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**DEPARTMENT OF RETAIL AND LOGISTICS MANAGEMENT**

**EXPLORING THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SERVICE QUALITY ON  
CUSTOMER SATISFACTION: A CASE STUDY OF DHL  
EXPRESS ZIMBABWE**

BY

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**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULLFILMENT OF THE  
REQUIREMENTS OF THE BACHELOR OF COMMERCE RETAIL AND LOGISTICS  
MANAGEMENT HONOURS DEGREE AT MIDLANDS STATE UNIVERSITY.**

**GWERU, ZIMBABWE**

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**APPROVAL FORM**

The undersigned certify that they have supervised dissertation entitled, Exploring the significance of service quality on customer satisfaction, A case study of DHL Express Zimbabwe (Private) Limited, submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Bachelors of Commerce in Retail and Logistics Management.

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## RELEASE FORM

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## DEDICATION

I dedicate this project to the Mamhunze family.

R1472021

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To the Almighty God, is the glory forever, for He has handed my life the skill and the ability to learn. I would also like to extend my profound gratitude to my academic supervisor Mr O. Manjengwa. You were not just a supervisor, but also a source of inspiration. Your suggestions, advice, comments, patience, tolerance, unwavering support and assistance played a significant role in making this project a reality. With my mind and limited resources, surely I would not have accomplished the hectic task alone.

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## ABSTRACT

The research was carried out to determine the contribution of service quality on customer satisfaction, dwelling more on service tangibility – a variable for service quality. The research was based on DHL Express Harare (Airport). The objectives of the study were constructed from service tangibility with the aim of determining the contribution of packaging on customer satisfaction, the influence of personnel on customer satisfaction and the significance of equipment on customer satisfaction.

The literature review looked at the following aspects which contributes positively to customer satisfaction: protection and preservation, communication and labeling, environmental soundness, convenience and aesthetics. Furthermore, employee training and employee engagement were also emphasized as instruments for customer satisfaction. The transportation, maintenance of warehouses including other company facilities and the tracking facility have also showed significance in satisfying customers.

The researcher used both descriptive and explanatory research designs. A sample size of 16, 14 and 1 was used for customers, personnel and the management respectively. Questionnaires were used for the customers and interviews for the management as the research instruments. The research used both primary and secondary sources of data. Data gathered was presented using graphs and tables to illustrate the research findings and responses gathered.

The findings of this research revealed that packaging, personnel and equipment have a positive impact on customer satisfaction and more of the customers proved to be satisfied. The study from the employee responses however showed that a lot has to be done by DHL Company in improving its fleet to ensure reliability and delivery of parcels in good condition. Overall, the results from the study evidenced that, service tangibility contributes more on customer satisfaction if the operational activities are executed properly by both the personnel and the management of DHL Company.

The researcher recommended DHL Express to continue improving its quality services and to adopt some strategies to improve customer satisfaction through service quality such as service responsiveness, reliability, empathy and assurance.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>APPROVAL FORM</b> .....	ii
<b>RELEASE FORM</b> .....	iii
<b>DEDICATION</b> .....	iv
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b> .....	v
<b>ABSTRACT</b> .....	vi
<b>LIST OF TABLES</b> .....	ix
<b>LIST OF FIGURES</b> .....	x
<b>ABBREVIATIONS</b> .....	xi
<b>CHAPTER 1</b> .....	1
<b>GENERAL INTRODUCTION</b> .....	1
<b>1.0 Introduction</b> .....	1
<b>1.1 Background to the Study</b> .....	1
<b>1.2 Statement of the Problem</b> .....	6
<b>1.3.1 Main aim</b> .....	6
<b>1.3.2 Research Objectives</b> .....	6
<b>1.4 Research Questions</b> .....	6
<b>1.5 Significance of the study</b> .....	6
<b>1.6 Delimitations</b> .....	7
<b>1.7 Assumptions</b> .....	7
<b>1.8 Limitations</b> .....	7
<b>1.9 Definition of Terms</b> .....	8
<b>1.10 Summary</b> .....	8
<b>CHAPTER 2</b> .....	9
<b>LITERATURE REVIEW</b> .....	9
<b>2.0 Introduction</b> .....	9
<b>2.1 To determine the contribution of packaging on customer satisfaction</b> .....	9
<b>2.2 To determine the influence of personnel on customer satisfaction</b> .....	14
<b>2.3 To determine the significance of equipment on customer satisfaction</b> .....	20
<b>CHAPTER 3</b> .....	25
<b>Research Methodology</b> .....	25
<b>3.0 Introduction</b> .....	25
<b>3.1 Research design</b> .....	25

3.2 Target population.....	26
3.2.1 Sampling population.....	26
3.3 Sample Size.....	27
3.4 Sampling Methods.....	28
3.5 Data Source.....	29
3.5.1 Secondary Data.....	29
3.5.2 Primary Data.....	30
3.6 Data Collection Instruments and Administration Procedures.....	30
3.7 Reliability and validity.....	31
3.8 Data Presentation and Analysis.....	31
3.8.2 Data analysis.....	31
3.9 Chapter summary.....	32
<b>CHAPTER 4.....</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS.....</b>	<b>33</b>
4.0 Introduction.....	33
4.1 Respondents Rate.....	33
4.2 Packaging on customer satisfaction.....	34
4.3 Personnel on customer satisfaction.....	38
4.3 Equipment on customer satisfaction.....	42
4.4 Interviews.....	46
<b>CHAPTER 5.....</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....</b>	<b>48</b>
5.0 Introduction.....	48
5.1 Summary.....	48
5.2 Conclusions and Recommendations.....	49
5.3 Areas for further research.....	50
<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>WEBSITES.....</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>APPENDIX 1: COVER LETTER.....</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>APPENDIX 2A: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR CUSTOMERS.....</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>APPENDIX 2B: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR EMPLOYEES.....</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>APPENDIX 3: INTERVIEW GUIDE.....</b>	<b>66</b>



## LIST OF TABLES

Table 3.1: Sample composition

Table 3.2: The Likert scale

Table 4.1: Questionnaire responses

Table 4.2: Management responses to the interview questions

R1472021

## LIST OF FIGURES

- Fig 2.1: Showing packaging which provides optimum protection of the contents.
- Fig 2.2: DHL labeled parcels with detailed information.
- Fig 2.3: Reusable environmental friendly packaging.
- Fig 2.4: Easily handled portable package for customer convenience.
- Fig 2.5: DHL & Ups attractive Packaging.
- Fig 2.6: Employee morale which improves job satisfaction at the workplace hence great service quality.
- Fig 2.7: Employee training.
- Fig 2.8: DHL Zimbabwe engaged & happy management mingling with its interns during arrival of new fleet to the firm at DHL Harare Head office.
- Fig 2.9: DHL four pillars.
- Fig 2.10: Well-maintained warehouse.
- Fig 2.11: DHL & FedEx courier for relatively small parcels.
- Fig 2.12: Newly imported DHL compatible courier fleet from Germany to Zimbabwe.
- Fig 2.13: DHL tracking system.
- Fig 4.1: Showing customer responses on packaging.
- Fig 4.2: Showing employee responses on packaging.
- Fig 4.3: Showing customer responses on personnel.
- Fig 4.4: Showing employee responses on personnel.
- Fig 4.5: Showing customer responses on equipment.
- Fig 4.6: Showing employee responses on equipment.

## ABBREVIATIONS

ACA	Air Cargo Automation
DHL	Dalsey, Hillblom and Lynn.
FedEx	Federal Express (shipping company)
GEMA	Global Events Management Application
NPTS	Network Proactive Tracking System

# CHAPTER 1

## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

### 1.0 Introduction

This chapter provides a detailed background of the study, statement of the problem, the research objectives, research questions, assumptions, delimitations and the limitations of the research. This study focuses on DHL Express Zimbabwe.

### 1.1 Background to the Study

Before the 1980s, customer satisfaction tended to be measured informally (for example by front line staff asking people if they were happy), or via annual surveys of customers. In the same years, most large brands and organizations in the logistics sector were not customer focused; they were product focused and logistics focused. The key questions they asked were: could they make the best product and could they ship it to the right location faster, cheaper, and more efficiently than their competitors? Thus this period saw several changes in how businesses operated. The ability of brands and services to have clear product differences started to diminish.

The early masters of modern customer satisfaction programs tended to be organizations who mastered paper based research such as postal and face-to-face. As the 1980s and the early 1990s progressed, the data collection tended to shift to Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI). As the 1990s unwound, the move to the internet started. The first step was for business to business research, which saw a growing number of studies migrate to email, followed by consumer, web-based, customer satisfaction studies as the millennium turned. Another strand of customer satisfaction that developed in the 90s was the growth of CRM (customer relationship management), which was the start of a move towards a single view of the customer and something that has taken on a new lease of life with the growth of interest in big data.

In the last few years, customer satisfaction research has, itself, been showing decreased satisfaction amongst the companies commissioning it. Research buyers are saying it is too slow, misses too much, and too expensive. Customers often report that surveys are intrusive and frustrating.

Olga (2017) explains that, dissatisfied customers are, unfortunately, an inevitable fact of business life. How you respond will determine whether the customer shares on social media how terrible your customer service is or will remain loyal to your company. Many researchers point out the fact that satisfied customers share their experiences with other people to the order of perhaps five or six people. On the contrary, dissatisfied customers are more likely to tell another ten people of their experience with product or service. Lots of brands have gone out of business because of poor customer service. More than ever, customers want to be treated with respect.

This has been the case with DHL Express Zimbabwe and the problem is yet to rest completely. Most customers are left unsatisfied with the services offered. The unpleasant facts about the impact of poor customer service on the brand are as well highlighted as the essay unfolds.

It is important to comprehend the question that, what happens after poor customer experience? Most of the firms in the logistics setup particularly in Zimbabwe have been so reluctant to this question without realizing the negative impacts of not addressing the issue. With that same question in mind, a number of factors are therefore taken into cognizance paying special attention to what actually happens in terms of the provision of the services and the consequences to the firm as a result of such. DHL Express has been in this phase for a while of not listening to its customers which the price or cost of that is very high. A company can have an exceptional product, however, failure to consider how it fits the needs and requirements of its customers will lose its business. Not listening to your customers is one of the biggest mistakes businesses have ever made and it may lead to the following consequences which may be in some cases irreversible: angry customers, lost business, and as well damaged reputation.

Low morale has been as well an issue of concern within DHL Express service center. Not listening to customers is not the only mistake which may have irrecoverable effect on the business. Inefficient customer service when most part of time is spent arguing with customers will also lead to unsatisfied customers. Treating customers without any respect and leaving their issues unresolved is the fastest way to become “famous” for the most terrible customer service. In order to satisfy customers, companies have to keep up with the latest technological advances and train their staff or suffer the consequences. By introducing an efficient customer service strategy the business will have not only positive feedback but will also earn trust and customer

loyalty which is a theory yet to be figured out and put into practice by the management of DHL Express.

There is a serious move by most stakeholders of DHL Express when they receive a bad service from the company. Instead of complaining a number of customers will reveal the truth publicly. Social media is growing in popularity as an avenue for frustrated consumers to talk about their customer service experience publicly. Instead of contacting the company directly and complaining the customers will go to the masses and share what they think about the company's brand. When the company does not receive complaints, this also does not necessarily mean all the firms' customers are happy. According to Lee Resource for every Customer complaint there are 26 other unhappy customers who have remained silent. Logically, customers silence is deadly for most businesses' not only because the company has lost the lifetime value these customers bring to the business but because of the impact these customers have on the company potential prospects.

However, having mentioned the silence of the customers, it is a high opportunity for the logistics companies and DHL Express in particular to capitalize and hastily make some rectifications. When your customers complain they give the company management team a unique opportunity to fix the issue and do whatever the team can to win those customers back and prevent that issue from happening in the future. An ability to post complaints empowers the customers to make the company better. Whenever the firm put all its efforts into providing a fast resolution to any complaint, this results in satisfying the customers' needs and let them become the company brand evangelists.

