research in Social Sciences and Humanities. 6(8):1362-1382.

Bai, J., So, K.C., Tang, C.S., Chen, X., Wang, H. (2019), Coordinating supply and demand on an on-demand service platform with impatient customers. Manufacturing and Service Operations Management, 21(3), 556-570.

Baker, M.J. (2014), Marketing Strategy and Management. London: Lalgrave Macmillan.

Bason, C. (2016), Design for Policy. London: Routledge.

Bernard, P. (2014), IT Service Management Based on ITIL. 2011th ed. Zaltbommel: Van Haren Publisher.

Bettencourt, L.A., Lusch, R.F., Vargo, S.L. (2014), A service lens on value creation: Marketing's role in achieving strategic advantage. California Management Review, 57(1), 44-66.

Bhattacharjya, J., Ellison, A., Tripathi, S. (2016), An exploration of logistics-related customer service provision on twitter: The case of e-retailers. International Journal of Physical Distribution and Logistics Management, 46(6), 659-680.

Boniface, M., Nasser, B., Papay, J., Phillips, S.C., Servin, A., Yang, X., Zlatev, Z., Gogouvitis, S.V., Katsaros, G., Konstanteli, K., Kousiouris, G., Menychtas, A., Kyriazis, D. (2010), Platform-as-a-Service Architecture for Real-Time Quality of Service Management in Clouds. In: 2010 Fifth International Conference on Internet and Web Applications and Services. United States: IEEE. p9-15, 155-160.

Brewster, L., Tarrant, C., Dixon-Woods, M. (2016), Qualitative study of views and experiences of performance management for healthcare-associated infections. Journal of Hospital Infection, 94(1), 41-47.

Bryman, A., Bell, E. (2015), Business Research Methods. Business Sector in Southern Africa. Doctoral Dissertation, University of Pretoria. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Cabrera, E. Jr., Alegre, H., Baptista, J.M., Cubillo, F., Duarte, P., Hirner, W., Merkel, W., Parena, R. (2016), Performance Indicators for Water Supply Services. London: IWA Publishing.

Cho, D.W., Lee, Y.H., Ahn, S.H., Hwang, M.K. (2012), A framework for measuring the performance of service supply chain management. Computers and Industrial Engineering, 62(3), 801-818.

Coetzee, C., Van Niekerk, D. (2012), Tracking the evolution of the disaster management cycle: A general system theory approach. Jàmbá: Journal of Disaster Risk Studies, 4(1), 1-9.

Cummings, T.G., Worley, C.G. (2014), Organisation Development and Change. Stamford: Cengage learning.

Daunton, M.J. (2015), Royal Mail: The Post Office Since 1840. London: Bloomsbury Publishing. Available from: httpsdefault/files/presentation200808chantilly.pdf [Last accesed on 2019 Feb 28].

Drucker, P. (2018), The Effective Executive. Abingdon: Routledge.

Elnaga, A.A., Imran, A. (2014), The impact of employee empowerment on job satisfaction: Theoretical study. American Journal of Research Communication, 2(1), 13-26.

Fleisher, C.S. & Bensoussan, B.E. 2015. Business and competitive analysis: effective application of new and classic methods. New Jersey, NJ: Pearson.

Forsgren, M., Johanson, J. (2014), Managing Networks in International Business. New York, NY: Routledge.

Foxit. (2011), ITIL: Continual Service Improvement. Available from: https://www.foxit.net/pages/consultancy/itilcontinual-service-improvement.shtml [Last accessed on 2022 Jan 05].

Gaebler Ventures. (2006), For Entrepreneurs: Motivation Employees. Available from: https://www.gaebler.com [Last accessed on 2020 May 20].

Goetsch, D.L., Davis, S.B. (2014), Quality Management for Organisational Excellence. New York, NY: Pearson.

Golden, P.M., Taneja, S. (2010), Henri fayol, practitioner and theoretician-revered and reviled. Journal of Management History, 16(4), 489-503.

Govender, I.G. (2011), Monitoring and Evaluation Systems Enhancing Corporate Governance in Local Government: A Case Study of KwaZulu-Natal. Doctoral Dissertation. KwaZulu-Natal: University of KwaZulu-Natal.

