



**Development of a Service Delivery Framework for South African Pilgrims  
Travelling to Saudi Arabia**

**By**

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## DECLARATION

I, Nizaam Peck, declare that the contents of this thesis represent my own unaided work, and that the dissertation/thesis has not previously been submitted for academic examination towards any qualification. Furthermore, it represents my own opinions and not necessarily those of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology.

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**Date**

## ABSTRACT

### **The Development of a Service Delivery Framework for South African Pilgrims Travelling to Saudi Arabia.**

This thesis is concerned with the service delivery received by pilgrims based in South Africa, especially with regards to services and amenities that were paid for and promised in the contract, but which may not have materialized. The focus on Hajj travelling can be viewed as an aspect of religious tourism (so to speak). Currently there is a dearth of research on this particular spiritual journey in South Africa. For this reason, this research aims to elucidate the service delivery components, processes and challenges.

The researcher finds it necessary to research this topic because pilgrimage constitutes part of religious tourism and the policies governing the Hajj industry, as well as the operational aspects of the Hajj industry are unclear. Problems such as poor service standards, lack of business ethics and malpractice exist in the Hajj industry.

The main challenges in the South African Hajj industry are:

- a) Lack of mainstream travel and tourism practices in the South African Hajj industry.
- b) Absence of a service and quality driven industry.
- c) Difficulty in acquisition of travel documentation for pilgrims.
- d) Lack of business ethics and malpractice by service providers.
- e) Limitations on travel through the newly introduced quota system by the Hajj Ministry of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA).

In 1994 the South African Government formed the South African Hajj and Umrah Council, (SAHUC) and is a nationally based constituted organisation. This organisation is officially recognised by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as the official structure responsible and accountable for facilitating the affairs of the South African pilgrims within South Africa and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (SAHUC, 2005).

The researcher intends on addressing the above-mentioned challenges through developing a service delivery framework that will help alleviate the problems in the industry between South African Hajj role players. The framework is aimed at identifying current gaps between supply and demand in the Hajj industry as well as providing recommendations for the future.

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- The Cape Peninsula University of Technology for the research scholarship, which made this research possible. Opinions expressed in this thesis and the conclusions arrived at, are those of the author, and are not necessarily to be attributed to the Cape Peninsula University of Technology.

## **DEDICATION**

The research is dedicated to all pilgrims who will undertake the holy journey to Mecca as guests of Allah, the Most Gracious the Most Merciful.

I would also like to dedicate my work to the two men who shaped my life, my late father Mr. Mogamad Magdi Peck and my late stepfather Mr. Jamalodien Salie.

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## TERMS AND CONCEPTS

Allah	Also God, known as the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful (Ali, 1989:14).
Day of Arafat	The day also referred to as the Standing Ritual. Arafat is a holy site where the most important ritual that constitutes the Hajj is performed. The pilgrims stand on the planes of Arafat and ask for forgiveness from Allah the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. If a pilgrim, misses the day of Arafat then the Hajj is forfeited (Fakier, 2010:279-280).
DFA	South African department of Foreign Affairs
Hajj agent	The umbrella term that the researcher uses to refer to both Hajj tour operators and Hajj travel agents.
Hajj Ministry	The Saudi Arabian government department responsible for Hajj affairs.
Hajj	Is a pilgrimage to the holy mosques in the cities of Mecca and Medina, and constitutes one of the five pillars of Islam. It is obligatory for every able Muslim who can afford it, to perform it once in his/her lifetime. It can only be performed during a specific period of the last month of the Islamic Lunar calendar known as Thul Hijja (Fakier, 1995:244).
Jamarats	Three stone pillars representing the devils. It forms part of the stoning ritual performed by pilgrims during the five holy days of Hajj (Fakier, 1995:252-253).
KSA	Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Kaba	The sacred house lying at the heart of the holy sanctuary (Al Haram Mosque in Mecca). The building is a large black cubed shape, stone structure consisting of a single room with a marble floor. The Kaba is Islam's holiest shrine (Fakier, 1995:259).
Mahram	Mahram is a male chaperone, specifically a man that a woman cannot wed such as a father, brother or uncle. In Islam, a woman may not travel alone unless she is travelling with a group of other women or with a Mahram (Sallie, 1983: definition and terms).
Mecca	The holiest city in the Islamic world. This city houses the Holy Kaba (black cubed shaped building) and the sacred Al Haram Mosque (Fakier, 2010:100).
Medina	The second holiest city in the Muslim world, it houses Prophet Mohammed's (PBUH), mosque and his grave (Fakier, 2010:341).
Muassasa	It is an organisation that tenders to the Ministry of Hajj for services to be rendered to pilgrims for the period of Hajj. They are the officials that implement the Hajj policies and protocols in Saudi Arabia. The Muassasa are outsourced service providers by the Saudi Arabian Hajj Ministry and normally have a contract of two to three years (KSA Ministry of Hajj, 2006b:2).
PBUH	Is a compulsory suffix Muslims have to pronounce upon saying or hearing the prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) name. It means May Peace and Blessings of Allah Be Upon Him and represents the honoured status Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) received from Allah the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.
SAHUC	South African Hajj and Umrah Council, the Hajj regulatory body in South Africa.

Tawaaf	The seven circumambulations around the Kaba, the sacred mosque in Mecca, KSA (Fakier, 1995:247).
Thul Hijja	The last month of the Islamic lunar calendar and the only month of the year in which Hajj can be performed (Sallie, 1983: definition and terms).
Tour Operator	A business providing a package of tourism-related services for the consumer, including some combination of accommodation, transportation, restaurants and attraction visits (Bayat & Ismail, 2008:184).
Travel agent	A Business providing retail travel services to customers for commission on behalf of other tourism sectors (cf.Bayat and Ismail)
Umrah	A voluntary pilgrimage to the holy mosque in Mecca. It is performed all year, except during the Hajj period. It is normally performed by choice as a visit to the holy land after pilgrims have completed the obligatory once in a lifetime pilgrimage known as the Hajj (Fakier, 2010:169-175).
Zamzam	Holy water from the Holy well of Zamzam in Mecca, KSA (Kandhalvi, 1997:719).

# CHAPTER ONE

## ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

### 1.0 Introduction

This thesis is concerned with the service delivery received by pilgrims based in South Africa, especially with regards to services and amenities that were paid for and promised in the contract, but which may not have materialised. The focus on Hajj travelling can be viewed as an aspect of religious tourism (so to speak). Currently there is a dearth of research on this particular spiritual journey in South Africa. For this reason, this research aims to elucidate the service delivery components, processes and challenges. In this chapter, a detailed background to the South African Hajj industry is provided. The thesis investigates challenges facing this industry. The focus of the research is indicated by outlining the research objectives as well as research questions. Common terms and concepts which are used in tourism and Hajj will be clarified and a description of the research population is specified.

### 1.1 Background to the research

South Africa is predominantly a Christian-faith country with 80% of its population reportedly ascribing to this religion. The religion of Islam is in second place, but is proportionately much smaller with only 1.5% of South Africans ascribing to this religion (South Africa. Census, 2001). Notably the most recent census (2011) did not indicate differences in religious denominations<sup>1</sup>. There are approximately 654 064 Muslims in South Africa and of the nine provinces, the majority are found in the Western Cape Province, followed by the Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal (Census, 2001).

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<sup>1</sup>In 2008, Stats SA embarked on a series of user consultations, to get advice as to what questions should be asked in the questionnaire. The question on religion was low on the list of priorities as informed by the users of census data, and it therefore did not make it onto the final list of data items. Statistics South Africa <http://www.statssa.gov.za/census2011/faq.asp> [01 October 2013].

Muslims in South Africa and those around the world perform the religious pilgrimage (or “Hajj”) to Mecca each year. The pilgrimage is considered compulsory for those that can afford to pay the cost of the trip. In South Africa, the popularity of the Hajj pilgrimage has increased year by year. Presently the Hajj pilgrimage is a global multi-billion rand industry, which is governed by the host country of Saudi Arabia. The Hajj pilgrimage is managed differently in each country and its service delivery depends on the level of governance and infrastructure in place in the respective countries. During the Hajj period of 2005 an estimated figure of 3 million pilgrims from 183 countries performed the holy journey worldwide (Hajj Ministry, 2013).

### **1.1.2 South Africa’s Hajj Service Delivery**

Service delivery is a widely used term in public management and is defined as the actual implementation of the policies drawn up by government (Pressman & Wildavsky 1973; Parsons 1995; Bridgman & Davis 2004; Weimer & Vining 2004 cited in Alford & O’Flynn, 2012:8). South Africa has Hajj agents who form an integral part of the Hajj service delivery framework. Hajj travel agents (often used interchangeably with Hajj tour operators) arrange flights, accommodations, tours, spiritual leaders, aid with the rituals of Hajj and are in the service of the pilgrim during Hajj. This research refers to both the Hajj travel agents and Hajj tour operators as Hajj agents. Further elaboration as to the use of the umbrella term ‘Hajj agent’ is provided in Chapter Three section 3.6.4.

Prior to embarking on the Hajj, the pilgrim and Hajj agent enter into a binding and exclusive legal contract which specifies roles and responsibilities between both parties prior to and during the Hajj. The contract holds the Hajj agent responsible for delivery of agreements and promises made to the pilgrim in the contract. This research identifies the contractual obligations of Hajj agents in South Africa and measures it against the pilgrims’ responses to service received from the Hajj agents during their pilgrimage.