Smith (2014) says that, 'without the proper know-how, international shipping can mean stress for business owners'. In line with the statement above, for DHL Express to get the consignments through the local customs and get them delivered to the right destinations in time, have become hard or traumatic causing serious delays in the clearance processes leaving the company's stakeholders dissatisfied. Quite a number of factors leading to inefficiencies in the operations of DHL Express are mentioned as follows;

Poor packaging with the following factors -

Vagueness in the content of description, that is the description must be detailed and accurate, for example, computer parts requires those words and the brand name, model, and serial number of the parts. Sometimes values, quantities or pages of the invoice will be missing. Incorrect product code and the invoice or description will not be written in English. Improper quantity or value, this is sometimes done intentionally where goods are deliberately under-valued to avoid duties or taxes and if customs figured out the problem the receiver will dispute causing queries, time wasting and money to solve the problem.

Poor performance by the Personnel –

This has led to unreliable employees, unresolved customer queries, unprofessional personnel, unfulfilled promises and poor customer service.

Poor tools and equipment –

Offices and the warehouse not kept to standards in terms of health and hygiene to both internal and external customers. There are also unmet delivery times or delays due to less number of company fleet and sophisticated tracking system.

The bottom line is, poor customer service has a negative impact on any type of business. The company is negatively impacted in terms of its reputation and the costs of acquiring new customers. It is reasonably believed that retaining your usual stakeholders is quite less costly than acquiring new stakeholders in many ways. Small companies on the other hand will lose their market share. It is also clear that poor customer service by DHL Express and other logistics companies in the same industry will result in loss of loyal customers, loss of potential customers, loss of profit, loss of reputation, and loss of employees among other losses.

DHL Express Zimbabwe is still lagging behind causing inefficiencies and ineffectiveness in its operations. The service quality offered to customers is compromised causing more complaints and customer dissatisfaction leading to customers shifting from DHL to other rivals who performed the same services better. Import delays and the entire clearance process have raised much concern to the company's stakeholders leaving DHL Express vulnerable to competition from its major rivals in the industry, which are FedEx, UPS and other logistics companies. In

1980 following the establishment of DHL in Zimbabwe with its activities being overseen from the Harare main branch, Mutare, Gweru, and Bulawayo among other towns and ports of entry into the country, DHL's operations and its service delivery is still yet to suffice and meet customer's expectations

Service quality on the other hand has become a key strategic factor for companies to differentiate their products and services from other competitors by using service quality as a process that customers evaluate. Many researchers suggest that customers assess service quality by comparing what they feel a seller should offer and compare it against the seller's actual service performance (Gronroos, 1982). Five perspectives of service quality have been identified by Parasuraman et al. (1988). These are empathy, reliability, responsiveness; assurance and tangibles which connect particular service character with hopes of customers and these have proved to be the major strategies DHL Express can adopt to improve customer satisfaction.

Considering how sophisticated customers are becoming due to the concept of customer relationship management, both service quality and customer satisfaction are currently the necessary instruments for DHL Express's revival and ultimately producing a satiated stakeholder. Caceres & Paparoidamis (2007), Gorla, Somers & Wong (2010) argues that service quality is the predecessor of customer satisfaction. It can therefore be assumed that the quality of service leads to customer satisfaction. However, there is no doubt that both of these elements, that is the service quality and customer satisfaction are generally recognized as the major decisive factors in maintaining long-term and successful business relationships.

Zairi (2000), analyzing customer satisfaction, indicates that customers comprise the aim of the company's activity, that is he focuses the fact that not service users and customers depend on the company, but the company's performance depends on its existing customers. Other authors argue (Panayides, 2007; Liu & Xie, 2013) that in the current competitive environment it is dangerous to be a non-customer-oriented company. It should also be considered that logistics service companies such as DHL Express Zimbabwe in particular should be customer centric.



## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Customer satisfaction has been an issue of concern in the competitive logistics sector and has found DHL Express Zimbabwe lagging behind in terms of its equipment, the packaging facilities and personnel.

### **1.3.1 Main aim**

The main aim of this study is:

- i. To determine the contribution of service tangibility on improving customer satisfaction.

### **1.3.2 Research Objectives**

- i. To determine the contribution of packaging on customer satisfaction
- ii. To determine the influence of personnel on customer satisfaction
- iii. To determine the significance of equipment on customer satisfaction

## **1.4 Research Questions**

- i. What is the contribution of packaging on customer satisfaction?
- ii. Does effective personnel management help in improving customer satisfaction?
- iii. Does the equipment have significance on customer satisfaction?

## **1.5 Significance of the study**

### **To the researcher**

The research study is crucial to the researcher as it is a requirement for every student to carry out a research in partial fulfillment for the degree of Bachelor of Commerce Honors Degree in Retail and Logistics Management.

### **To the organization**

This research could help the company to have a better comprehension of customer satisfaction and adopt the research objectives to improve on their service delivery thereby gaining a competitive edge over its rivals.

## **To the University**

The research will be used as literature review and as an avenue for further study

### **1.6 Delimitations**

- i. The research was limited to DHL Express (Airport) only.
- ii. The researcher's respondent categories were the DHL Express (Airport) management, employees and customers only.
- iii. The research concentrated on packaging, personnel and equipment surfacing out their contribution on customer satisfaction.
- iv. The study was carried out from April 2018 to May 2018.

### **1.7 Assumptions**

- i. The respondents to be interviewed will co-operate in good faith.
- ii. Information to be collected will be regarded as accurate, complete relevant and therefore reliable.
- iii. The findings will reflect the actual situation on the ground.

### **1.8 Limitations**

- i. *Financial constraints*- The researcher relied on finances from family and friends.
- ii. *Time constraints*- The researcher conducted the research within specified hours as agreed by the company management, thus the research was more convenient during the lunch hour to the employees and customers.
- iii. *Inaccessible confidential information* - The researcher convinced the respondents by clearly stating that the information will be confidential and used for educational purposes only.

## **1.9 Definition of Terms**

**Tangibility** - Santos (2002:294) refers to tangibles as the tangible elements of a service and includes aspects such as the appearance of physical facilities, tools and equipment, personnel, and communication material.

**Service quality** - Grönroos (1990:82) is of the opinion that service quality is the result of what consumers receive and how they perceive it. Choi (2001) revealed that “service quality occurs during service delivery in an interaction between the client and the contact person from the service firm” (p. 9).

**Facility management**– Facility Management involves supporting services and coordinating functions necessary for maintaining, operating and managing physical assets and workplaces. As a result, the needs of an organization and its employees can be met and successful business activities are enabled (Levy et al., 2010)

**Tracking system** - Tracking is the process of gathering and presenting information on the location of delivery items in a distribution network or supply chain (Deschner et al., 2008).

### **1.9 Summary**

The thrust of the chapter is focused on detailing the cause of the problem that triggered the research. The information gathered covers the research objectives which majorly focus on the contribution tangibility on improving customer satisfaction

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.0 Introduction

This chapter will provide a detailed understanding of tangibility as a service quality concept on customer satisfaction. The variables of tangibility will be taken into account explicating their significance on customer satisfaction. The variables to be discussed are; packaging, personnel, equipment and how DHL Express can adopt effectively these variables in order improve on the service quality and ultimately satisfying customers.

#### 2.1 To determine the contribution of packaging on customer satisfaction

In many companies the packaging has led an obscure life, and has not been one of the highly prioritized areas. The current trend however, as described in the following quotation shows that this is about to change: “Once an afterthought for many companies, packaging is rapidly moving to the front and center of their overall distribution strategies (Modern Materials Handling, 2000). Packaging has been an area of concern in the logistics industry and research has been undertaken to find ways of improving the packaging facility as well as identifying its contribution to an organization and the stakeholders with the idea of improving customer satisfaction.

Tiliander (2000) explains that, the packaging has indirectly become increasingly essential since logistics today often focuses on optimizing the logistical flows, regarding time and space, between the companies in a logistics channel. Lee and Lye (2003) added that three quarters of all finished goods require packaging and product packaging is the science, art and technology of protecting products for the purposes of containment, protection, transportation/storage and information display. Both authors from this context emphasized on the contribution of packaging surfacing out the packaging functions and the optimization of the logistical flows. As a result of the latter if executed well, efficiency and effectiveness is improved in the organization’s operations and ultimately satisfying company stakeholders. The various functions that packaging must fulfill are identified and discussed below.

### 2.1.1 Protection and preservation

Brody and Lord (2000) states that, “protection is the most important function of packaging. Protection means the establishment of a barrier between the contained product and the environment that competes with man for the product.” This follows that the packaging shall therefore be made to stand harsh climatic conditions as well preserving the quality of the product. Following Brody and Lord’s explanation, Levy, (2000:53) further added that, the choice of suitable packaging involves a number of considerations: Will the package provide the optimum protection for the content throughout the distribution and shelf life? Will it contain the product adequately, keeping harmful outside influences out, and the product in? Will it adequately describe and market the product? The designers are therefore encouraged to take into consideration the above questions by Levy, (2000) when making the packaging. Williams et al., (2008) and Varghese et al., (2015) explains that, packaging appears among the key elements that can support the implementation of efficiency and sustainability-oriented strategies. Beyond the traditional and basic view of packaging as a means of protecting products and over the last few years, new design requirements have been added for packaging that is on the one hand, to improve the differentiation capacity of the product thus commercial function, and on the other, to improve the efficiency of the product at a logistic and production level.



*Fig 2.1 Showing packaging which provides optimum protection of the contents: Source - DHL & FedEx online websites*

Once the package is differentiated from others in the same industry (for instance DHL packaging and FedEx), customers will easily identify the product saving time and effort and the company will have a brand identity hence competitive edge in the market.

## 2.1.2 Communication and Labeling

Stewart (1996:6) comments that identification in terms of packaging includes more than just the identification of the product. It must establish brand identity, the provision of information on how the product is used, and the promotion of its sales. Hill (2005) said as individual preferences become more complex and diverse, packaging becomes the major means of product branding, packaging also provides the more permanent impression of product brand to the customer.

Various packaging served to passengers on board are different from the normal retail packaging. There are certain packages that either have no information or limited information with regard to the contents and ingredients. However, the packaging must have detailed information which explains the use, features and the contents of the packaging. In the logistics set up with companies such as FedEx and DHL in particular, the packaging communicates the size of the shipment, type, quantity of the contents, the name of the sender and receiver with their contact details, the shipper of the consignment, the place of origin and destination. The latter information results in efficient and effectiveness in the logistical flows / supply chain and more importantly customer satisfaction.



*Fig 2.2 DHL labeled parcels with detailed information : source [www.dhl.com](http://www.dhl.com)*

An important factor in packaging is labeling which may be written, printed, or graphic matter on the container. According Smith (2006), there are six variables that must be taken into consideration by producers and designers when creating efficient package: form, size, color, graphics, material and flavor. Labeling also forms part of communicating the product to the company stakeholders. In terms of labeling, the use of symbols instead of language to indicate features or how packaging should be used could be considered. Many of the regulations

governing product labeling are extremely detailed, often specifying the placement and minimum type size of required information.

### 2.1.3 Environmental soundness

Ergonomic and environmental issues are of the utmost importance to be competitive in the international market (Rundh, 2005). Packaging-related environmental issues have received widespread media attention. At the most altruistic level, to preserve the planet, it is necessary to minimize the amount of packaging used, and eliminate its use where possible. Cost savings can be achieved through the careful use of materials, in response to the perceived needs of a more environmentally aware market (Stewart, 1996:6).

Packaging is composed of materials ultimately derived from the earth. Most packaging is used only once and discarded, converting the earth's natural resources, to less available or useful products (Brody & Lord, 2000:162-163). Sometimes there is no purpose for further use, packaging is discarded in the environment. The cost of removing litter from the environment is usually borne by the tax payer and the consumer. The design and choice of packages has become an essential strategy for the reduction of waste in order to reduce negative environmental impact (Jahre & Hatteland, 2004).



*Fig 2.3 Reusable environmental friendly packaging (dhl & ups) Source: online*

In line with the aspect of environmental soundness, Grönman et al, (2013) pointed out that, this efficiency of packaging in logistics should be considered not only in terms of logistics in regard to the processes of supplying, packing, handling, storing, and transport, but also in environmental



terms which involves the reduction of packaging and raw materials consumption for example, re-use, recycle and or recovery waste from packaging.