Grönroos, C. (2001), The Perceived Service Quality Concept-a Mistake. Managing Service Quality: An International Journal, 11(3), 150-152.

Gupta, S., Starr, M. (2014), Production and Operations Management Systems. London: CRC Press.

Hellriegel, S.V., Yatskov, A.I., Kelley, D.P. (2009), Systems and Methods for Cooling Computer Modules in Computer Cabinets. United States Patent. Vol. 10. United States: Cray Inc. p330-350.

Hlekane, C. (2013), SAPO Financial Report. Available from: https://www.sapo.co.za/2013 financial statement [Last accessed on 2019 Feb 10].

Huczynski, A., Buchanan, D.A. (2010), Organizational Behaviour. 7th ed. Harlow, UK: Pearson Education.

Iqbal, W., Dailey, M.N., Carrera, D., Janecek, P. (2011), Adaptive resource provisioning for read intensive multi-tier applications in the cloud. Future Generation Computer Systems, 27(6), 871-879.

Ivanov, D., Dolgui, A., Sokolov, B., Ivanova, M. (2017), Literature review on disruption recovery in the supply chain. International Journal of Production Research, 55(20), 6158-6174.

Iyer, R., Johlke, M.C. (2015), The role of external customer mind-set among service employees. Journal of Services Marketing, 9(3), 38-48.

Kerzner, H. (2017), Project Management: A Systems Approach to Planning, Scheduling, and Controlling. New Jersey, NJ: John Wiley and Sons.

Khan, M.A., Md Yusoff, R., Hussain, A. & Binti Ismail, F. 2019. The mediating effect of job satisfaction on the relationship of HR practices and employee job performance: Empirical evidence from higher education sector. International Journal of Organizational Leadership. 2(8):78-94.

Koivisto, M., Miettinen, S. (2009), Designing Services with Innovative Methods. Keuruu: Otava.

Kuller, P., Grabowski, M., Petrsames P, Vogt, M. (2010), IT Service Management Methods and Framework Systematisation. Kronberg: Innotrain IT.

Lamichhane, N. (2019), Implementing continual service improvement in business enterprises: A proposal to improve business effectiveness of Nepal. International Journal of Advanced Research and Publications, 3(6), 239-241.

Lloyd, C., Warhurst, C., Dutton, E. (2013), The weakest link? Product market strategies, skill and pay in the hotel industry. Work, Employment and Society, 27(2), 254-271.

Lloyd, V. (2011), ITIL Continual Service Improvement. London: The Stationery Office.

Lovelock, C., Patterson, P. (2015), Services Marketing. Melbourne: Pearson Australia.

Luhmann, N., Baecker, D., Gilgen, P. (2013), Introduction to Systems Theory. Cambridge: Polity.

Mackay, K. (2007), How to Build M and E Systems to Better Support Government. Washington: World Bank.

Manyatshe P, 2003. SAPO financial report. http://www.sapo.co.za/2003 Financial statement. [Last accessed on 2022 May 24].

Mele, C., Pels, J., Polese, F. (2010), A brief review of systems theories and their managerial applications. Service science, 2(1), 126-135.

Mellat-Parast, M., Golmohammadi, D., McFadden, K.L., Miller, J.W. (2015), Linking business strategy to service failures and financial performance: Empirical evidence from the U.S. domestic airline industry. Journal of Operations Management, 38(1), 14-24.

Melo, J.M. (2013), What is the Post? Trusted intermediary for all kinds of services. In: Reinventing the Post: Emerging Opportunities for the Postal Industry. England: Libri Publishing, 1(1), 93-97.

Meredith, J.R., Mantel, S.J. Jr. (2011), Project Management: A Managerial Approach. New Jersey, NJ: John Wiley and Sons.

Mesquida, A.L., Mas, A. (2015), Integrating IT service management requirements into the organizational management system. Computer Standards and Interfaces, 37(1), 80-91.

Mfarinya, L.T. (2018), The Adoption of the Holistic Marketing Concept as a Customer Retention Strategy and Its Impact on Customer Retention in the Financial Industry: A Case Study of CABS Zimbabwe. Masters Dissertation, Zimbabwe: University of Zimbabwe.

Miettinen, S., Sarantou, M., Akimenko, D. (2016), Art and storytelling as an empowering tool for service design: South Australian case study. In: For Profit, for Good: Developing Organizations through Service Design. Vol. 28. Lapland: University of Lapland. p74-80.