### **1.1.3 Contextualizing the Hajj in South Africa**

In 1994 the South African government imputed sole authority of all matters regarding the Hajj to the South African Hajj and Umrah Council (henceforth SAHUC). SAHUC was given the mandate to service pilgrims during the Hajj period, other duties included *inter alia*: regulation of Hajj operators, monitoring the industry, liaising directly with the Saudi Arabian Hajj Ministry and providing feedback to the South African government. Importantly, SAHUC was tasked with regulating the South African Hajj industry and is notably the only South African organisation that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) recognises as a Hajj authority outside of Saudi Arabia. This means that SAHUC is responsible for the South African pilgrims' welfare as well as managing service industry. For this reason, this research will identify and elaborate upon the roles of SAHUC, its relationship with KSA, communication between Hajj agents and the evaluation of service delivery experienced by Hajj pilgrims (SAHUC 2005).

### **1.1.4 Challenges facing the Hajj industry**

Since the Hajj season of 2005 the KSA has introduced a quota system for South Africa. This quota regulates the number of pilgrims permitted to enter Saudi Arabia from South Africa. Vast changes in the quota system was a big transition for pilgrims in South Africa as it meant that South African Muslims no longer enjoyed the privilege of sending an unlimited number of pilgrims each year. Instead, the pilgrims number were reduced to 7000 pilgrims per annum and would annually be subjected to further changes dependant on the KSA. This research evaluates how the quota system affected service delivery in the South African Hajj industry (Kemp, 2006).

An integral part of the Hajj service delivery was that Hajj agents were tasked with the responsibility of bringing the pilgrims to the holy land of Mecca, caring for their needs while there and returning them safely home. In order to perform this task the Hajj agents had the multifaceted task of liaising with the KSA, SAHUC, South African Department of Foreign Affairs, airlines, hoteliers, road transport providers and the pilgrims. The role of

the Hajj agents' points to the interdependent nature of the tourism industry as each service was linked to other services, ultimately contributing to a complete holistic tourism offering. The Hajj agents occupy the middle position between the regulator and the client (Salie, 2006). Of interest to this research is the role of the Hajj agents in relation to the Hajj service delivery. Additionally, this research identifies and evaluates the constraints experienced between Hajj agents, SAHUC and the pilgrims.

## **1.2 Research problem**

- a) The research focuses on assessing service delivery issues occurring in the South African Hajj industry and assessing the challenges faced by the Hajj agents. The former is of particular interest as pilgrims may find it difficult to voice their issues with service delivery. The latter is also of particular interest, as the contractual obligation of the Hajj agents may not be clearly defined. In addition, challenges faced by the Hajj agents may also be unclear due to the complex communication channels between the various stakeholders (i.e. SAHUC, KSA, SA Department of Foreign Affairs and other Hajj agents).

The challenges facing this particular service delivery is elaborated further below:

### **1.2.1 Sub problem 1**

This study seeks to establish the service levels from Hajj agents. Currently there is no official vetted report regarding Hajj service in South Africa. This could possible cause underlying problems such as inadequate accommodations and amenities open the door to possible lack of business ethics and continued and progressive poor levels of service delivery. The impacts of such levels of service delivery to pilgrims therefore may result in the pilgrims having negative perceptions towards Hajj agents with little to no recourse.

### **1.2.2 Sub problem 2**

The study aims to investigate the notification procedure in which Hajj agents are notified of official numbers of pilgrims allowed from South Africa for Hajj as well as additional numbers afterwards. In 2005 the official quota of South Africans allowed to travel were reduced to 7000 pilgrims. An even bigger reduction was seen in 2006 Hajj season as this figure was reduced to 2000 pilgrims. The new quota system was further exacerbated by the 9000 pilgrims who registered with SAHUC for the 2006 to 2007 Hajj season. Receiving late notifications may be problematic for SAHUC and Hajj agents and may feature as an important factor in service delivery.

### **1.2.3 Sub problem 3**

Service delivery gaps do occur from the regulatory body SAHUC to Hajj agents and from SAHUC to the pilgrims. SAHUC is obligated to regulate the Hajj agents and to provide a platform for them to service the pilgrims travel needs during the pilgrimage. The study seeks to survey the issue of regulation in the South African Hajj industry. This research is particularly interested in emergent service delivery gaps, which may manifest due to strained relationships between the various stakeholders mentioned above.

## **1.3 Research Objectives**

Having expounded on the status of the Hajj as well as the possible challenges faced by the various stakeholders who make up the service delivery, the objectives of the research are to:

- a) Evaluate service delivery of the Hajj agents' with respect to the 2006 to 2007 pilgrimage undertaken by pilgrims.
- b) To identify constraints affecting the Hajj agents of South Africa.
- c) Quantitatively measure the responses of pilgrims regarding their personal view of service delivery.



## **1.4 Research Questions**

Bearing in mind the complexity of the Hajj service, the following research questions are addressed in the research:

- a) What are the levels of service delivery experienced by the pilgrims?
- b) What are the constraints facing the Hajj agents?
- c) How effective is the quota system that is administered by the Hajj Ministry of Saudi Arabia and implemented by SAHUC?

## **1.5 Significance of the research**

Formal academic research related to Hajj in South Africa is sparse. In 2007, two academic theses were completed by Ebrahim (2007) and Hendricks (2007), respectfully. Hendricks (2007: abstract) focused on the performance and governance of SAHUC specifically as a regulator while Ebrahim (2007: abstract) focused on the transformation of the management of Hajj and Hajj traditions in the Cape. These studies underpin the need for academic enquiry relating to the development of a service delivery framework for South Africa pilgrims travelling to Saudi Arabia.

Recommendations emerging from this research will be significant for the overall function of SAHUC, Hajj agents and future pilgrims. The research will draw on SERVQUAL model to analyse the service delivery system as a foundation to uncover the levels of service quality as well as identify service delivery gaps in the South African Hajj industry. The major service delivery problem areas will be highlighted and recommendations will be made to improve these problem areas.

The pilgrims' decision process to travel on the holy journey is explained through Schmoll's decision-making model. Bennett (2000:90) points out that the model emphasises many of the aspects that influence the decision process and tourism demand in general. The SERVQUAL model explains how customers evaluate service quality through five gaps which may occur during the service delivery process (Bennett,

2000:233). The SERVQUAL model uncovers gaps in service delivery where service quality can become compromised and is used by managers in the tourism industry to try to close these service quality gaps.

*“The service delivery system captures the people, elements and process involved in delivering services”* (Bennett, 2000:300). This research draws on the Schmoll model, the SERVQUAL model and the service delivery system to develop a service delivery framework for South African pilgrims travelling to Saudi Arabia. These models are used to address the constraints experienced by Hajj agents as well as potentially poor service delivery issues experienced by pilgrims.

Qualitative and quantitative research methodologies will be used to improve on the research problems. Constraints in the South African Hajj industry is verified through interviewing Hajj agents and their recommendations are noted and included at the end of the research to possibly aid and improve the South African Hajj industry.

Significance of the research with regard to contractual obligations between pilgrim and Hajj agent is that the role players will become more informed about their role and responsibilities with regard to their clients-the pilgrims. The research will also show if the contractual obligations between pilgrims and Hajj agent have been implemented and if there is recourse for pilgrims.

## **1.6 Delineation of the research**

Pilgrims who had performed their Hajj in 2006 to 2007 had been selected for the research. As pilgrims arrived at O.R. Tambo International Airport after pilgrimage, these pilgrims were randomly targeted to answer the questionnaires. Furthermore, the Western Cape, Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal Provinces were selected when conducting interviews with the Hajj agents who service the South African Hajj Industry. In 2006 there were 41 Hajj agents servicing South Africa’s pilgrims of which the researcher interviewed 19 Hajj agents originating from the three aforementioned provinces. Only the Hajj agents who were certified by the regulator in 2006 were selected to form part of the research.

## **1.7 Research Methodology**

This research utilises a largely quantitative approach, supplemented by key informant interviews and focus group discussions. The quantitative approach materialised in the form of questionnaires while the qualitative perspective was drawn from one-on-one and group interviews. Bar graphs were used to graphically show questionnaire results, while a thematic analysis of transcribed interviews was used to draw out common threads as well as highlight divergent aspects of the data.

The sample size for the suppliers for the Hajj year 2006 to 2007 was 41 registered Hajj agents in South Africa of which 19 Hajj agents were randomly selected for open schedule interviews. With regards to pilgrim sampling size, Statistics SA 2001 confirms that there are 654 064 Muslims in South Africa. Of this group, a total of 1690 questionnaires were distributed and 326 were completed and returned.

### **1.7.1 Literature Review**

A search of literature was undertaken by the researcher to gain an understanding of the existing literature on the research topic. Research of relevant books, journal articles, government policy, official publications, and newspaper articles published and unpublished material on the internet makes up the literature complement. Within this review, the researcher utilises the Schmoll Decision-Making Model, the SERVQUAL model and the service delivery system as a reference for the thesis.

### **1.7.2 Empirical survey**

A portion of the research methodology and design is quantitative therefore; a questionnaire survey was used as one of the instruments to collect data to answer the research questions.

### **1.7.2.1 Description of research population and target population**

The researcher attempts to discover what challenges Hajj agents encounter as well as ascertain their suggestions to improve the industry. Hajj agents were interviewed after the Hajj Season, during February 2007. The inclusion criteria targeted all 41 registered Hajj agents in South Africa. The researcher wanted to determine how SAHUC could make the South African Hajj industry more efficient by complying with the Hajj Ministry of Saudi Arabia and by being a regulator between industry Hajj agents and pilgrims. Open schedule interviews were held with the Secretary of SAHUC at the Cape Town offices in November 2007 as well as the Secretary General of SAHUC in Johannesburg during January 2008 and the President of SAHUC in Cape Town during November 2007.