#### 2.1.4 Convenience

A correctly designed package must have customer-convenience features, which take into account the end user and the environment in which the product is going to be used (Stewart, 1996:59). Thus, it is important to consider the work of the flight attendant, and as such the packaging should provide the right level of protection for the product, while at the same time permit the product to be readily accessible, particularly in the confined spaces of the aircraft cabin. It needs to contain the product in a convenient quantity, that is easy to handle by the flight attendants and passengers alike, and which satisfies but at the same time avoids unnecessary waste.



*Fig 2.4 Easily handled portable package for customer convenience: source dhl online websites*

#### 2.1.5 Aesthetics

The package's overall features can underline the uniqueness and originality of the product. In addition, quality judgments are largely influenced by the product characteristics which packaging reflects. If the packaging communicates high quality, consumers assume that the product is of high quality. If the package symbolizes low quality, consumers transfer this low quality to the product itself. The package communicates a favorable or unfavorable implied meaning about the product (Silayoi and Speece, 2004). Underwood, Klein, and Burke (2001:402) suggest that



consumers are more likely to imagine aspects of how a product looks, tastes, feels or smells when they look at a picture of a product on the package.



**Fig 2.5**  
DHL& Ups  
attractive  
Packaging:  
source –  
online  
websites

Schlossberg (2008) suggest that the most effective means of attracting attention to a product is by focusing attention on product brand through the use of an appropriate color, size, language, and picture while increasing product availability.

## **2.2 To determine the influence of personnel on customer satisfaction**

### **2.2.1 Motivation**

Recent studies focus on the development of services and organization structure in the way to provide high service quality and analyze customers' needs. Several research studies in the last three decades focused at the development of new services, restructuring organization dimensions, provision of new instruments and services to meet customers' needs Storey, (1998). Sanden however pointed out that previous researches did not give adequate attention to improve the employees' performance and work environment conditions which form the basis of providing better services which are reflect at the customer's satisfaction and loyalty and ruling factors Sanden, (2003).

#### **2.2.1.1 Job satisfaction**

Modern trends are interested in measuring employees' reactions by shaping the revolution of the personnel management as it began to look at employees' satisfaction as a key component element of motivation at work and addressing the factors that influence job satisfaction as a key positive relationship of work performance achievements (Zoghbi, 1998). Heskett outlined that

the growth of organizations is achieved through customer loyalty to organization, satisfied of the value of the service received provided by the staff having good quality of life conditions offered by the organizations (Heskett, 1997). Both authors emphasized the significance of personnel to customer satisfaction, that if the internal customers which are the employees are satisfied following motivation at work, they will yield remarkable results of good quality customer service which in turn contribute to customer satisfaction. It is undeniable therefore that, since employees are considered customers within the organization, they are the final judges of the quality of the service provided. Zoghbi outlined that motivation to job satisfaction leads to performance achievement within the company showing a gap of perceptions with Heskett. Heskett believed that employee motivation is the instrument to create a quality service which in turn builds customer loyalty to the organization hence the company growth. Heskett's idea is based on survival and growth of the company due to quality services which promotes customer satisfaction.



**Fig 2.6** Employee morale which improves job satisfaction at the workplace hence great service quality- source dhl online websites

Furthermore, Gardener and Lambert (1972) says that motivation deals with moving employees towards doing the job and achieving the goal through rewards. Following Gardener's explanation on motivation, it is the manager's role to start the motivation process and open the door for employees to add their inputs on what does really motivates them and it should be as a strategy to achieve business goals through their main assets which are people.

On the other hand, Steers and Porter (2003) stated that work motivation is a factor that changes employee's way of working and behavior. In addition, motivated employees are needed and required in our rapidly changing workplaces and markets. They will help organizations survive by performing the job and work required with their full latent; hence employees will be more

productive (Yongsun, Barbara, and Christy, 2002). Putting the right employees in the right positions depending on their skills and amount of work they can generate, will enhance their ability to use their skills and abilities more frequently which will lead them to concentrate on the business missions and objectives (Yongsun, Barbara, and Christy, 2002).

#### 2.2.1.2 Employee training

Employee is a blood stream of any business. The accomplishment or disaster of the firm depends on its employee performance. Hence, top management should realize the importance of investing in training and development for the sake of improving employee performance which is a source of customer satisfaction in the logistics sector assuming the services offered are of good quality to the stakeholders of the firm. Training could be given through different methods such as on the coaching and mentoring, peers' cooperation and participation by the subordinates. This team work enable employee to actively participate on the job and produces better performance, hence improving organizational performance.

Various researches have been conducted in trying to have a clear comprehension of the aspect of training and its significance in the logistics setup on customer satisfaction. Jie and Roger, (2005) states that, training programs not only develops employee but also help an organization to make best use of their human resources in favor of gaining competitive advantage. It seems mandatory to plan for such training programs for the employees to enhance their abilities and competencies that are needed at the workplace. The authors believed that training if managed well by the human resource will benefit the company by having a competitive edge and reduces inefficient use and allocation of resources in the organization. David, (2006) emphasized that, training not only develops the capabilities of the employee but sharpen their thinking ability and creativity in order to take better decision in time and in more productive manner. David's view on training encourages exposure of the employees, giving them new challenges and broadens their mental capabilities to identify new opportunities and make effective decisions that are crucial to the success of the organization. Moreover, Hollenbeck, Derue and Guzzo, (2004) were not merely in support of the development of employee in general but also further explained that training enable employees to deal with the customer in an effective manner and respond to their complaints in timely manner.

According to Farooq, M. & Aslam, M. K (2011), managers are trying their level best to develop the employee's capabilities, ultimately creating good working environment within the organization. Farooq emphasized the involvement of the management in making sure the environment is conducive enough for workers to execute their tasks. Conducive working environment facilitates employee motivation and enhancing the elements of individual job performance. For the sake of capacity building managers are involved in developing the effective training programs for their employees to equip them with the desired knowledge, skills and abilities to achieve organizational goals. Jia-Fang, (2010) added on expressing that, this struggle by the top management not only improves the employee performance but also creates positive image of the firm worldwide. Jia's idea is based on the company reputation as a result of quality services offered to the customers as a result of well-trained employees. In this modern era of business where competition has been at the front page of the paper in the logistics industry, Robert, (2006) emphasized the contribution of effective training programs that helps employees to get acquaintance with the desired new technological advancement, also gaining full command on the competencies and skills required to perform at particular job and to avoid on the job errors and mistakes. Effective integration of the author's perceptions in regard to training will see a company successful due to customer loyalty, satisfaction and good rapport.



**Fig 2.7**

*Employee training:*  
Source - [www.dhl.com](http://www.dhl.com)

According to Hawthorne studies and many other research works on productivity of worker highlighted the fact that employees who are satisfied with their job will have higher job performance, and thus supreme job retention, than those who are not happy with their jobs (Landy, 1985). Moreover, it is stated that employees are more likely to turnover if they are not satisfied. Following the authors argument, it is clear that the employee could be only satisfied when they feel themselves competent to perform their jobs, which is achieved through better

training programs. Recognizing the role of training practices, enable the top executives to create better working environment that ultimately improves the motivational level as well as the performance of the workforce. Pfeffer (1994) highlights that well-trained workforce is more capable of achieving performance targets and gaining competitive advantage in the market. The authors find out that there is much difference to company performance from a satisfied and unsatisfied employee. As a result, the authors supported the idea that morale at the work place should be improved to increase job satisfaction and reduce turnover of employees. The authors, in their line of argument clearly shows that competence on the job, regular training and conducive working environment contributes to quality of work and services offered to customers hence customer motivation.

### 2.2.1.3 Employee engagement

Employees are the human embodiments of a company. They represent the brand. If an employee is unhappy, this message is conveyed through work habits, interactions with co-workers and most importantly dealing with customers. Employees are the face of the business if they are unmotivated, unsatisfied its effect can be devastating. Today customer satisfaction is a universal priority for business of all sizes. Employees can make or break an organization. Employee engagement is arguably the most critical metric for organizations in the 21st Century. Most if not all, of the other key measures that reflect and drive organizational performance (customer satisfaction, innovation, profitability, productivity, loyalty and quality) are products of engaged committed employees.



**Fig 2.8** DHL Zimbabwe engaged & happy management mingling with its interns during arrival of new fleet to the firm at DHL Harare Head office: Source - DHL internal Reports (2017)



Mercer (2007) explains employee engagement as ‘a state of mind in which employees feel a vested interest in the company’s success and are both willing and motivated to perform to levels that exceed the stated job requirements. It is the result of how employees feel about the work experience, the organization, its leaders, the work and the work environment’. Following Mercer’s definition, it is clear that motivation of employees is the art to efficiency and effectiveness in the business ultimately contributing to customer satisfaction. Employee Engagement happens when employees exhibit interest in their jobs, and are willing to exert an extra discretionary effort to get the required results. It is an intrinsic factor of motivation. An engaged employee as expounded by Bevan et al (2000) as someone who is aware of business context, and works closely with colleagues to improve performance within the job for the benefit of the organization. Knowing the context of the business requires the addition of Mercer’s view on employee engagement were the state of mind is willing and motivated to perform the assigned tasks. An organization should have pillars which the employers and employees should always remind them with. The pillars starts with a motivated employee, creating a satisfied customer, building a profitable network and proving a great service quality as shown below on fig 1.

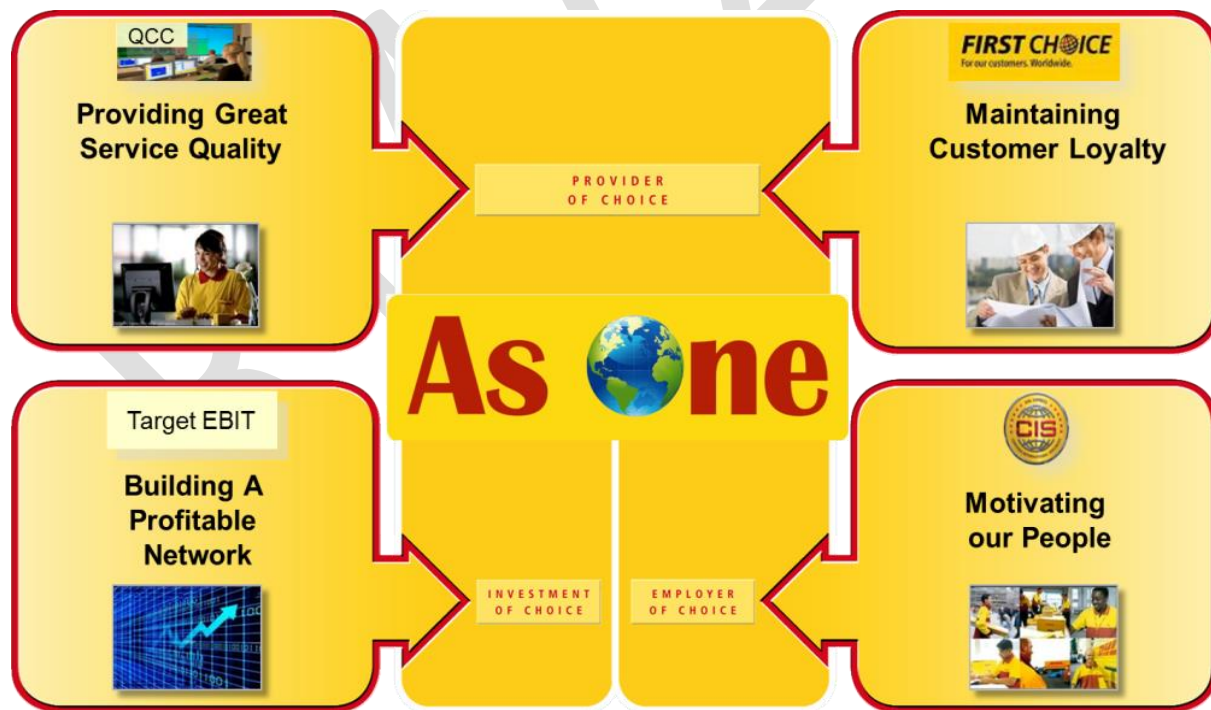


Fig 2.9DHL four pillars: Source - DHL internal Reports

Both employee engagement and training have significant contributions to the satisfaction of customers if well executed by the human resource wing of the firm. It is therefore important to keep in mind as emphasized by Stew Leonard (2009) that, “If you look after your staff, they will look after the customers who in turn will look after your business”.