Msosa, S.K., Govender, J.P. (2015), Exploring the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction in postal financial services. Risk Governance and Control: Financial Markets and Institution, 5(3), 186-193.

Myitstudy. (2013), Available from: https://com/blog/2013/05/distinction-between-itil-and

Ndambiri, S. (2015), Barriers of effective strategy execution: Organisation's challenge. The International Journal of Business and Management, 3(9), 296-298.

Ngirwa, C.A. (2009), Human Resource Management in African Work Organizations. Vol. I. Dar es Saalam: National Printing Co. Ltd.

Neha S.N. 2018 Operation management of Trust Bank Limited (Gulshan corporatebranch).https://dspace.bracu.ac.bd/xmlui/bitstream/handle/10361/10966/12204062_BBA.pdf?sequence=1. [Last accessed on 2023 Jul 18].

Nwokeiwu, J. (2013), Training, Development and Performance in a Public Corporation: Case Study of the Nigerian Railway Corporation. Doctoral Dissertation. KwaZulu-Natal: University of KwaZulu-Natal.

O'Cass, A., Sok, P. (2013), Exploring innovation driven value creation in B2B service firms: The roles of the manager, employees, and customers in value creation. Journal of Business Research, 66(8), 1074-1084.

Okholm, H.B., Basalisco, B., Boivie, A.M., Gårdebrink, J. (2018), Challenges of regulating quality of service in the postal industry. New Business and Regulatory Strategies in the Postal Sector, 6(1), 29-43.

Osborne, S.P., Radnor, Z., Nasi, G. (2013), A new theory for public service management? Toward a (public) service-dominant approach. The American Review of Public Administration, 43(2), 135-158.

Panzar, J., Menk, A. (2011), Postal service pricing incentives following the introduction of price cap regulation. Review of Network Economics, 10(3), 334-356.

Peltier, T.R. (2016), Information Security Policies, Procedures, and Standards: Guidelines for Effective Information Security Management. Boca Raton: CRC Press.

Phadtare, M. T. 2014. Industrial marketing. 2nd ed. Delhi, India: PHI Learning Pvt. Ltd. Google Scholar.

Pour, B.S., Nazari, K., Emami, M. (2013), The effect of marketing mix in attracting customers: Case study of Saderat Bank in Kermanshah Province. African Journal of Business Management, 7(34), 3272-3280.

Pradeesh, N.M. (2011), Human Resource Planning and Development. Kerala, India: Calicut University, P.O, Malappuram.

Priyadharshini, E., Vijayakumar, V., Quadir, M.A. (2018), Towards a cloud consumer's credibility assessment and trust management of cloud services. EAI Endorsed Transactions on Cloud Systems, 3(12), el.

Quirke, B. (2017), Making the Connections: Using Internal Communication to Turn Strategy in to Action. London: Gower Publishing.

Reason, C.J.C., Smart, S. (2015), Tropical south east Atlantic warm events and associated rainfall anomalies over southern Africa. Frontiers in Environmental Science, 27(3), 24-32.

Reid, R.D., Sanders, N.R. (2019), Operations Management: An integrated Approach. Danver: John Wiley and Sons.

Richard, P.J., Coltman, T.R., Keating, B.W. (2012), Designing is service strategy: An information acceleration approach. European Journal of Information Systems, 21(1), 87-98.

Robbins, S.P., Coulter, M., Vohra, N. (2012), Introduction to Management and Organizations. 10th ed. United Kingdom: Pearson Education. Vol. 10. Publishing Prentice Hall Publications. p2-21.

Ross, J.E. (2017), Total Quality Management: Text, Cases, and Readings. New York, NY: Routledge.

Rust, R.T., Huang, M.H. (2014), The service revolution and the transformation of marketing science. Marketing Science, 33(2), 206-221.

SA Post Office. (2014), Annual Report and Status Update; State of Nation Address Implications for Telecommunications: Parliamentary Researcher 28 Briefing-PMG. Available from: https://pmg.org.za/committee-meeting/20044 [Last accessed on 2018 Jun 10].