The other half of the research was quantitative in nature in the form of an opinion survey questionnaire. The researcher intended to reveal the attitudes, opinions and perspectives of Hajj pilgrims regarding their pilgrimage through evaluating the services rendered by Hajj agents, airlines, SAHUC and the improvement of Hajj preparation for prospective pilgrims.

The researcher attempted to identify pilgrims' needs once the 2006 to 2007 Hajj season had ended, specifically during the first 15 days of January 2007. During this time, when the returning pilgrims had acquired the experience, the researcher was able to gauge if the travel companies' promises were kept through conducting questionnaire surveys. During 2006 to 2007, 5000 South African pilgrims performed Hajj and 41 Hajj agents serviced the pilgrims. In this study, a total of 326 pilgrims and 19 Hajj agents participated in this study. Questionnaires were circulated to pilgrims who were involved in the 2006 to 2007 Hajj season only. Only South African pilgrims were the focus of this research. Male and female respondents were targeted with a minimum age of 18 years old. Hajj agents who serviced the South African Hajj industry during 2006 to 2007 were selected for this research. The Hajj agents from the Western Cape, Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal Provinces were randomly selected and interviewed.

### **1.7.3 Interpretation of results**

Findings from the interviews and questionnaires are interpreted and described in Chapter Five. They are derived from the following sources:

- a) Interviews with different role players within the industry, Hajj agents, SAHUC and registered Hajj organisations.
- b) Questionnaires administered to pilgrims upon arrival from Saudi Arabia.

### **1.7.4 Structure of the thesis**

Chapter One is the introductory chapter which foregrounds the notion of the Hajj pilgrimage as an important part of tourism industry in South Africa. It defines service delivery broadly and complexifies the Hajj pilgrimage as an under-researched aspect of Muslim quotidian life. The research problems, aims, methodology and significance are provided here.

Chapter Two provides an overview the three models used in the research namely: the Schmoll model, the SERVQUAL model and the service delivery system. This chapter will be identifying which model would be suitable for the research. A summary of the pilgrims' steps and planning before going on Hajj is highlighted and pilgrims' decision-making process is compared to Schmoll's decision-making model in tourism. A summary of SAHUC's stipulations for pilgrims embarking on Hajj is presented and factors which may prevent prospective pilgrims from performing the pilgrimage are considered.

Chapter Three illustrates the roles and challengers of stakeholders in the South African Hajj industry, specifically: the Hajj Ministry of Saudi Arabia, the South African Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), the South African Hajj and Umrah Council and Hajj agents. The chapter also explains problems that were experienced by SAHUC during the Hajj season of 2006 to 2007. The latter part of this chapter gives the reader an

overview of each role players' functions and difficulties and how all role players fit into the Hajj service delivery framework of South Africa.

Chapter Four is the methodology chapter and begins by differentiating between the qualitative and quantitative research methodology employed in the research. Sampling methods are provided and sampling criteria for the pilgrims, Hajj agents, as well as the regulator, are specified. The data collection instrument is a questionnaire and is presented as an Appendix. The questionnaire's structure is elaborated here. Additionally, the method of data analysis is explained, while limitations of the research are also listed to shed light on the challenges faced by the researcher when conducting the research.

Chapter Five is the findings chapter and outlines the feedback received from the questionnaires. The chapter displays the results of each question posed in the questionnaire and makes use of tables and graphs to display the statistics graphically. In this chapter, the service levels that the pilgrims experienced will become apparent and from the results, the researcher identifies different needs and wants amongst the pilgrims of the sample population.

Chapter Six is the concluding chapter, which provides summaries of the preceding chapters and proposes recommendations based on findings in Chapter Five. Specific recommendations regarding the role players within the South African Hajj industry including the pilgrims are also provided here.

## **1.8 Summary**

This chapter introduces important aspects of the Hajj, such as: contractual agreements between pilgrims and the Hajj service industry, service delivery between pilgrims and Hajj service industry, the effects of the quota system on service delivery and the constraints experienced by Hajj agents as the key research areas. The research problem and sub problems were identified, followed by the research objectives and research questions. The significance of the research was highlighted followed by the

research methodology and details of the statistical analysis were explained. The chapter mapped out the manner in which the research will be conducted and gives an overview of the chapters to come. The following chapter will focus on a literature review of tourism as a service, the progression of improving tourism through quality approaches, the service delivery system and service quality models.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW (PART ONE)**

#### **2.0 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter outlines literature pertinent to positioning the Hajj industry within the greater Service Delivery Framework of the tourism industry, particularly religious tourism. This chapter will outline dimensions of tourism as a service, the progression of improving tourism through quality approaches as well as the various organisations involved in steering tourism to continuous improvement. The service quality model (henceforth SERVQUAL model) will be discussed in relation to improved service quality. In this regard, the history of service delivery will also be outlined and a link between service delivery, tourism and globalisation will be established further. The pilgrims' methodology of embarking on the holy journey is reviewed and linked to tourism theory regarding Schmol's model for consumer buying behaviour.

#### **2.1 Tourism as a Service**

The United Nations World Tourism Organisation (henceforth UNWTO) recognised tourism's remarkable growth as the largest industry in the world. UNWTO forecasted that tourism will become the leading business in the future, increasing global international arrivals from 700 million in the year 2000 to 1.6 billion by the year 2020 (Buhalis & Costa, 2006:237).

Unlike many other industries (such as the manufactured goods industry), tourism is a global industry which produces products and services for people. The tourism industry is distinct as the tourism product (i.e. Hajj) is produced and consumed at the same time. In other words, tourism products do not exist until a consumer travels to the point of production (the holiday destination) and actively gets involved in the final phase, which is enjoying the holiday at the holiday destination (Smith, 1994:592). This inherent nature of the tourism product being that a tourist cannot "try on the product" before buying it,



causes it to be a high-risk decision when choosing a holiday destination (Minciu & Moisa, 2009:1009).

Examples of a tourism product are *inter alia* tours, safaris, incentive holiday destinations and religious pilgrimages. The tourism product is essentially made up of many services, which end up becoming a holiday experience for the tourist. Services and the tourism product have the following five characteristics (Bennett 2000; Bennett & Strydom 2001; Inkson & Minnaert 2012: 125):

a) Services are Intangible.

In tourism, one cannot touch, inspect or test drive a holiday. The tourism product being the holiday will be consumed when it is produced. One will experience the Muslim pilgrimage when in the city of Mecca in Saudi Arabia but not while inspecting the pictures on a brochure. In recent times, tourists have made considerable effort to research a holiday destination before visiting, in order to minimise possible disappointment. These efforts may include viewing videos and blogs of people who have been to the destination before or the use of websites such as Trip Advisor where travellers honestly express their holiday experience for those who are planning to visit the destination.

b) Services are Inseparable.

In the case of an automobile, it is produced in one country and sold in another and consumption of the product takes place after production. This is impossible in services, as a service cannot be separated from the owner. In an accommodation environment, a hotel guest cannot experience check-in service if the front office staff is not available nor can the front office staff render a service if there is no guest.

c) Ownership is not transferred.

The tourist has a right to use the service for a given time but does not own it. In the accommodation industry, the guest paid the fee for the night and has a right to sleep over for the night but he does not own the room or the hotel.

d) Services are heterogeneous.

Services are performed through people and people do not perform the exact same service every time. Factors such as time of day, mood of employee, day of the week or the customer involved can affect the way a service is delivered.

e) Perishability of a service.

A service is produced when it is consumed therefore it cannot be stored like tangible products. Similarly if it is not sold in a given time frame the revenue is lost and cannot be recovered, for a example if a hotel ended the day with thirty rooms empty then the money for those rooms for that business day is lost (Bennett, 2000; Bennett & Strydom, 2001:5). Middleton (1989) shows services occurring during the production of the tourism product could be viewed either in isolation or holistically and point to two stages. The first stage occurs when tourists partake in a particular service which is a distinct product offered by a single business such as a flight to Amsterdam on KLM Airlines. In the second stage, the tourism product is viewed from a 'total' perspective which implies not only the flight to Amsterdam but the entire holiday to Amsterdam from moment the tourists left their home until they returned. The 'total' stage is commonly referred to when discussing the tourism product (Middleton 1989, cited in Smith, 1994:584).

## **2.2 Dimensions of Service**

The tourism product as outlined previously comprise of many services, which forms the tourist's holiday experience. This sector will clarify the concept as well as the dimensions of services, which influences tourists' behaviour. Ali and Howaidee (2012:167) explain that services are found at a destination or are linked to it and make it possible for tourists to stay and explore a destination. Some of the services one may find at a tourism destination are: bars, cafes, fast foods through to luxury restaurants, taxis, car rental, ski schools, golf clubs, travel agents, camping supplies and information services.

The customer has a role to play in the production of these services and as Zins (1998:2886) points out, in some cases the participation of customers are low and only their presence is required, (such as eating at a fast food restaurant). In other production of services, the customer participation is moderate such as a haircut and in other services one will find a high level of involvement because the customer co-creates the service with the service provider, such as weight reduction programme (Zins, 1998:2886).

Therefore information about the products and services available at a tourism destination is of the most influential factors when a tourist is considering a potential holiday destination (Molina, Gomez & Consuegra, 2010:723). Minciu and Moisa (2009:1014) agrees and elaborates that searching for information regarding a holiday destination forms a crucial step in the decision-making process which will eventually lead potential travel demand into actual travel demand.