### **2.3 To determine the significance of equipment on customer satisfaction**

In the last decades, facility management has established itself as a key business service factor (Scupola, 2012). Facility management involves supporting services and coordinating functions necessary for maintaining, operating and managing physical assets and workplaces. This follows that the equipment of the company must be taken care of, for instance the fleet vehicles for consignments transportation, the warehouse and its facilities as well the technological equipment. As a result, the needs of an organization and its employees can be met and successful business activities are enabled (Lavy et al., 2010).

#### **2.3.1 Maintenance of Warehouses**

Today’s successful warehouse operations view maintenance as a top priority to ensure maximum utilization of both facility and equipment assets, thus having a strong influence on logistic operations, (Campbell, 1995). Effective warehouse maintenance practices must become part of the warehouse strategic master planning process. The scope of warehouse operations in terms of location, size, and type of equipment addresses whether the maintenance plan has its own in-house maintenance, or it depends more on contract services. Regardless of the source of repair, two responsibilities of warehouse maintenance must be achieved; safe and reliable operations of material handling equipment and maintenance of facilities, grounds, utilities, plumbing, heating, air conditioning, security system, fire protection, etc. (Smith and Tomkins, 1998). Smith believed that companies should ensure that there is efficient equipment in place which helps in the warehousing functions. The maintenance of the equipment ensures health to the employees, undamaged products to the customers of the company and customer satisfaction.



**Fig 2.10**

Well maintained warehouse: source [www.dhl.com](http://www.dhl.com)

Salonen and Bengtsson (2011) further showed that, manufacturing companies can achieve substantial improvement on their productivity via development of strategic maintenance. Sherwi (2000) however pointed out that, maintenance of built assets is often considered as a cost burden, which was supported by Chew et al, (2004) arguing that organizations are reluctant to spend, aiming at preserving the condition of their assets. In line with that, Taillander et al., (2011) further explained that maintenance should be considered not only as a mere source of cost, but rather as a way for potential gain. Which implies that, an organization should recognize the positive impact of warehouse maintenance, maintaining quality of the consignments on the shelves and in transit, health and a safe working environment will both assure internal and external customer satisfaction.

## **2.3.2 Transportation**

### **2.3.2.1 just-in-Time (JIT) delivery**

The Just-in-Time (JIT) concept implies a continuous flow of materials through the supply chain, and aims to keep inventory to a minimum by synchronizing transport to the production process (Böge, 1994; Allen, 1994). However, it appears that this process can generate more transport Yang et al., (2005); Lamming and Hampson, (1996) & Swenseth and Buffa, (1990), as total



vehicle miles increase to accommodate the more frequent movement of smaller quantities of goods. The latter authors supported the idea of costs which comes by just in time approach as more transport will be needed, which requires more drivers, more fuel and hence improper utilization of the resources. Copper et al., (1994) added that, fuel consumption also increases, as smaller vehicles consume more fuel per tonne moved than larger vehicles and produce more pollution. With regard to overall transport efficiency, JIT has the effect of depressing vehicle load factors McKinnon, (2000), and this explains the idea to avoid duplication of resources by making sure that the vehicles are loaded at their cost effective and or full carrying capacity. With this in mind, an organization should have a large fleet of vehicles or transportation facility capable to meet every arising demand in the market. Customer satisfaction comes as well from the angle were a customer need the product at or within a specified time. This can only happens when a company has the equipment or facilities to meet customer needs and wants which happens to improve customer satisfaction.



*Fig 2.11 DHL & FedEx courier for relatively small parcels: Source - DHL internal Reports & [www.fedex.com](http://www.fedex.com)*

### 2.3.2.2 Incompatibility of vehicles and products: procurement

Fleet configuration that is matching the capacity of the vehicles to the freight demands, is a key responsibility of any transport manager, and this is especially true when the procurement of new vehicles is considered, as the less flexible a vehicle is in its carrying capacity, the fewer the opportunities that there are for load consolidation. Some vehicles require specialist handling equipment or refrigeration capabilities and are, therefore, limited to carrying only certain

dedicated loads, whilst others are restricted by the nature of the load that they carry and prohibit opportunities for the carriage of mixed consignments.



**Fig 2.12** Newly imported DHL compatible courier fleet from Germany to Zimbabwe (2017): Source - DHL internal Reports

Consequently, once a transport manager has decided on a fleet configuration, it may be several years before the company can take advantage of newly- introduced technologies or even adapt to changes in market demand for different products. Additionally, there are also direct environmental implications of an ageing fleet, as older vehicles emit more pollution, Department for Transport, (2006).

### **2.3.4 Information Technology Equipment**

#### **2.3.4.1 Tracking Facilities**

Lee and Billington (1992) were among the first to recognize the importance of tracking, when in 1992 they presented the lack of capability of informing customers on the progress of their orders as one of the most severe pitfalls of supply chain management. An organization should contribute to customer satisfaction by simplifying customer's lives through the use of information system equipment and soft wares. A company should have a platform on its website for instance, ([www.dhl.com](http://www.dhl.com)) for tracking the movement of consignments from the time it is picked, all the checkpoints in transit until the consignment reaches its final destination. This will

create convenience to customers as they can track the progress of the consignments from different geographical areas.



**Fig 2.13** DHL tracking system: source – [www.dhl.com](http://www.dhl.com)

Tracking instruments that are used by most logistics firms comprises of the GEMA system, NPTS, ACA, Automated spread sheets among other facilities to track, update and keep data of customers and every progress of the consignments in the clearance process. Customers are provided with the tracking, reference or airway bill number just after the pick-up of the consignment in the company systems. The airway bill number will then be used to consistently check the progress of the consignment in transit and during the clearance process.

## 2.4 Summary

The key components discussed in this chapter were packaging, personnel and equipment as objectives of tangibility and their contribution on customer satisfaction.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **Research Methodology**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

This chapter provides a detailed discourse of the research design, population, sampling process, data sources and research instruments. It also details why certain techniques and instruments were used for conducting the research.

#### **3.1 Research design**

According to Labaree (2016) the research design refers to the overall strategy chosen to integrate the different components of the study in a coherent and logical way, thereby, ensuring that the research problem is effectively addressed; it constitutes the blue print for the collection, measurement, and analysis of data. Burns and Grove (2009) elaborates that designing a study helps the researcher to plan and implement the study in a way that will help the researcher to obtain intended results, thus increasing the chances of obtaining information that could be associated with the real situation. There are basically three classifications of research designs namely; exploratory, causal and descriptive research. The researcher used explanatory and descriptive research for data collection relating to the significance of service quality on customer satisfaction dwelling on tangibility as a variable of service quality. DHL Airport branch was used as a case study.

##### **3.1.1 Descriptive Research Design**

This research seeks to find the impact of tangibility as a variable of service quality on customer satisfaction and this has led the researcher to use the descriptive research design as it is used in determining the relationship between two variables (Shukla, 2010). The descriptive research design allowed the researcher to get precise information on the contribution of packaging, equipment and personnel as the main objectives of tangibility on customer contentment.

### **3.1.2 Explanatory Research**

Denzin and Lincoln (2005) says that, qualitative research is primarily an explanatory research and it is used to gain an understanding of underlying reasons, opinions and motivations. It provides insights into the problem or helps develop ideas or hypotheses for potential quantitative research. Furthermore explanatory research is a continuation of descriptive research as it goes beyond merely describing the existing conditions to analyzing or explaining why/how it is happening. An important element of explanatory research is identifying and possibly controlling the variables in the research activity since it permits the causal links to be better explained. In line with that, it is also conclusive in nature as it allows the researcher to draw definite conclusions after validating or refuting the hypothesis.

### **3.2 Target population**

Shukla (2008) defines target population as a complete group of people that are specifically identified for investigation according to the objectives of the research project. Population is any precisely defined set of people or collection of items which is under consideration Collis, J & Hussey (2003). In this study, identification of the target population was necessary so as to provide a base from which sample units and sample size were deduced. The target population for the research comprised of DHL Express management, customers and employees.

#### **3.2.1 Sampling population**

According to Shukla, (2008) sampling means a representative of small number of elements from a larger defined group of elements. This is with the expectation that the sample preferred will be a true representative of the group.

### 3.3 Sample Size

Sekaran (1992:253) cites Roscoe (1975) who proposes that as a thumb rule for influencing sample size, “Sample sizes larger than 30 and less than 500 are appropriate for most research”. Borrowing from this finding by Sekaran, a sample size of 31 was used.

**Table 3.1 Sample composition**

RESPONDENTS	SAMPLE SIZE SELECTED
Management	1
Employees	14
Customers	16
<b>Total sample units</b>	<b>31</b>

#### 3.3.1 Sample Size Calculation

The sample size of this study was determined using Cooper and Schindler (2014) formula.

Where;

N = size of the population

e = the error

n = sample size

An error of 10% was encountered for giving a confidence level of 90%

**Formula:**

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{45}{1 + 45(0.1)^2}$$

$$n = 31$$

### **3.4 Sampling Methods**

To collect the data required the researcher considered the probability and non-probability sampling methods. These methods give room for the researcher to make personal judgment on the research as well as judging the reliability and validity of the findings. From probability sampling method the researcher used simple random sampling. Convenience and judgmental sampling were also used on non-probability sampling.

#### **3.4.1 Judgmental sampling**

Management

The researcher used judgmental sampling on the selection of the management since the researcher wanted to find out the management perception on the influence of tangibility on customer satisfaction. The researcher then chose the respondents that would be well qualified and experienced in the area of research as they will be in a better position to provide the required information to solve the problem at hand.

#### **3.4.2 Simple random sampling**

Employees

The aim of the researcher was to find the extent to which the front line employees are knowledgeable, skilled and as well know their abilities to instill trust and confidence in customers. The researcher therefore used simple random sampling such that anyone employee will have a chance of being selected (Kumar, 2011).

### **3.4.3 Convenience Sampling**

#### Customers

The researcher selected respondents who were available and easily accessible. The researcher preferred this sampling technique to the target population because all the customers does not come every day to DHL offices for business purposes. The researcher chose customers who were conveniently accessible and willing to participate in the answering of the questionnaires during the time of the research. This sampling technique helped the researcher to collect information from this group of respondents on a short period of time and this avoided unnecessary time wasting and costs trying to locate and access other customers who were not present during the time of the research.

### **3.5 Data Source**

The data was collected from both primary source and secondary source. The sources provided the information that was needed to solve the problem at hand. The research instruments used in this study were questionnaires and interviews. The researcher chose these instruments with the aim of getting information that will provide answers to the research questions, hence achieving the research objectives.

#### **3.5.1 Secondary Data**

Kotler and Gary (2004) defined secondary data as data that consists of information already in existence somewhere having been collected for another purpose. Jewel (2001), also agreed that secondary data is the data collected for purposes other than the original use. It is the evidence that already exists and had been gathered for other reasons other than the present research. For the purpose of the study company reports, textbooks, internet, and journals were used.



### **3.5.2 Primary Data**

Primary data refers to data collected for the first time in the area of study. Jewel (2001), defines it as data that has been collected for the purpose for which it is originally used. The data consists of information gathered personally by the researcher for the first time. Primary data for this study was collected using interviews and questionnaires. The main source of data was DHL Express customers, managers and employees.

### **3.6 Data Collection Instruments and Administration Procedures**

The researcher used two data collection techniques that were questionnaires and interviews.

The researcher was given a letter from the University of Study stating Faculty of Commerce department of Retail and logistics Management. The objective of the letter was to ask permission from the DHL Express management team to conduct research. An explanation of the purpose of the research was stated in the letter and the researcher also assured that information obtained from the respondents will be purely for academic purposes only.

Firstly, the questionnaire was revised by the management before it was administered to other employees. After approval by the management and information gathering, data validity and reliability were conducted to determine the applicability of the data to the study. Saunders (2009) describes questionnaires as lists of questions aimed at discovering particular information. See appendix 2A and 2B for sample.

Saunders (2005) defined interviews as a conversation between two or more people in a structured routine or unstructured manner. The researcher conducted a face to face interview with the Gateway manager of DHL and the conversation was put in black and white by the interviewer and later on typed on the word document. Five interview questions were designed using an interview guide with the expectation of ten to fifteen minutes of the interview process. See appendix 3.