SA Post Office. (2016), SA Post Office on its Annual Report and Status Update; State of Nation Address Implications for Telecommunications: Parliamentary Researcher Briefing-PMG. Available from: https://pmg.org.za/committee-meeting/20044 [Last accessed on 2019 Mar 19].

Saldana, J. (2016), The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers. London: Sage Publications.

Salim, H.M. (2014), Cyber Safety: A Systems Thinking and Systems Theory Approach to Managing Cyber Security Risks. Doctoral Dissertation. Massachusetts: Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Scarso, E., Bolisani, E. (2012), Trust in knowledge exchanges between service providers and clients: a multiple case study of KIBS. Knowledge Management Research and Practice, 10(1), 16-26.

Schindler, R.M., Bickart, B. (2012), Perceived helpfulness of online consumer reviews: The role of message content and style. Journal of Consumer Behaviour, 11(3), 234-243.

Setia, P., Patel, P.C. (2013), How information systems help create OM capabilities: Consequents and antecedents of operational absorptive capacity. Journal of Operations Management, 31(6), 409-431.

Siddique, M.I., Shadbolt, N. (2016), Strategy Implementation: Literature Review. Available from: https://www.onefarm.ac.nz/system/files/resource_downloads/Strategy%20Implementation%20literature%20review%20final%20_0.pdf [Last accecced on 2020 Feb 26].

Slack, N., Brandon-Jones, A. (2018), Operations and Process Management: Principles and Practice for Strategic Impact. London: Pearson.

Speckman, A. (2013), SA Post Office Faces Big Challenges. Business Report. Pretoria: Government Printer.

Spencer, S. (2018), Multi-Level Governance of an Intractable Policy Problem: Migrants with Irregular Status in Europe. Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, 44(12), 2034-2052.

Srinivasan, R. (2014), The management consulting industry: Growth of consulting services in India: Panel discussion. IIMB Management Review, 26(4), 257-270.

Stauss, B., Den Hertog, P., Van der, A.A., De Jong, M.W. (2010), Capabilities for managing service innovation: Towards a conceptual framework. Journal of service Management, 21(4), 490-514.

Suleyman, C. (2011), Competition in Postal Markets-A Small Consumer Perspective. Consumer Focus. Available from: www.consumerfocus.org.uk

Taneja, S., Pryor, M.G., Humphreys, J.H., Singleton, L.P. (2013), Strategic management in an era of paradigmatic chaos: Lessons for managers. International Journal of Management, 30(1), 112-120.

Taris, T.W., Schaufeli, W.B. (2014), The job demands-resources model. In: The Wiley Blackwell Handbook of the Psychology of Occupational Safety and Workplace Health. Vol. 12. United States: Wiley. p155-180.

Teece, D.J. (2010), Technological innovation and the theory of the firm: The role of enterprise-level knowledge, complementarities, and (dynamic) capabilities. Economics of Innovation, 5(1), 679-730.

TSO. (2011), The Official Introduction to the ITIL Service Lifecycle. London, UK: The Stationery Office.

Tuulaniemi, J. (2011), Palvelumuotoilu Service Design. Karisto, Finland: Talentum Media Oy.

Tzortzaki, A.M., Mihiotis, A. (2014), A review of knowledge management theory and future directions. Knowledge and Process Management, 21(1), 29-41.

Van Scheers, L. & Botha, J. 2014. Analysing the relationship between employee job satisfaction and motivation. Journal of Business and Retail Management Research, 9(1):105:107.

Wang, Y.C., Luo, C.C., Tai, Y.F. (2017), Implementation of delightful services: From the perspective of frontline service employees. Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management, 31(1), 90-104.

Werner, J.M., DeSimone, R.L. (2011), Human Resource Development. Mason: South-Western Cengage Learning.

West, M.A. (2012), Effective Teamwork: Practical Lessons from Organizational Research. Chichester: John Wiley and Sons.

Whelan, E., Carcary, M. (2011), Integrating talent and knowledge management: Where are the benefits? Journal of Knowledge Management. 15(4):675-687.

Wu, H.C., Ko, Y.J. (2013), Assessment of service quality in the hotel industry. Journal of Quality Assurance in Hospitality and Tourism, 14(3), 218-244.

Yarimoglu, E.K. (2014), A review on dimensions of service quality models. Journal of Marketing Management, 2(2), 79-93.