Once the tourist has actually embarked on the travel, there are five dimensions or factors which consumers consider when evaluating services (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1988 cited in Urdang & Howey, 2001: 536). These dimensions are:

- a) Tangibles. The condition of the facility where service is performed e.g. whether the equipment up to date and the appearance of employees should match the type of service provided.
- b) Reliability. The service provider must deliver the promised services, which were agreed upon dependably.
- c) Responsiveness. The eagerness to serve customers and to provide service without delay.

- d) Assurance. The employees should have a respectful demeanour and display a sound knowledge of the service being offered and should come across as a trustworthy, confident person.
- e) Empathy. The organisation should display care towards its customers through its employees and its customer service policies (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1988 cited in Urdang & Howey, 2001: 536).

With reference to these five dimensions, which consumers consider when evaluating services, Smith (1994:589) shows how service and hospitality are linked and is sometimes very difficult to differentiate. He uses the accommodation sector to differentiate between these two overlapping concepts. While the prompt and efficient check-in service of the front office staff would be an example of good service, hospitality is evident through subtle nuances such as a smile during performing the service and genuine warmth and concern for the guest (Smith, 1994:589).

In order for guests to feel cared for and satisfied with services, Minciu and Moisa (2009:1009) advise tourism service providers to bear in mind and approach the demand for tourism services as a consumption process, which each tourist experience differently due to personal attributes such as time constraints, financial availability, desires, perceptions and attitudes. Ignoring these factors may lead a destination to having a bad reputation concerning service culture (Tribe & Snaith, 1998:27-28).

The importance of services in tourism is highlighted in a model designed by researchers' Mathienson and Wall in 1982, which show the elements that influence a tourists' behaviour and their decision to travel (Mathienson & Wall, 1982 cited in Minciu & Moisa, 2009:1014). This model proposed four elements, which overlap each other and indirectly highlights the importance of services as two of the four elements are linked to services, namely:

- a) The mental image the tourist has of a destination and the provided services – Some people may perceive a country like Rwanda with an image of a war-torn

country and may not imagine that there may be resorts, restaurants and taxi services.

- b) The features of the touristic services at the destination – This refers to certain tourist services and facilities such as: tourist information facilities, tax refund centres, taxis and tour services. This also pertains to the quality of these features e.g. considering whether taxis are private or sharing or whether there are options of exclusive tours instead of group tours (Mathienson & Wall, 1982 cited in Minciu & Moisa, 2009:1014).

The above points are two elements, which influence potential tourists' behaviour before they decide on which holiday destination to choose. Zins (1998:2886-2887) views tourism offerings at the holiday destination as being both restrictive and non-restrictive services, as she is of the opinion that tourism offerings are mostly complex service bundles which are packed together. In some cases, it gives the potential travellers limited options of the exact travel choice they wanted and in other cases the tourism offering gives the potential travellers complete freedom to make their own arrangements. A typical example would be a seven day packaged tour to Cape Town and on the seventh day, the travellers have a day of leisure to undertake a leisurely day off or explore on their own.

## **2.3 Quality in Tourism**

Quality is important in any industry as it ensures value for money for products and services bought. In tourism, quality is hard to prove, as the tourism product is intangible. UNWTO is responsible for promoting and developing policy regarding quality in tourism globally.

### **2.3.1 UNWTO and their role in promoting quality in Tourism**

According to the UNWTO, quality in tourism is defined as:

*“...the result of a process which implies the satisfaction of all the legitimate product and service needs, requirements and expectations of the consumer, at an acceptable price,*

*in conformity with the underlying quality determinants such as safety and security, hygiene, accessibility, transparency, authenticity and harmony of the tourism activity concerned with its human and natural environment” (Fitzsimmons & Fitzsimmons 2001, cited in Eraqi, 2006:476).*

The UNWTO is an agency of the United Nations with a membership of 161 countries and 370 affiliate members who represent the private sector, tourism associations, local tourism authorities and educational bodies (Inkson & Minnaert, 2012:323-324). The UNWTO has been playing a major role in creating quality awareness in the public and private sectors in order to protect the customer and improve the overall quality in tourism since its creation in 1923 (Augustyn, 1998:145). Other than focusing on quality in tourism, the UNWTO plays a major role achieving global tourism goals such as poverty alleviation through offering strategic guidance to the global tourism industry (Tribe, 2010:17). Some of the recent steps taken to achieve overall quality in tourism are:

- a) In 1980 the WTO adopted the Manila declaration which forms the basis for many tourism strategies and policies of the past.
- b) In 1985 the WTO adopted the Tourism Bill of Rights and Tourism Code and undertook a study on state measures to ensure quality of tourism services.
- c) In 1998 the WTO published a manual on quality control of tourism products and services.
- d) In 1991 the WTO adopted recommended measures for safety in tourism.
- e) In 1993 the WTO published policy guidelines on health-originated information.
- f) In 1995 a quality support committee was formed whose task it was to develop a framework for providing quality tourism services (WTO1985a, WTO 1980, WTO 1985b, WTO 1985a, WTO 1988, WTO 1991, WTO 1993, WTO 1995, cited in Augustyn, 1998:145).

These policies have led to standards being set and promoted globally in the tourism industry. According to Eraqi (2006:477-478) the UNWTO has created six tourism quality standards in 2003 for a tourism product or service which should be considered when a tourism business or destination management is planning to design or market a tourism product. The six standards are explained below:

- a) Safety and security. A tourism offering should not be a danger to one's life even if it is under the category of adventure tourism, the law relating to safety standards and protocols should still be followed.
- b) Hygiene. This refers to the quality to the service offered, whether it is a meal being served or a room for the night. It is important that cleanliness and hygiene is not only associated with luxurious accommodations and restaurants but across all levels of the service sectors in tourism.
- c) Accessibility. It is important that mainstream tourism offerings be available for all people without discrimination including people with disabilities.
- d) Transparency. It is important for tourism service operators to communicate clearly and truthfully on what is included, excluded and the total price in the tour products and services offered. These factors will guide the consumers' expectations and provides them with consumer protection should the service provider slip-up in the contract.
- e) Authenticity. It is culturally determined, tourists' expectations of a product or service must be met, and a product or service becomes less authentic when it does not resemble the culture it is portraying. For example if the tribal Zulu cultural dances are performed in suits and sunglasses instead of the traditional Leopard and Springbok skins. It would not be appropriate, and would make the experience less authentic.

- f) Harmony. The tourism offering has to be in harmony with the people and the environment that surrounds it and is linked to the concept of sustainability (WTO 2003, cited in Eraqi, 2006:477-478).

These standards have the best interests of tourists in mind, of the locals affected by the tourism as their communities become attractions as well as sustainability of the natural environment as the production of tourism unfolds.

### **2.3.1.1 Significance of Quality in Tourism**

The tourism industry has been growing rapidly, and because of that, quality in tourism has become one of the future global issues (Augustyn, 1998:145). For a business to stay profitable and survive in this global business environment, Eraqi (2006:471) encourages business to consider the benefits of quality of service, as it attracts new consumers and aids in keeping existing consumers which creates a higher profit contribution and if an organisation maintains this status then value and frequency of purchase will increase.

Augustyn (1998:146-147) explains how some countries such as the UK, Denmark and Norway have taken quality of service seriously by adopting and implementing a national and regional tourism quality system. He explains that on a national level the tourism quality systems have been developed by government departments who are responsible for tourism in co-operation with the national and regional tourism organisations and the private sector. It is then implemented within the boundaries of a particular country through regional and public tourism bodies and individual private sector tourism enterprises (Augustyn, 1998:148). The outcome would be a shift in tourism quality over both national and regional levels for these countries, which would give them the competitive advantage over their neighbours.

As a result, quality has become a key element in the competitiveness of the tourism industry due the fact that the tourism sector cannot only compete based on cost alone as clients demand more value for money without minimising the quality (Eraqi,



2006:471). Weiermair and Fuchs (1999:1007) argues that tourists can only make quality assessments of a tourism offering especially those linked to satisfaction, once they have considered price or the value of all the costs in acquiring this quality.

Hasan and Zakaria (2009:8-9) is of the opinion that in most cases service quality only happens at the point of service delivery, normally in a form of interaction between the customer and contact staff of the organisation. Therefore, they motivate that service quality is greatly reliant on the performance of employees. Relating to services offered in the tourism sector, Eraqi (2006:477) points out that one good act of quality service does not suffice to change tourism product quality perception; he adds that an excellent service may cause a consumer to overlook the shortcomings experienced elsewhere in the tourism offering. Regarding the Hajj agents, service quality may vacillate during the servicing of pilgrims while in South Africa as opposed to their six-week pilgrimage in the KSA. Service quality may be viewed as a challenge to establish and maintain. This means that pilgrims may feel that the quality service level vacillates throughout the six-week pilgrimage.

For Augustyn (1998:146-147) the tourism offering may be compromised when the quality service level is misinterpreted by different enterprises relating to the overall tour product. He explains that a bed and breakfast would spend huge amounts of money on upgrading the “quality” standards through upgrading facilities such adding en-suite rooms and flat screen televisions instead of satisfying the real customer needs such as hospitable behaviour. He recognises that the physical part of the tourism product is important, but emphasise that the human component forms the core of perceived quality of the service offered, as it is the critical success factor. These sentiments are quite relevant to the Hajj industry where Hajj agents may have on average fifty pilgrims to one staff member. Many times the staff members does not have training in customer care or have previous experience in service excellence and provide a service that the pilgrims are not satisfied with and reflects poorly on the Hajj travel agency.