### **3.7 Reliability and validity**

#### **3.7.1 Validity**

Creswell (2009) highlighted that validity entails the soundness and effectiveness of the measuring instrument/method. According to Girden and Kabacoff (2011) a sample is said to be valid only if it represents what it purports to represent. The questionnaire technique was validated by analysing and standardizing questions in accordance with the research objectives and distributed to the relevant respondents. The questionnaires proved to be valid because questions managed to reveal the information which was required. The information collected through the research methods and tools helped address the research objectives.

#### **3.7.2 Reliability**

According to Girden and Kabacoff (2011) data reliability entails the possibility to achieve the same results when the measurements of the respondents are repeated under the similar conditions. The research instruments used proved to be the most appropriate in gathering information. Respondents can answer questionnaires at their own pace thereby giving them enough time to think and answer properly unlike in the use of group interviews.

### **3.8 Data Presentation and Analysis**

#### **3.8.1 Data Presentation**

Jewell (2001) articulated that when data has been collected, it needs to be presented in a way that communicates the information to the final users. For the purpose of clear presentation and better understanding and clarification of written texts data tables and graphs were used.

#### **3.8.2 Data analysis**

Data collected using various instruments was recorded on summarized sheets. The data was checked for errors and irrelevant information was discarded. The data was presented in numerous ways such as tables, graphs and texts, contrasting and complementing facts were noted.

### **3.9 Chapter summary**

In this chapter the researcher focused on the research design, the population and the sample selected for the study, data collection instruments, data collection procedures, reliability, validity, data presentation and the analysis. The next chapter focuses on data presentation techniques, discussion and interpretation of findings.

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# CHAPTER 4

## DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

### 4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents and analyzes data as spelt out by objectives. It will begin by looking at the response rate

### 4.1 Respondents Rate

The researcher handed out questionnaires to the DHL Airport employees and customers and further conducted an interview with the management were a favorable response rate from the employees and the customers was attained as shown in the diagram below:

**Table 4.1 showing questionnaire responses**

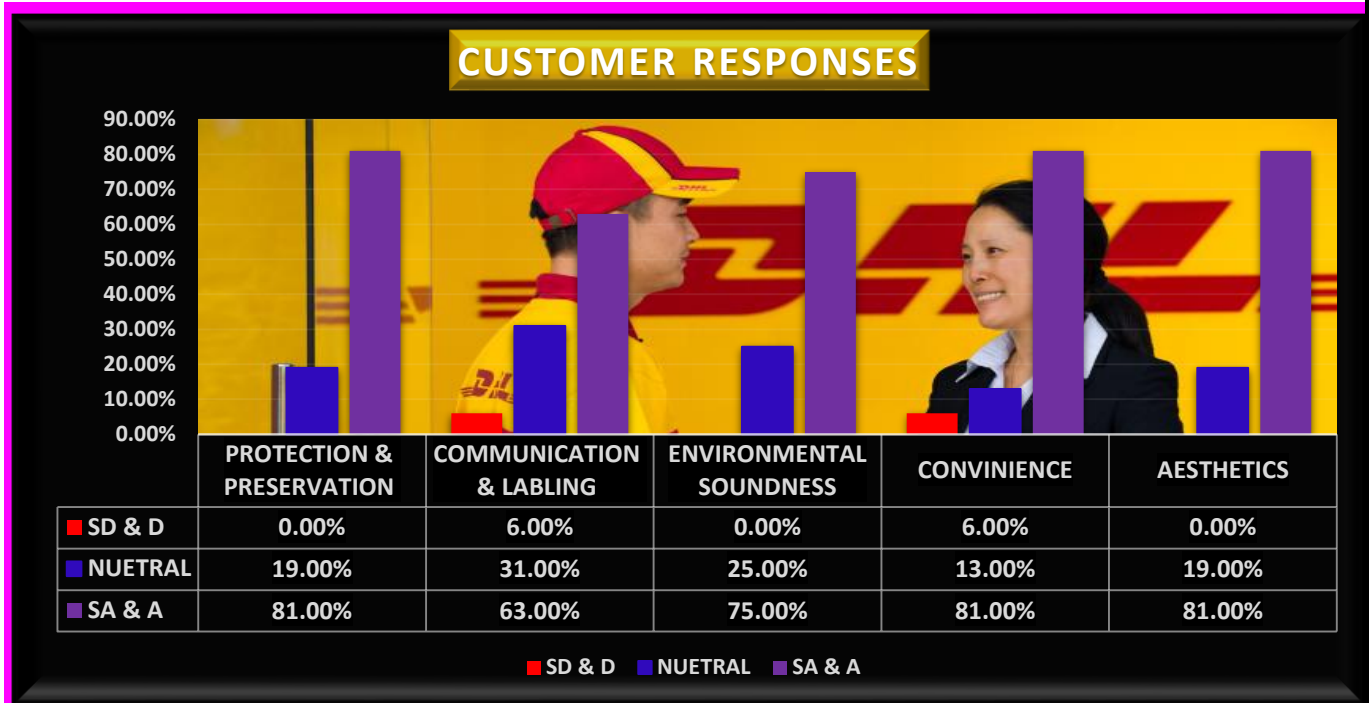
Respondents	Instrument used	Responses	Received	Response rate
Employees	Questionnaires	14	14	100%
Customers	Questionnaires	16	16	100%
<b>Total</b>		<b>30</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Primary data

The table shows that the researcher issued 14 questionnaires to the employees and 16 questionnaires to the customers which were all returned giving 100% response rate. Yehuda, B (1999) stated that, "the use of the questionnaire as a research instrument for the acquisition of information can rarely provide a full set of data, only in the case of 100% response rate." This therefore implies that the research gathered full set of data which was accurate and devoid of non-response bias.

## 4.2 Packaging on customer satisfaction

Fig 4.1 showing customer responses on packaging



Source: Primary data

From the diagram above 19% of the customers were neutral and 81% agreed that the consignments are well protected and preserved to maintain the product quality whilst none disagreed. This follows that more customers are satisfied with the optimum protection and preservation of their parcels as emphasized by Levy, (2000) as a result of good packaging.

Most of the customers agreed by 63% that the packaging provides clear communication and labeling whilst 6% disagreed leaving 31% neutral. 63% of customers were in favor of the fact that DHL packaging have detailed information which explains the use, features and the contents of the parcel. The disagreed customers however showed dissatisfaction supporting the fact that the communication and labeling is not clear.

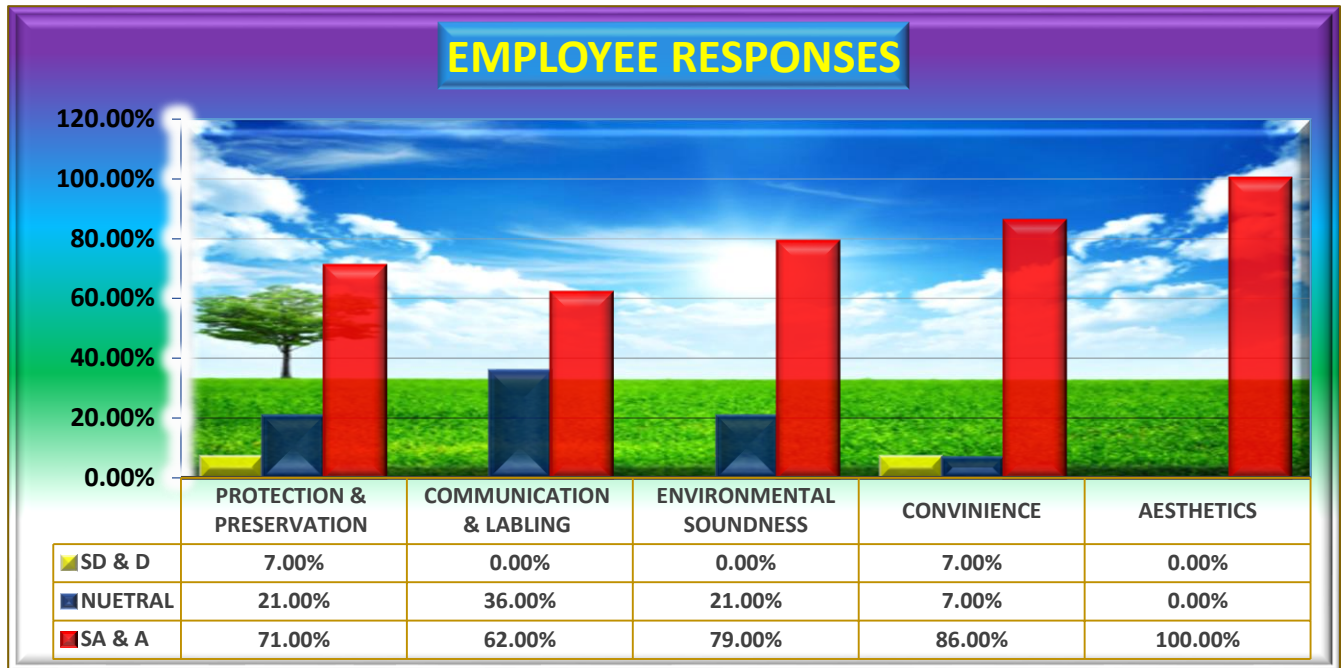
On the environmental soundness of the DHL packaging, 75% agreed that the packaging is safe, secured, environmental friendly and reusable as supported by Grönman et al, (2013). The 25% of

the customers were not advocating for that idea. Overall on this aspect, more customers are satisfied with DHL packaging as shown on the diagram above.

Stewart, (1996) states that, a correctly designed package must have customer-convenience features such as good size and the ability for easy handling. The latter has led to 81% of customers agreeing that they are satisfied with the packaging facility with 13% neutral as a result of less or no experience in conducting business with DHL. However, 6% of the customers disagreed on the notion that the packaging is convenient due to the packaging size, shape and quantity which is not convenient enough for handling.

In terms of the aesthetics or attractiveness, Underwood, Klein, and Burke (2001:402) suggest that consumers are more likely to imagine aspects of how a product looks, tastes, feels or smells when they look at a picture of a product on the package. In line with the same statement, 81% of the customers showed that they are satisfied with the quality of the packaging with only 19% neutral as some customers were new to the organization without much evidence of the DHL packaging facility. Furthermore customers proved to be satisfied with none disagreements as shown on the table above.

**Fig 4.2 showing employee responses on packaging**



*Source: Primary data*

The employees showed 71% in agreement that the packaging provides good protection and preservation of the parcels throughout out the distribution channel and shelf life with 21% neutral. 7% however disagreed that DHL packaging is good at protecting and preserving the consignments in in the supply chain.

Communication and labeling showed 62% of employees in agreement that there is detailed information about the consignments or product. Stewart (1996:6) comments that identification in terms of packaging includes more than just the identification of the product but rather showed also from the study that the information about the product on the packaging plays a crucial role in customer satisfaction. With no employees who disagreed, 36% were neutral as to whether the packaging effectively communicates the information or not.

It is essentially clear on the diagram above that, more employees were in support of the packaging as contributing more to customer satisfaction due to its environmental soundness. 79% of the employees agreed whilst the remainders of 21% were neutral. The packaging is

strongly believed to be environmentally friendly and re-usable to both internal and external customers.