### **2.3.1.2 Total Quality Management (TQM)**

Total Quality Management (TQM) is the present state of the evolution of quality control over time in various industries and has been applied to tourism. Below is a brief overview of the conceptualisation of TQM to its present application. In the past traditional standards for quality were born out of manufacturing industries, wherein operational management benchmarked the level of standards for other industries (Eraqi, 2006:471).

Later the quality standards were steered by customer-focused notions and presently the concept of quality management started to be considered as an overall process involving not only the employee who is delivering the service but everybody in the organisation from top management to the junior staff (Eraqi, 2006:471). Augustyn (1998:148) elucidates how quality management theory has evolved in the past from quality control, to quality assurance to the present state, total quality management (TQM). Eraqi (2006:470-471) agrees and adds total quality management is the concept of improving the quality of tourism services in a total manner. Researchers in the industry have rated TQM as the best possible strategy for building a competitive advantage through customer satisfaction (Grocock, 1986; Wilson *et al.*, 1995, cited in Augustyn, 1998:149).

The philosophy of total quality management looks at building quality into the production of a product or service, the fitness of the final products and services as well as the need to have quality consciousness in the organisation during the production and delivery process (Eraqi, 2006:470). Augustyn (1998:148) agrees and views TQM as the highest level of quality management and surpasses previous quality management. He declares this opinion because TQM views inspecting, controlling and assurance of quality to achieve customer satisfaction as insufficient, if the application of quality management is not present at every branch and at every level of the organisation. The concept of TQM has become the interest of various governments with the hope of tackling their service delivery issues with a fresh approach

The benefits of TQM are the minimisation of errors and continuous improvement in an organisation, which lead to a thrilled customer, and in contrast, if an organisation has no form of quality management it will lead to gradual decrease in sales of the tourism products being offered (Augustyn, 1998:148). Eraqi (2006:479-481) agrees and specifies that the benefits of TQM will only appear if it is applied the right way and he further cautions that businesses must have a clear understanding of their aims and objectives before implementing a quality management system.

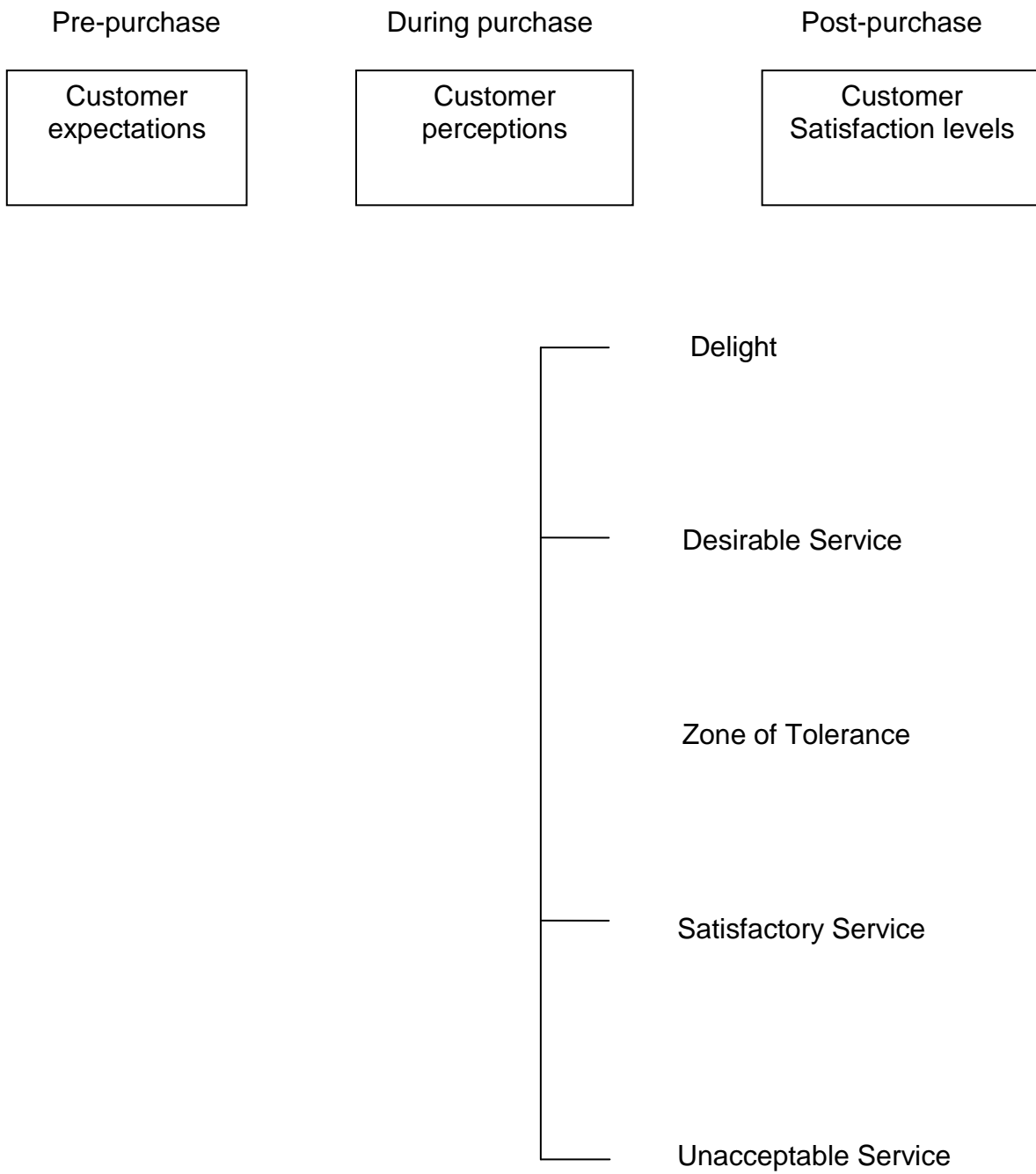
Augustyn (1998:156) concludes that TQM is no 'quick fix' solution to be used to gain a competitive advantage; rather TQM involves building quality into producing tourism services and takes several years of constant effort to change the culture of the existing quality system (Castle, 1996 cited in Augustyn, 1998:156).

### **2.3.2 Service Quality in Tourism**

Literatures on service quality abound with diverse perspectives from various researchers discussing service quality in tourism.

*"Quality is the perception by the tourist of the extent to which his expectations are met by his experience of the product"* (Eraqi, 2006:481).

Service quality is defined as a general attitude towards a service or a general feeling of greatness or inadequacy of the services offered and the service provider producing the services (Bitner & Hubert 1994, cited in Gonzalez, Comesana & Brea 2007:154). Donaldson and Runciman 1995, cited in Hasan and Zakaria (2009:2) agree and add that it is the judgement of how well the delivered service level, match consumer expectations.



**Figure 2.1: Zone of Tolerance Theory**

(Williams & Buswell, 2003:63)

Mukherjee and Nath (2005:175) are of the opinion that consumers see service quality through the margin of error that they are willing to accept for a particular service, calling it the zone of tolerance, as depicted in Figure 2.1. This means that the service provider should always try to deliver the services as close as possible to the desired level of service that will delight the consumers as indicated in Figure 2.1. On the other hand, when the service provider delivers a service, which is close to the adequate level or below then the consumer's perception of quality of the service, will become negative and dissatisfied. With regard to the six-week pilgrimage to Mecca known as the Hajj it is important for the Hajj agents who are the pilgrims' service providers to determine which parts of the journey are most stressful on the pilgrims and then focus their resources on ensuring that their pilgrims' perception of the service remains positive.

Other scholars see service quality through two perspectives namely: the organisation's perspective and the customer's perspective. In the organisation's perspective, the service organisation has the desire to continue to exist in the business environment as well as trade in a global environment. In the customer's perspective, there is a desire for better service quality (Agus, Baker & Kandampully 2007, cited in Hasan & Zakaria, 2009:9).

While Augustyn (1998) argues that tourists' perception on quality starts from the time they leave their home to embark on the journey to the time they return home. Tourists judge the quality of the complete tourism experience from the start up until returning home (Medlik and Middleton, 1979 cited in Augustyn, 1998:151).

Tourism managers are reminded to be aware that creating an upbeat atmosphere and good overall experience that is satisfying to consumers is part of service quality as well as opposed to simply focusing on products and efficiency (Bitrana & Lojo 1993, cited in Hasan & Zakaria, 2009:1). Regarding the Hajj industry, the Hajj agents' staff who accompanies the group of pilgrims should steer the atmosphere towards the pilgrim's spirituality enabling the pilgrim to achieve the most out of the spiritual journey, instead of focusing on favourable travel arrangements as the centre of the pilgrim's journey.

## 2.4 The SERVQUAL Model

In this research, the SERVQUAL model is drawn upon in a more general sense because it is an instrument to improve service quality in various sectors including tourism. The SERVQUAL model is related to the research problems specifically:

- a) Pilgrims not being satisfied with services delivered by the service providers after contractual obligations are agreed upon.
- b) Constraints experienced by the service providers between themselves and the pilgrims, and the Hajj regulator of the South African Hajj industry.
- c) Service delivery gaps between the Hajj regulatory body, the Hajj service providers and pilgrims.