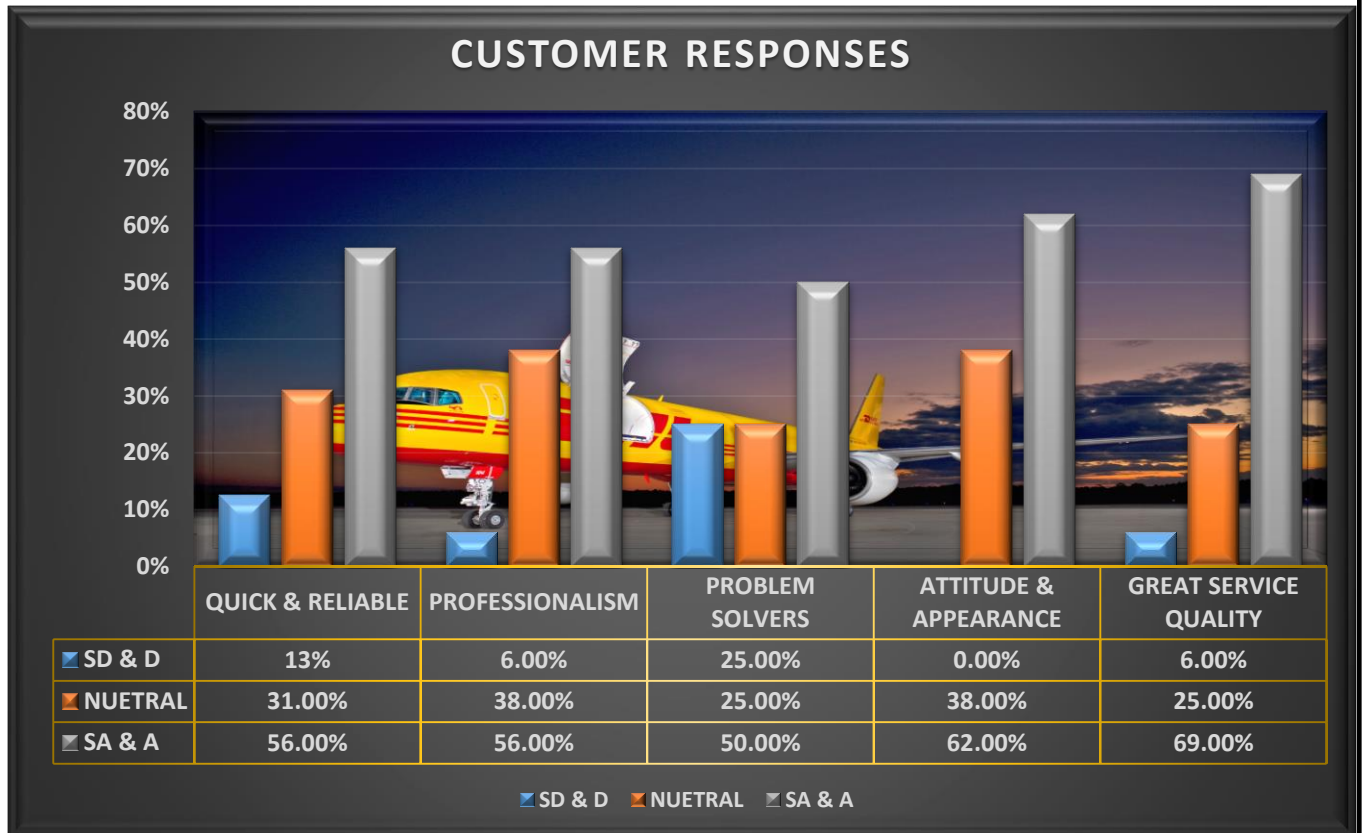
A number of employees agreed by 86% that the packaging is convenient in a way that it is readily accessible to the company such that there would not be stock out costs or any parcels to be delivered to customers unpackaged. Easy handling was also part of convenience which the employees agreed on. However, 7% of the employees were indecisive on whether the packaging was convenient or not with another 7% of the employees in disagreement that the packaging is convenient.

A massive response was shown as 100% of the employees agreed that the DHL packaging is highly attractive, original and unique. This also clearly shows that the employees neither disagreed nor was neutral to the aesthetics of the packaging. A 100% response showed that the quality of packaging contributes more to customer satisfaction.



### 4.3 Personnel on customer satisfaction

Fig 4.3 showing customer responses on personnel



Source: Primary data

From the diagram above 56% of the customers agreed that the personnel is quick and reliable showing their motivation levels and good customer service to the company stakeholders or customers in particular. This also follows that customer loyalty and satisfaction is enhanced as a result of value of the service received provided by the staff having good quality of life conditions offered by the organizations (Heskett, 1997). 31% customers were neutral which gave no clue as to know if employees are quick and reliable. However, 13% of the customers were not in favor of the idea that employees are quick and reliable as part of customer service which is a factor to customer dissatisfaction.

56% of the customers agreed that the employees provide professional welcome to all customers and visitors, presenting a positive impression of themselves and the organization. 38% of the

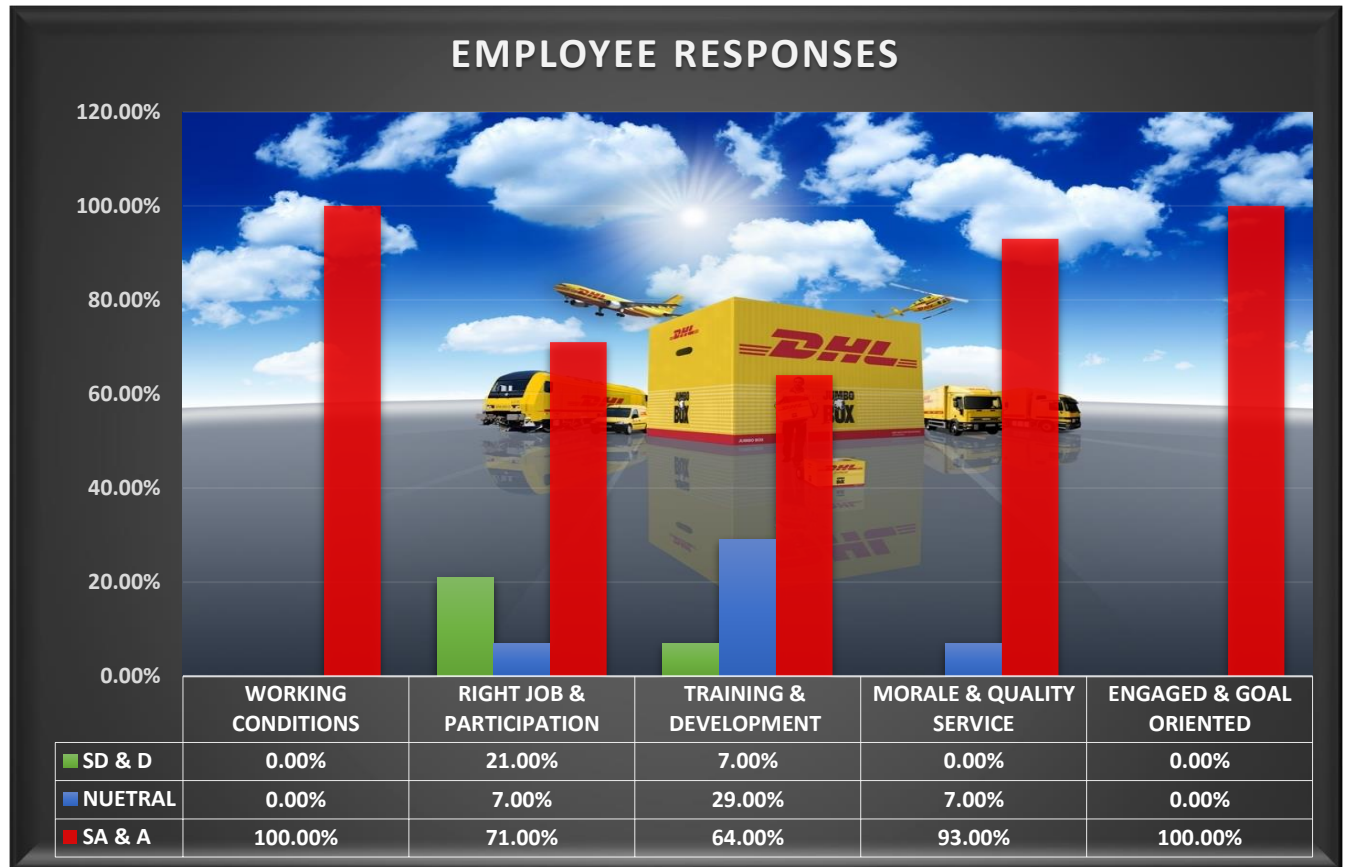
customers were quite not sure as to whether the employees present professionalism or not with however 6% of the customers who clearly disagreed that the employees are professional.

Hollenbeck, Derue and Guzzo, (2004) were not merely in support of the development of employee in general but also further explained that training enable employees to deal with the customer in an effective manner and respond to their complaints in timely manner. Problem solving by the employees had shown relative concern to the customers were 50% of the customers only agreed that the concerns and queries are brought to satisfactory conclusion. 25% of the customers were neutral and 25% disagreed that the employees are problem solvers. Unaddressed customer issues by the personnel will continuously cause customer complaints and dissatisfaction.

Customers showed that the personnel possess good attitude and appearance agreeing by 62%. This is a proof of good customer service on the attitude were the personnel in some cases is emotionally intelligent to customer issues and well presentable in terms of the dressing, showing a good appearance. None of the customers disagreed on the aspect of good attitude and appearance which however gave 38% of the customers who were neutral on the same aspect.

Overall, the customers agreed by 69% that the personnel provide great service quality to a customer which is quite a remarkable result to the company in terms of customer satisfaction. 25% of customers did not show their perception on the whole aspect of great service quality to customer's satisfaction. In line with the same context of great service quality, 6% of the customers however managed to frankly disclose their disagreement that personnel contributes to customer satisfaction through providing great service quality.

**Fig 4.4 showing employee responses on personnel**



*Source: Primary data*

From the diagram above 100% of the employees agreed that the working conditions are conducive to complete the assigned tasks effectively to reach customer satisfaction and the job itself is satisfactory. This was supported by Sanden, (2003) revealing that the working conditions form the basis of providing better services which are reflect at the customer's satisfaction and loyalty. Having neither employees disagreeing nor neutral on the working conditions proved to be an area which is well managed through management decisions of satisfying both internal and external customers who are personnel and customers respectively.

As the employees of the organization, they agreed by 71% that their jobs relate to their skills and expertise which allows efficiency and effectiveness in the execution of their tasks leading to good service quality. Putting the right employees in the right positions depending on their skills

and amount of work they can generate, will enhance their ability to use their skills and abilities more frequently which will lead them to concentrate on the business missions and objectives (Yongsun, Barbara, and Christy, 2002). These same employees agreed that they are given the opportunity to air their views on the improvement of the company activities. Only 7% of the employees did not state their position and remained neutral. However, 21% disagreed stating that their skills are not matching with the job given and participation is devoid to them.

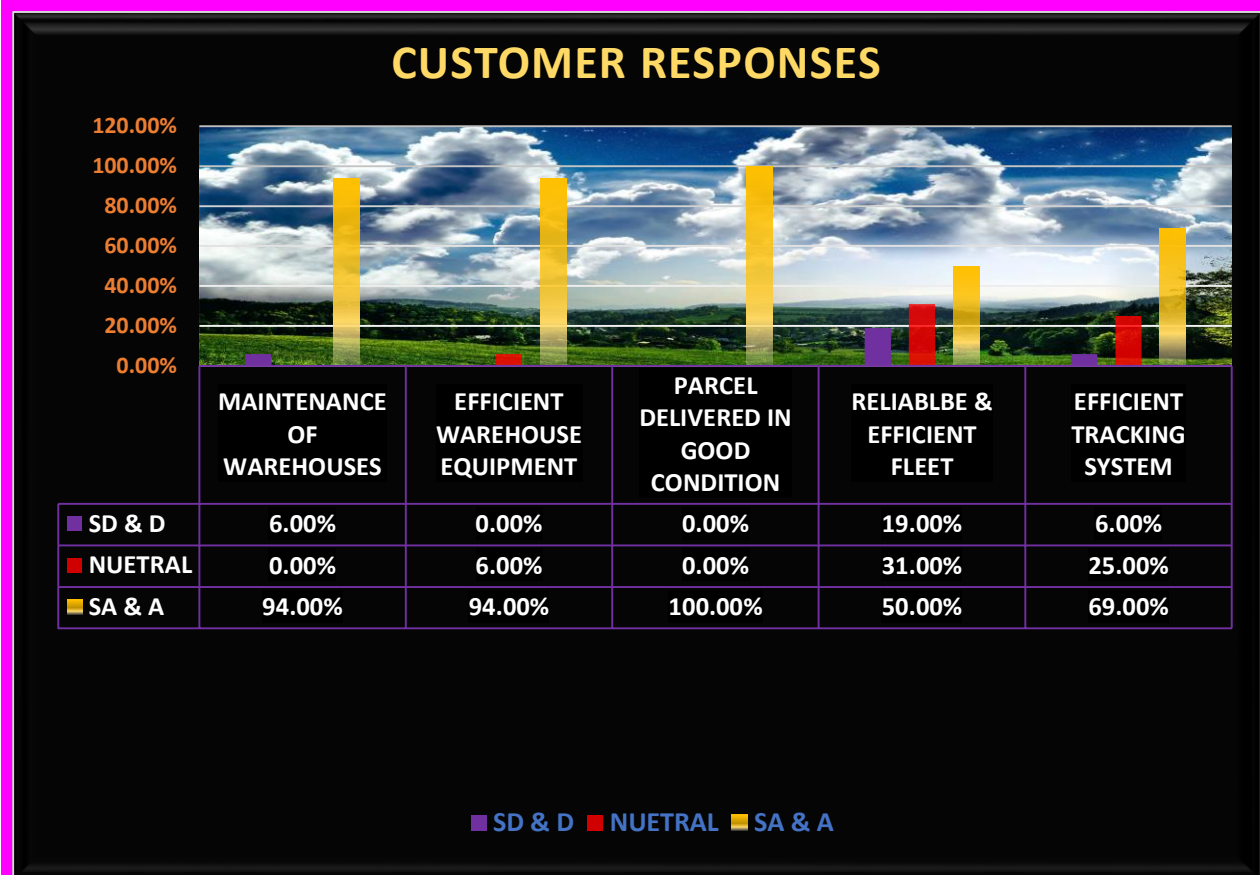
Pfeffer (1994) highlights that well-trained workforce is more capable of achieving performance targets of the organization. The provision of training and development opportunities has led to 64% of the employees agreeing that they are receiving the training they need. With 29% of the neutral employees, 7% disagreed that they are receiving the training they need to do the job well and the management is in support of their professional development and advancement.

93% of employees agreed that there is high morale at the work place and the employees are competent enough to maintain high standards of quality services and satisfy customer needs and wants. With none disagreement on morale and quality service, 7% of employees stated that neither morale nor quality of service is within DHL which results in either satisfaction or dissatisfaction of customers.

Employee engagement and goal orientation has proven to be an area of strength with 100% of employees agreeing that they understand their work and how the work contributes to the overall success of the organization. From the diagram above, the 100% turn up of employees in advocate of engagement and goal orientation showed that employees are motivated with their work which results in creating great service quality, an instrument for customer satisfaction. In support of employee engagement, Bevan et al (2000) finds an engaged employee as someone who is aware of business context, and works closely with colleagues to improve performance within the job for the benefit of the organization.

### 4.3 Equipment on customer satisfaction

Fig 4.5 showing customer responses on equipment



Source: Primary data

From the diagram above 94% of the customers agreed that the DHL warehouse, halls, offices and indoor air quality are both satisfactory. This explains the efforts of the company in maintaining its facilities such that the working environment will be conducive to both internal and external customers of the firm. On the other hand, 6% of the customers disagreed that the facilities of the company including the warehouse maintenance on the floors and shelves of parcels, just to mention a few are convincing hence customer dissatisfaction on the equipment of the company.

Folk lifts and pallets as instances of the warehouse handling equipment have shown 94% of customers agreeing that they save time in the collection of the parcels. Smith (1998) believed that companies should ensure that there is efficient equipment in place which helps in the warehousing functions. Only 6% of the customers were neutral to this idea with none disagreeing

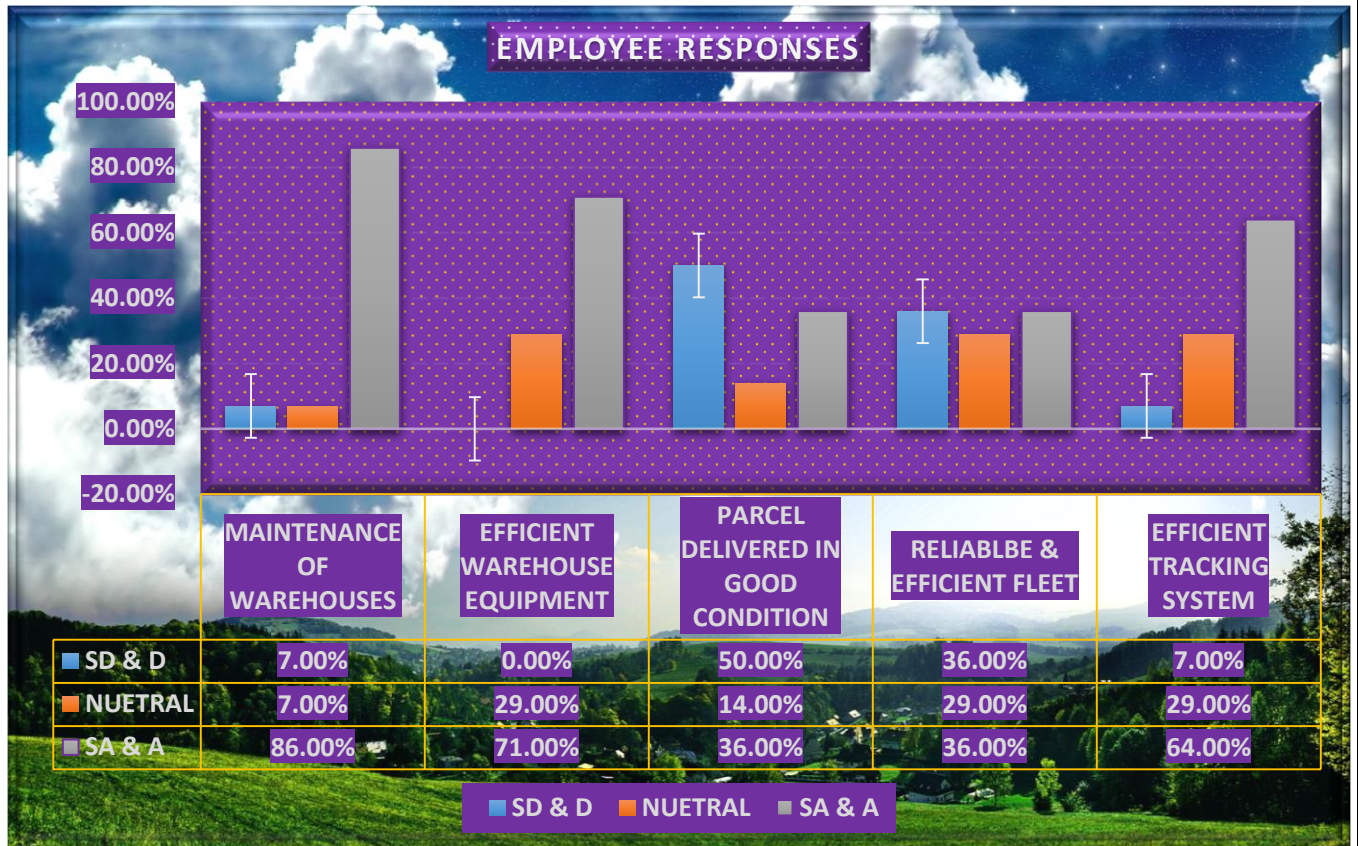
to the fact that the warehouse handling equipment is efficient and effective to customer satisfaction.

A high magnitude of customers showed that they are satisfied with the company DHL as a result of delivering parcels in good condition to the intended recipient. The 100% response of customers in agreement to the good condition of their parcels, clearly explains the importance of the company warehouse for storage of consignments and the cold room which preserves and stores parcels with contents which requires less temperatures.

50% of the customers agreed that the company has efficient fleet and provides reliable deliveries as per customer requirement and maintains the quality of the parcels from the origin to finally reach the customer. In the same context, 31% of the customers were neutral with only 19% who were in disagreement with the fact that the fleet is efficient and reliable. The 19% response is a sign of customer dissatisfaction due to unmet agreed or promised time frames and delays in loading of the parcels.

Lee and Billington (1992) were in support of use of the tracking system to the organizations. The DHL tracking system had seen 69% of the customers agreeing that the system is efficient, reliable and effective as the customers can track parcel movement on their own. Simplifying customer lives is an instrument for customer satisfaction as time to reach the company offices confirming shipment updates will be eliminated. With 25% neutral customers on clearly stating their views on the aspect of the efficiency of the tracking system, only 6% disagreed on the basis that the tracking system needs more after sales service were the customer has to be educated on the check points and interpreting each country code such that the tracking system can be efficient and effective especially to new customers of the firm.

**Fig 4.6 showing employee responses on equipment**



Source: Primary data

The above diagram shows that 86% of the employees agreed that the company maintains its warehouse and offices to preserve quality of its products and the health of its employees. As a result of maintenance of the company facilities, the working conditions will be conducive to both the personnel and the customers of the company which improves employee and customer satisfaction. Taillander et al., (2011) further explained that maintenance should be considered not only as a mere source of cost, but rather as a way for potential gain which is in this case maintaining the quality of the facilities to ensure customer satisfaction. 7% of the employees were neutral and 7% of the other employees disagreed that there is ensuring of good work place by cleaning and maintaining the facilities which maybe the warehouse and the offices.

The employees agreed by 86% that the company has warehouse material handling equipment such as the forklifts which saves time in the clearance process of parcels for customers. Time is the important factor for most customers which form part of efficiency in the operations of a



company as shown above on the diagram with 0% employees disagreeing on the efficiency of the company equipment. However, 29% of the employees were not sure whether the warehouse equipment of the company is efficient or not.

Maintaining the conditions of the parcels does not happen only in the warehouses but with the type and size of the delivery vehicles as well. 36% of the employees agreed to the latter notion stating that the parcels are delivered in good condition. However, 50% of the employees disagreed on the aspect of good conditions of the parcels reaching the final consumer. The idea behind the employees agreeing to disagree is that, the fleet of the company is not enough to ferry every consignment depending on the nature of the contents inside the package, for instance, the parcel which contains medication for a patient can be loaded in the same vehicle ready to depart to Mutare which is carrying tobacco samples and car parts. As a result the conditions of the parcels will be affected leading to customer dissatisfaction due to poor company equipment. 14% employees were indecisive on whether the company delivers the parcels in good condition or not.

36% of the employees agreed that the company has reliable and efficient fleet in the transportation of the parcels from the origin to the final consumer. 29% employees were neutral whilst 36% of employees disagreed that the company fleet is compatible and regularly serviced for efficiency in the transportation of consignments.

The tracking system has proved to be efficient with 64% of the employees in agreement that the system eases work as either the employees or the customers can track the movement of the parcels online using perhaps a laptop or a mobile phone. With the flexibility of the tracking system in accessing information about the parcel movements, customers are satisfied. 29% of the employees remained neutral on the same aspect of efficiency of the tracking system whilst 7% of the employees disagreed that the tracking facility is efficient and contributes to customer satisfaction. Using the tracking system requires one to have internet access, the equipment which maybe the computers or laptops of the company to be used by the employees. However, not all customers have these facilities, hence inefficient to some extent to the customers of the company.



#### 4.4 Interviews

**Table 4.2 Management responses to the interview questions**

QUESTIONS	ANSWERS
1. Are there any innovations that have been taken to improve the packaging facility?	DHL is an international company with headquarters in Germany. There is standardization of the packaging facility with decisions made from the head office outside the country which takes time and allows limited choice on innovation.
2. Does DHL packaging of parcels contribute to competitive advantage in the market? If so, how?	Considering companies such as FedEx, UPS, Multilink and other firms. The DHL packaging has been of first priority to customers due to its size, quality, durability and its ability to protect parcels in transit hence competitive edge.
3. How do you know that employees are providing good service to customers?	With the training we provide we ensure quality work with immediate supervisors in place. We have emails on the company website for customer feedback and appraisals through emails for employees who have gone an extra mile is satisfying customers.
4. Does training and engagement alone improve competence of employees on the job?	They form the bases for providing good quality service due to improved work. There are other strategies to improve the work such as rewards and good working conditions.
5. How effective is the tracking systems to customers?	DHL tracking facility has reduced the work load to the employees attending calls and emails advising the status of the consignments. Stakeholder's time and effort to come to DHL offices has been saved, allowing convenience to both DHL and its customers.