According to Parasuraman *et al.*, 1985 cited in Williams and Buswell (2003:178-181) the SERVQUAL model was designed for the financial sector and used by financial institutions in USA and thereafter it was used in the service sector. In 1985 Parasuraman *et al.* (1985:166) conducted research on service quality with a test group comprising of 12 focus groups and several executives. The outcome of the research revealed subjects had a similar perception of the service quality with discrepancy between their expected service and the actual service performance. As a result of their findings they developed a conceptual model which portrayed five gaps in the production of services. Shortly thereafter, Parasuraman *et al.* (1988:166) introduced the SERVQUAL model which included 22 items in five dimensions depicting how consumers evaluate services. The five dimensions are: reliability, tangibles, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. These five dimensions are taken into consideration by consumers when evaluating the quality of a service provided and also act as a predictor of the consumers overall satisfaction of the service (Parasuraman *et al.* 1988, cited in Ali & Howaidee, 2012:166).

Results are obtained through the distribution of questionnaires to the customers, operational staff and management of an organisation. The questionnaires contains 22

statements regarding the service delivered or received which needs to be rated on a Likert scale of one to seven. The 22 statements relate to the five dimensions of service.

Within the 22 statements, scores are created from the completed questionnaires with a range of -6 to +6 and by analysing the scores relating to the five dimensions, specific elements of the customer service experience can be examined (Williams & Buswell, 2003:178-179).

Eraqi (2006:481) summarises the SERVQUAL model as an instrument that measures physical and indefinable elements of the service and investigates gaps found in the customer-supplier chain to highlight target areas where quality may be improved. These gaps include the gap between:

- a) Customers' expectations and management's perceptions of customers' expectations.
- b) Management's perceptions of customers' expectations and service quality specifications.
- c) Service quality specifications and service delivery.
- d) Service delivery and external communications to customers.
- e) Customers' expectations and perceived services.

(Parasuraman *et al.*, 1988:23, cited in Eraqi, 2006:481; Augustyn 1998:151).

The SERVQUAL model highlights five possible areas in the production of a service where problems in the quality of the service can occur.

**CUSTOMER**

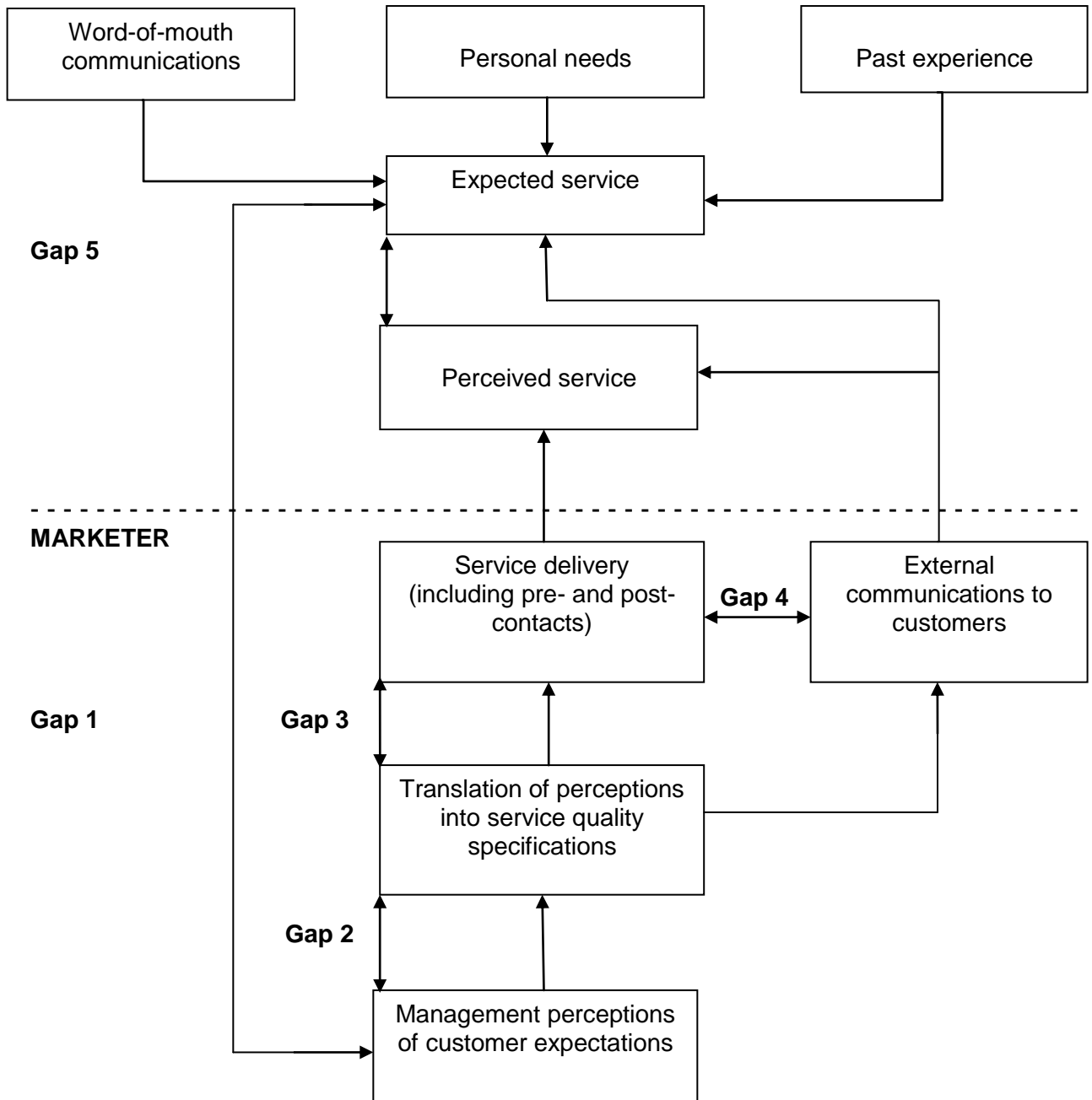


Figure 2.2: The SERVQUAL Model (Bennett, 2000:233)



### **2.4.1 Gap 1: Not understanding customer expectations**

*“Gap 1 occurs when managers do not know or understand their customers’ needs and expectations. The managers cannot design or specify the service that is required, creating gap 2” (Williams & Buswell, 2003:180).*

Bennett (2000:234) agrees and mentions that the three main causes for management not understanding customer expectations in Figure 2.2 are:

- a) Lack of marketing research orientation - The organisation is not attempting to find out what the expectations are of their clientele. If they are conducting surveys to ascertain customer feedback they are not using the research findings adequately and management does not interact with the customers.
- b) Inadequate upward communication – The frontline staff such as hotel reception staff and tour guides notice first hand clients’ needs and frustrations. If there is a lack of communication between frontline staff (or subordinates) and management then they will not obtain crucial feedback that could grant the organisation time to recover the faults.
- c) Too many levels of management – Top heavy management slows down the ability to quickly react and make a decision.

Bennett (2000:235) mentions some of the strategies used to close gap 1 is to have a suggestion box in the hotel, a comments book for tourists to fill in at the end of the tour, or a guest satisfaction questionnaire. The organisation could then try to assess the satisfaction of the clients immediately after the tour or when clients check out of the hotel. Information gained could then encourage managerial action and help them to focus on key performance areas. These suggestions and complaints should be considered and addressed. Bennett (2000:235) also mentions that management levels should be reduced to allow easier adaptation to problem situations and management must create an atmosphere where subordinates feel free to share their experiences with managers.

## 2.4.2 Gap 2: Setting poor service standards

There are four causes for gap 2 in Figure 2.2 and Zeithaml *et al.*, 1990 cited in Williams & Buswell (2003:181) identifies them as:

- a) Management does not commitment to service quality.

Management does not put resources aside to improve quality in the organisation and does not create an atmosphere in the organisation where employees sense that quality of service is important to the business.

- b) Goal Setting is absent.

Service goals are not present in an organisation and management acts on the most convenient action instead of considering the customer's needs.

- c) Insufficient task standardisation.

Certain routines like check in procedures in a hotel or transport inspection in a tour operator's depot need to be followed in a standardised manner to save time and create consistency between employees.

- d) Perception of feasibility.

If managers have the belief that customers' expectations can never be met they will lose customers and business because there will be organisations who will strive to meet customers' expectations and succeed even though challenges such as an economic recession exist.

Bennett (2000:235) mentions some of the strategies to close gap 2 is for management to put resources aside to improve quality in the organisation. This could be done through employee training in service excellence. Top management should also create a vision for service quality in the organisation and create an atmosphere in the organisation where managers have a positive mind-set and employees sense that quality of service is important to the business. Management should also develop specific service quality goals which challenge employees, but is attainable. The goals must be designed to meet the customers' expectations; they must also be specific and accepted by all employees. Importantly, these goals must focus on the important aspects of the service to be improved.

### 2.4.3 Gap 3: Service performance gap

*“Gap 3 is when the service specification has been designed incorrectly thus causing the operational staff to deliver an inaccurate service” (Williams & Buswell, 2003:180).*

Augustyn (1998:152) mentions that there is a need for quality control at every stage of the tourism product delivery and it is difficult for an individual tourism organisation to command actual control over the process. It is in this area that a discrepancy occur giving rise to gap 3 in Figure 2.2. Bennett (2000:238-240) agrees and mentions that the main causes for the service performance gap are:

a) Role ambiguity.

The employee is not trained for the job and does not know what the customer expects from him.

b) Role conflict.

When an employee fulfils two roles which oppose each other, such as: focusing on checking in guests as quickly as possible (to avoid growing queues), as well as being required to give individual attention to all guests.

c) Poor employee job fit.

When an employee's personality is not suitable for the position held such as an introverted shy person as a tour guide.

d) Poor employee technology job fit.

It becomes difficult for employees to deliver a high level of service when they are not equipped with necessary tools such as computers and a reservation system. If the employee is not proficient in using tools and software it further slows down service levels.

e) Inappropriate supervisory control systems.