*Source: Primary data (interview)*

From the table above, the management responded to every question giving tangible information the researcher needed for the study. Apart from more time and efforts needed for the innovation of the packaging facility, the management has been effective in securing its customers in the market by putting in place training opportunities as part of motivational tools to its personnel such that they will be effective and efficient in utilizing the company equipment. This competence by the personnel will therefore results in the provision of great service quality and ultimately customer satisfaction.

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## **CHAPTER 5**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.0 Introduction**

The chapter gives a summary, conclusions drawn from the research findings, recommendations for the way forward of the research study and areas for further research.

#### **5.1 Summary**

The research was guided by the objectives as stated below:

- To determine the contribution of packaging on customer satisfaction,
- To determine the influence of personnel on customer satisfaction,
- To determine the significance of equipment on customer satisfaction.

## **5.2 Conclusions and Recommendations**

### **5.2.1 Contribution of packaging on customer satisfaction**

The researcher concludes that service quality through ensuring efficient packaging will result in customer satisfaction as shown from fig 4.1 and fig 4.2 with highest responses of agreements by the customers and employees. It is crystal clear from the research that, customers are satisfied by the DHL packaging in terms of its protection and preservation, communication and labeling, environmental soundness, convenience and aesthetics. This also guarantees customer loyalty and retentions to the firm and ensures survival of DHL among its competitors.

The researcher recommends that, when designing the packaging DHL should consider that the package contain the product adequately, keeping harmful influences out, and the package should adequately describe or communicate and market the product to cater for the 6% customer responses in disagreement that the package is convenient and communicates effectively. The package is suggested to have clear labeling and identity for customers to easily identify the product saving time and effort of the customers, hence customer satisfaction.

### **5.2.2 Influence of personnel on customer satisfaction**

From the research on fig 4.3, the results showed that customers are relatively satisfied with DHL personnel in terms of the provision of services. A number of customers did not disclose their perception on whether they are satisfied with the services or not. It has been shown from the research that the personnel is quick and reliable, professional, problem solvers with good attitude and appearance as well provides good services. On the other hand, it has been concluded from fig 4.4 that, 21% personnel is not working in their right jobs with room for participation and 7% is not receiving the training they need to develop their skills such that they can provide great service quality to the customers as a result of right skills, right job and motivation.

It is recommended therefore that the personnel should receive enough training in their respective jobs and to be customer centric in their operations. From fig 4.3, 13% of customers stated that the employees are not quick and reliable which is an issue of inefficiency and 25% of personnel that does not solve problems. The immediate supervisors and management should put in place measures that promotes and motivates employees to address the stated concerns for instance good working conditions and other non-financial and financial rewards.

### **5.2.3 Significance of equipment on customer satisfaction**

The company facilities and or equipment proved to be efficiently and effectively managed as more customers responded that the company maintains its warehouses and has efficient warehouse equipment with parcels delivered in good condition as well efficient tracking system for parcel movement and clearance status. From fig 4.5, it is however concluded that, 50% of the customers managed to state that they are happy with the equipment of the company in terms of reliability and efficiency of the company fleet in delivering the parcels to the customers. With the same scenario the personnel from fig 4.6 stated that the parcels are not delivered in good condition and the fleet is not efficient and reliable which is a great concern for the company and calls for actions to address the issue.

In order to improve and maintain the levels of customer satisfaction, the company DHL should procure more fleet and in some cases outsource other operational activities to reliable logistics firms in the same sector. This can curb the issues of being unreliable and delays in the delivering of customer consignments and maintains the levels of customer satisfaction to the company.

### **5.3 Areas for further research**

During the process of conducting the research on the contribution of service quality on customer satisfaction, the researcher discovered areas which are beyond the scope of the research that could be researched using the same instruments. The researcher dwelled more on tangibility as a variable of service quality exploring its significance on customer satisfaction. The tangibility alone proved not to suffice on the strategies the company DHL needs to satisfy its customers. The researcher has stated below other service quality variables which needs further research.

- The Effect of Service Responsiveness on customer loyalty/ satisfaction,
- The Impact of Service Assurance on customer Retention/ satisfaction,
- The Influence of Service Empathy on positive word of mouth/ customer satisfaction and,
- The impact of Service Reliability on Customer satisfaction.

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APPENDIX 1: COVER LETTER



Midlands State University  
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*Our Hands, Our Minds, Our Destiny*

FACULTY OF COMMERCE  
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Midlands State University  
Faculty of Commerce  
P Bag 9055  
Gweru

Tel +263542604560/+2635426044664

DHL Express Zimbabwe  
Cnr 4<sup>th</sup>& Central Avenue  
Harare

**RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT DHL EXPRESS**

I am a final year student with the above university studying Bcom Honours Degree in Retail and Logistics Management in partial fulfilment of the requirement of the programme.

I am kindly seeking for permission to use your company DHL Express Zimbabwe as a case study on the topic **“Exploring the significance of service quality on customer satisfaction”**. The information obtained from this research study will be strictly for academic purposes and will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

I am looking forward to your favorable response

Best Regards

Talent Mamhunze.

Registration No. **R147202J**

Approved/Not Approved.....

For and on behalf of DHL Express Zimbabwe      Name.....

Signature.....      Designation.....

Date.....

## APPENDIX 2A: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR CUSTOMERS



**Midlands State University**  
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### Questionnaire for Customers

This research questionnaire has been prepared by a final year student studying Retail and Logistics Management at Midlands State University. In partial fulfillment of the program each student is required to conduct a research/dissertation of his/her choice. **The research topic is, ‘Exploring the significance of service quality on customer satisfaction’**. I kindly request that you assist by participating in this questionnaire. Thank you very much for taking your time to help the researcher to learn about your experiences with DHL Express.

#### Instructions

Please **do not write your name** as participants are meant to be anonymous. All information will be kept confidential. Any concerns can be communicated to Talent Mamhunze on his contact details +263713488531/ +263783054545.

Thank you for your time.

### Section A: Contribution of packaging on customer satisfaction

Using the scale of agreement (5 being strongly agree, 4 being agree, 3 being neutral, 2 being disagree, 1 being strongly disagree), kindly indicate by ticking one box from the boxes provided for each number, the level to which you agree that, ‘packaging contributes positively on customer satisfaction within the DHL Express company’.

	BEHAVIOUR	1	2	3	4	5
1	The consignments are well packaged and delivered in good quality					
2	Packaging has detailed information which explains the use, features and the contents of the parcel.					
3	The packaging is safe, secure, environmentally friendly and reusable.					
4	The packaging is convenient in handing due to its size, shape and quantity					
5	Overall, you are satisfied with the quality of packaging services provided by DHL					

### Section B: Influence of personnel on customer satisfaction

Using the scale of agreement (5 being strongly agree, 4 being agree, 3 being neutral, 2 being disagree, 1 being strongly disagree), kindly indicate by ticking one box from the boxes provided for each number, the level to which you agree that, ‘personnel influence positively on customer satisfaction within the DHL Express company’.

	BEHAVIOUR	1	2	3	4	5
1	Motivated employees with excellent customer service level, quick and reliable					
2	Provide professional welcome to all customers and visitors, presenting a positive impression of themselves and the organization					
3	Customer queries are brought to a satisfactory conclusion					
4	Excellent attitude and appearance					
5	Employees provide great service quality to customers					



### Section C: Significance of equipment on customer satisfaction

Using the scale of agreement (5 being strongly agree, 4 being agree, 3 being neutral, 2 being disagree, 1 being strongly disagree), kindly indicate by ticking one box from the boxes provided for each number, the level to which you agree that, “ DHL equipment influence positively on customer satisfaction.”

	BEHAVIOUR	1	2	3	4	5
1	Halls, floors and indoor air quality conditions in the work offices are satisfactory					
2	The company warehouse material handling equipment (e.g. Forklifts and pallets) saves time in the collection of parcels					
3	Parcels are delivered in good conditions after being preserved and kept safe in the cold room and or bonded warehouse.					
4	The company provides reliable deliveries as per customer requirement and maintains the quality of parcels from their origin to finally reach the customer.					
5	The shipment tracking system is efficient, reliable and effective as customers can track parcel movement on their own using DHL website.					

*Thank you for your cooperation and sympathetic consideration.*

## APPENDIX 2B: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR EMPLOYEES



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### Questionnaire for Employees

This research questionnaire has been prepared by a final year student studying Retail and Logistics Management at Midlands State University. In partial fulfillment of the program each student is required to conduct a research/dissertation of his/her choice. **The research topic is Exploring the significance of service quality on customer satisfaction.** I kindly request that you assist by participating in this questionnaire. Thank you very much for taking your time to help the researcher to learn about your experiences with DHL Express.

#### **Instructions**

Please **do not write your name** as participants are meant to be anonymous. All information will be kept confidential. Any concerns can be communicated to Talent Mamhunze on his contact details +263713488531/ +263783054545.

Thank you for your time.

### Section A: Contribution of packaging on customer satisfaction

Using the scale of agreement (5 being strongly agree, 4 being agree, 3 being neutral, 2 being disagree, 1 being strongly disagree), kindly indicate by ticking one box from the boxes provided for each number, the level to which you agree that, ‘‘packaging contributes positively to customer satisfaction within the DHL Express company’’.

	BEHAVIOUR	1	2	3	4	5
1	The package contain the product adequately and provide the optimum protection for the content throughout the distribution and shelf life.					
2	The packaging is effectively labelled and communicates detailed information about the consignment or product.					
3	The packaging is environmentally friendly and re-usable					
4	The packaged consignment is readily accessible and can be easily handled.					
5	The packaging is unique, original and highly attractive					

### Section B: Influence of personnel on customer satisfaction

Using the scale of agreement (5 being strongly agree, 4 being agree, 3 being neutral, 2 being disagree, 1 being strongly disagree), kindly indicate by ticking one box from the boxes provided for each number, the level to which you agree that, ‘‘personnel influence positively to customer satisfaction within the DHL Express company’’.

#### (i) *Job Satisfaction*

	BEHAVIOUR	1	2	3	4	5
1	The working conditions are conducive and the job itself satisfactory for employees					
2	Employees perform in their right positions and have an opportunity to participate in the goal setting process.					

*(ii) Employee training*

	BEHAVIOUR	1	2	3	4	5
3	I receive the training I need to do my job well and the management supports my professional development and advancement.					
4	In this organization there is morale and we are competent to maintain very high standards of quality and satisfy customers' needs and wants.					

*(iii) Employee engagement*

	BEHAVIOUR	1	2	3	4	5
5	I understand how my work directly contributes to the overall success of the organization.					

**Section C: Significance of equipment on customer satisfaction**

Using the scale of agreement (5 being strongly agree, 4 being agree, 3 being neutral, 2 being disagree, 1 being strongly disagree), kindly indicate by ticking one box from the boxes provided for each number, the level to which you agree that, "equipment influence positively on customer satisfaction within the DHL Express company".

	BEHAVIOUR	1	2	3	4	5
1	The company maintains its warehouse and offices to preserve quality of its products and the health of its employees					
2	The company has warehouse material handling equipment (e.g. Fork lifts and pallets) which saves time in the clearance process for customers.					
2	The company has more fleet of transportation vehicles to ensure reliable deliveries of parcels in good condition.					
3	The company fleet is compatible and regularly serviced for efficiency in the transportation of consignments from origin to the final stakeholder.					
5	The tracking and information systems eases the work and contribute to customer satisfaction through efficiency					

*Thank you for your cooperation and sympathetic consideration.*

## APPENDIX 3: INTERVIEW GUIDE



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### Interview Guide: Management

#### Research Interview Guide for Management

My name is Talent Mamhunze, a final year student studying Retail and Logistics Management at Midlands State University. In partial fulfillment of the program each student is required to conduct a research/dissertation of his/her choice. **The research topic is, ‘Exploring the significance of service quality on customer satisfaction’.** I kindly request that you assist by participating in this interview. Thank you very much for taking your time to help the researcher to learn about your experiences with DHL Express.



**Interview Guide:**

1. Are there any innovations that have been taken to improve the packaging facility?
2. Does DHL packaging of parcels contribute to competitive advantage in the market?
3. How do you know that employees are providing good service to customers?
4. Does training and engagement alone improve competence of employees on the job?  
Explain.
5. How effective is the tracking systems to customers?

*Thank you for your cooperation and sympathetic consideration.*