Employees performance are based on quantity of guests checked in or number of air tickets sold and the customer's perception of the quality of service is not considered.

f) Lack of perceived control.

It occurs when an employee is overloaded with work in a given situation and experiences stress and feelings of helplessness. This could occur when there is insufficient staff to share the workload or a process. In this situation, employees' productivity would be slow, as in the case where over-encumbered employee has to obtain authorisation from a manager in the back office for every transaction while attending to a queue of customers.

g) Lack of team work.

All departments of an organisation must work together to reach one goal which is the satisfaction of the customer. If the transport cleaning team of a tour operator repeatedly fail to clean the vehicles properly, it will make the tourists have a negative image of the forthcoming tour as they step into the coach. This in turn makes it difficult for the tour guide to enhance service levels.

Bennett (2000:235) mentions some of the strategies, which could be used to close gap three. Employees should have a clear understanding of their particular roles in the organisation, tasks should be more varied to avoid role conflict and regular breaks should be given to avoid a sense of being overloaded. Potential employees should be screened and interviewed thoroughly during the selection process in order to ensure a person who has a friendly hospitable demeanour works in a frontline position and a shy introverted person holds a position away from constant customer contact.

Bennett (2000:235) continues by adding that training should be given to employees lacking computer skills or knowledge of particular software to enable service that is more efficient. Cross training for other jobs within the organisation should also be encouraged amongst lower positions to foster growth and loyalty in the organisation. Employees should be given freedom in their immediate job environment and be held accountable for their actions. This will lead to more focused and committed employees and a reward system could be introduced to act as an incentive for excellent service. Management must encourage a sense of teamwork in the organisation and help the subordinates in times of crisis in order to further show management's commitment to being part of the team.

#### **2.4.4 Gap 4: Service delivery communications gap**

*“Gap 4 is when inaccurate or incomplete information is given to customers and expectations are too high” (Williams & Buswell, 2003:180).*

Bennett (2000:243) agrees and mentions that it is tempting for organisations to promise customers what they cannot deliver as illustrated in Gap 4 of Figure 2.2 whereas the best approach would be to focus on precise and suitable communication messages. According to Bennett (2000:243) the main causes for gap 4 are:

a) Inadequate horizontal communication.

This occurs within the organisation when there is a lack of communication between various departments such as advertising and operations, sales people and operations and human resources, marketing and operations. The operations department normally carries out the services to the customers and if the marketing department advertised a promotion, which cannot be fulfilled by the operations staff, then the organisation, will appear to be lacking in service delivery. Likewise sales staff sometimes promises to meet impossible deadlines for customers to close the sale, but the operations staff ends up with an upset customer whose valid expectations were not met. Another factor that contributes to the communication gap is the different policies and procedures between departments and branches of an organisation. A typical example would be a nationwide hotel chain where pets are allowed in some branches and disallowed in others.

b) Propensity to overpromise.

In order to close the sale, make more profit or gain market share some organisations will overpromise in selling and advertising. These actions will lead to disappointed customers who would cause negative word of mouth advertising and probably would not return.

The strategies that could be used to close gap 4 is to have a credible advertising campaign. The marketing department should communicate with the operations

department so that all staff are aware of the promotion and their role in providing the advertised services. Customers can be satisfied through teamwork of the sales and operations department. These departments need have close contact in order to ensure that promises made, are fulfilled. Regular meetings need to be held between the two departments to discuss areas where the two departments depend on each other. The operations department should also be notified in advance of extra services that were arranged for the customer (Bennett 2000:244-245).

Different departments or branches of an organisation should be governed by one policy manual explaining every function in the organisation. The departments, branches and the employees should try to follow the same policy and procedures so that the organisation is consistent in its service delivery. Customers also have a role to play in service delivery and effective communication should be used to inform them of aspects of their role in service delivery during their holiday. When customers check into a hotel, rest camp or holiday resort they should be issued with orientation sheet possibly with a map of the resort, warnings of malaria areas, speed limit within the rest camp and the times when loud music is unacceptable. Normally failure to adhere to these in house rules would spoil other guest's holiday experience (Bennett 2000:244-245).

Gap 4 should be a warning to managers of service organisations that they can influence customers' expectations through external communications and should be careful not to raise customer expectations so much that they are almost impossible to satisfy (Bennett, 2000:244-245).

#### **2.4.5 Gap 5: Perceptions-expectations gap**

Medlik and Middleton 1979, cited in Augustyn (1998:151) explains that gap 5 in Figure 2.2 relates to a discrepancy between the customers' perceptions of the quality of the product compared to the organisation's idea of the quality of their product. Zeithaml *et al.*, 1990 cited in Williams and Buswell (2003:179) states that at gap 5, customers match expectations of the service to service actually received and will be satisfied, thrilled or disappointed with the service. They further point out that factors that influence customers' judgement of a service are word of mouth opinions, which they heard from

other people, the customers' personal needs and the customers past experiences with similar experiences.

Bennett (2000:245-246) agrees and adds that customers have two sets of preconceived ideas of expected service namely desired expectations and adequate or satisfactory expectations. Desired expectations is the best level of service the customer hope to receive and adequate or satisfactory expectations would be a lower more realistic acceptable service level. The desired and adequate or satisfactory expectation levels are divided by a zone of tolerance as indicated in Figure 2.1, which represents the normal or bare minimum service it takes to neither thrill nor upset the customer's perception of the received service (Bennett, 2000:246). Bennett (2000:246) further states that the outcome for organisations that perform within this zone of tolerance as indicated in Figure 2.1, would be a fairly satisfied customer whose minimum expectations were realised.

Williams and Buswell (2003:62) explain that the organisation should always aim to delight customers rather than only satisfying them as indicated in Figure 2.1. They further elaborate that delightedness occurs when a customer is positively surprised with the service received. Bennett (2000:246) mention that the two factors that influence desired expectations are the customer's belief about what is possible and their personal needs. The customers may have their own philosophy on how services should be provided and how service providers should conduct themselves and this influences their perception of expected service. The customer's needs vary according to the situation, a man may be travelling with his family on pilgrimage therefore his main concern will be family and spiritually orientated. When organisations are able to identify and excel in going beyond the customers' expectations of a service then delightedness in the provided service is achieved (Bennett, 2000:246).

Williams and Buswell (2003:62) describe the zone of tolerance in Figure 2.1, becoming narrower when customers are partaking in high risk activities such as great white shark cage diving and it becomes wider during low risk activities such as a city tour. Bennett

(2000: 246) adds that when an organisations performance falls below the adequate or satisfactory expectation level, then the customer will be disappointed.

Bennett (2000:247) mentions four more factors that influence both desired and adequate or satisfactory expectation levels as indicated in Figure 2.1. These factors are listed below:

a) Explicit service promises.

These are statements that fall within the control of the organisation and relates to advertisements on print or media and sales promises, which builds an expectation in the potential customers mind. Relating to the Hajj industry, a Hajj agent may advertise accommodation in the holy city of Mecca for the entire six-week pilgrimage, instead of moving out of Mecca during the five-day peak period of Hajj.

b) Implicit service promises.

These promises are communicated indirectly through the customers judging the costs and tangibles linked to the service and then making conclusions based on evidence and reason. For example, the price of a room in a hotel opposite the holy mosque in Mecca (R10 000 per night during the Hajj season) would therefore signal that the prospective pilgrim could expect to receive a view from his hotel room overlooking the holy mosque and shorter distances to walk for prayers.

c) Word of mouth.

Is any positive or negative communication received about the destination or product from someone not affiliated to the organisation providing the service. With reference to Figure 2.5 Schmoll's decision-making model, word of mouth relates to personal influences on the potential traveller.

d) Past experiences.

Customers will draw on previous or similar experiences to conceptualise a desired service and adequate or satisfactory service of the particular service they are purchasing. For example, a couple who have been on Umrah (visit to the holy mosque in Mecca) will develop their expectations for Hajj based on their experiences during Umrah.



Bennett (2000:248-249) mentions that a questionnaire based on the five dimensions of a tourism service being: reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy and tangibles should be used to obtain the customers desired expectation level, adequate expectation level and the rating of the company's performance to measure how customers perceive customer service of an organisation. He further suggest that if one follow SERVQUAL gap analyses theory then closing of gaps 1 to 4 is the solution to rectify any discrepancies at gap 5 (Williams & Buswell, 2003:179; Bennett 2000:245).

#### **2.4.6 Application of SERVQUAL**

The SERVQUAL model is a well-known instrument for measuring service quality in various industries. In Austria, Germany and Switzerland the SERVQUAL model was used in a research, which measured tourist judgement on service quality in the traditional Alpine ski holiday resorts. It was chosen because it measures the gap between expectations and perceptions of service by the consumer as an indicator of service quality (Parasuraman *et al*, 1993; Zeithaml 1988 cited in Weiermair & Fuchs, 1999:1006). Some of the researchers who have used the SERVQUAL model to measure the quality of services in tourism and affiliated fields are: Baker and Fesenmaier, 1997; Childress & Crompton, 1997; Fick & Ritchie, 1991; Leblanc, 1992; Ostrowski & Gordon, 1993 (Ali & Howaidee, 2012:167).

Weiermair and Fuchs (1999:1018) classifies the SERVQUAL model as providing non-biased results and the findings of the research brought to light that the traditional Alpine ski holiday resorts are losing their appeal as tourists' preferences and tastes are changing (Weiermair & Fuchs, 1999:1018).

The SERVQUAL model is used as a major service evaluation tool and can be utilized in diverse service situations (Ali & Howaidee, 2012:166). Hasan and Zakaria (2009:11) agrees and notes that in their research "Customer Perception Towards Service Quality Provided by Tabung Haji Seremban" the SERVQUAL model helped to pinpoint areas

requiring managerial attention and action to improve service quality in the organisation tasked with escorting Malaysia's pilgrims to Saudi Arabia each year.

In Egypt, the SERVQUAL model was used in a research to determine the current service quality level of tourism services in Egypt (Eraqi, 2006:470). The findings of the research were that the tourism organisation management in Egypt has to ensure:

- a) Internal customer satisfaction.
- b) External customer satisfaction; quality-management process.
- c) Achieving efficiency in the processes.

The findings of the above research are based on the viewpoints that the employees are the internal customers and have to be satisfied in their jobs and treated fairly in order for them to have a positive attitude, which in turn will create passion for their jobs and ultimately a passion for tourism. The tourists who are the external customers will sense the genuine hospitality, efficiency and quality of service. This will bring about satisfaction, delightedness and have positive effects such positive word of mouth advertising which is good for the destination's image and will possibly spur on return visits. The research concluded that positive attitudes by internal customers need to exist across all levels of contact with tourists and must be steered by a quality-management process (Eraqi, 2006:482-489).

A research by Urdang and Howey (2001:533) shows how the SERVQUAL model was used to determine the amount of damages that would be awarded to a traveller.

*"It is proposed that models such as SERVQUAL could be used to assist the courts in arriving at fairer and more consistent damage awards"* (Urdang & Howey, 2001:536).

Urdang and Howey (2001:536) point out that service provider could prevent service related cases ending up in court if they use the SERVQUAL model as a tool to pin point and understand the cause of the customer's dissatisfaction in their service. Augustyn (1998:151) agrees because from the viewpoint of improving customer satisfaction the SERVQUAL model is regarded as a useful tool because it identifies quality improvement

areas within an individual service organisation. This research is relevant to the South African Hajj industry as many times pilgrims do not come forward to lodge formal complaints because of the spirituality of the journey it seems inappropriate to argue over material things and if the case reaches the court it is often unsuccessful due to technicalities.

It is common to have a consciousness of quality improvement in tourism or any sector of business because when quality improves within the organisation then customer satisfaction will follow. This theory was proven when the SERVQUAL model was used in a research researching the relationship between service quality and satisfaction in the context of spas in Spain. The respondents provided their service quality perceptions according to the SERVQUAL scale and the findings were that satisfaction depends on perceived quality (Gonzalez, Comesana & Brea, 2007:153).

## **2.5 Other Service Quality Models Applicable to Tourism**

The SERVQUAL model has established itself as the dominant instrument used in industry to measure service quality, but it is not the only model and method available and every year scholars are developing new improved methods of measuring service quality or adapting the SERVQUAL model to suit their service sector as shown in Figure 2.3. There are however, other approaches used to measure service quality that will be discussed below.

Ali and Howaidee (2012:166) mention that the scholars Carman, Cronin and Taylor (1994) found that when they remove the expectation measure from the SERVQUAL model, then the performance measure increases. This caused them to find the SERVQUAL model partially ineffective and prompted them to develop the service performance (or SERVPERF) model by arguing that only the performance part of the SERVQUAL model should be included. According to Tribe and Snaith (1998:27) researchers Cronin and Taylor are well known as some of the main critics of the SERVQUAL model and they explain that SERVPERF's main difference to the SERVQUAL model is the dropping of the expectations side of SERVQUAL and focusing on the performance perceptions alone. They further criticize the SERVPERF model by

revealing that performance cannot give a complete idea of satisfaction when one is using a price-based strategy (Tribe & Snaith, 1998:27).

Eraqi (2006:473-474) points out that the main difference between SERVQUAL and SERVPERF is that SERVPERF has additional items which measure the overall rating of satisfaction, perceived service quality and purchasing intention. These factors position SERVPERF to focus on the fact that customer satisfaction is the result mostly of service quality (Eraqi, 2006:473-474). Tribe and Snaith (1998:26) mention that SERVQUAL, SERVPERF and importance-performance are three main research instruments used to measure the concepts of quality and customer satisfaction. Eraqi (2006:473) agrees and adds TQS and ISQM as the most known models used to evaluate service quality offered to customers. He concludes that the SERVQUAL model developed by Parasuraman *et al.* (1985) is the most widely used model (Eraqi, 2006:473).

Tribe and Snaith (1998:26) have developed a new instrument called Hotel Satisfaction or HOLSAT, which was designed to measure tourist satisfaction with a holiday and is illustrated in Figure 2.3. The developers have designed the instrument to approach satisfaction attitudes using expectations or performance analysis and have identified two key uses for the instrument being:

- a) Focusing on the holiday element of the holiday experience such as identification of key aspects of the holiday experience.
- b) Focusing on the satisfaction element of the holiday experience such as the attitudes towards these aspects which produce satisfaction or dissatisfaction (Tribe & Snaith 1998:26).

Many academic writers have adapted the SERVQUAL model to suit specific sectors in tourism as shown in Figure 2.3. The HOLSAT instrument was tested in Varadero, Cuba during 1996 as a pilot study to capture tourists' sense of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with attributes of their chosen holiday. Due to the inadequate sample size, it was difficult to generalise findings but the developers are optimistic of the instrument's potential usefulness (Tribe & Snaith, 1998:26).

Application	Reference	Alternative name for the model
Travel and tourism, at variety of sites  Hotels	Fick and Brent Ritchie (1991)  Knutson <i>et al.</i> (1990)  Saleh and Ryan (1991, 1992)  Richard and Sundaram (1994)  Akan (1995)  Gabbie and O’Niell (1997)  Ekinici <i>et al.</i> (1998)	LODGSERV
Resort – Varadero, Cuba  Fast-Food Industry  Restaurants  US recreational services	Tribe and Snaith (1998)  Johns and Tyas (1996)  O’Niell (2001)  Crompton and Mackay (1989)  Hamilton <i>et al.</i> (1991)  Taylor et al. (1993)	HOLSAT   DINESERV
Private clubs and estates, Hong Kong  Heritage sites  Leisure and tourism facilities in the UK	Lam <i>et al.</i> (1997)  Frochot (1996)  Williams (1997b)	HISTOQUAL

**Figure 2.3 Adapted versions of the SERVQUAL instrument** (Williams & Buswell, 2003:178)

Another service quality model that was developed is the Technique for Order Preference by Similarity to Ideal Solution or TOPSIS system (Hwang & Lin 1987, cited in Mukherjee & Nath, 2005:175-176). The TOPSIS system is based on the concept of the ideal solution, which could be seen as the best service situation that will please consumers, and the negative ideal solution, which could be seen as the worst situation that will upset consumers with the service (Mukherjee & Nath, 2005:175-176). TOPSIS applied to a service quality scenario means that the ideal solution contains all the best values of criteria for quality of service delivered and the negative ideal solution is made up of all the worst values, which will upset and repulse a tourist from using those tourism services (Tsaur *et al.*, 2002 cited in Mukherjee & Nath, 2005:175). The criticism of the TOPSIS system is that it may lead to unrealistic results if the positive and negative deviations in the theoretical equations cancel out each other. In a banking environment, a customer who is unhappy with the service of a bank teller may not feel compensated by the latest artistic decor of the branch (Mukherjee & Nath, 2005:175).

## **2.6 Defining Customer Satisfaction (CS)**

The World Tourism Organisation defines customer satisfaction and its significance as follows:

*“Customer satisfaction (CS) is a psychological concept that involves the feeling of well-being and pleasure that results from obtaining what one hopes for and expects from an appealing product and/or service”* (WTO 1985, cited in Ali & Howaidee, 2012:169).

Importance must be placed on the satisfaction of the tourists expectations before, during and after the visit by the service providers in contact with the tourists because such action will influence the tourist’s perception of the destination’s image (Molina, Gomez & Consuegra, 2010:726). Satisfaction of clients is also a clear product of improved levels of service quality and in addition service quality also provide benefits to increasing market share, profitability, differentiation and developing strategy (Agus, Baker & Kandampully 2007, Parasuraman 1991, cited in Hasan & Zakaria, 2009:9).

Tribe and Snaith (1998:28) explain that a service experience during a holiday is much more complex than a service received in other industries. They elaborate by pointing out the following:

*“a consumer derives banking satisfaction from transactions with a particular banking organisation...in a holiday a consumer’s satisfaction is affected by a series of experiences, some of which are independent of the commercial tourism organisations”* (Tribe & Snaith, 1998:28).

Augustyn (1998:152) agrees and reveals that customer or in this case tourist satisfaction is very complex because of the many services and factors which form part of the tourist’s overall experience. He clarifies this statement by pointing out the traditional views of quality and satisfaction by tour operators in the following example. A tour operator offers quality packages made up of first class air tickets and five star accommodation and superb restaurants, the tour operator focus only on the quality of these components and the quality of their own services. However, the tour operator fails to note the quality of the destination facilities, infrastructure, public transport and hospitable behaviour in the tourism destination area, which also influence tourist satisfaction (Augustyn, 1998:152).

Smith (1994:590) explains that satisfaction of tourists’ in a travel service, lie in the freedom and choice the tourists’ have in a tourism product, such as freedom to choose their own airline to fly with or their preferential brand of hotel chain can play a role in enhancing the tourists’ sense of control and satisfaction. He goes further by elaborating that even if companies have preferred suppliers for their staff who travels regularly, then employees can still be satisfied when suppliers offer the staff choices. These choices could vary from smoking or non-smoking rooms, choice of seats on the airplane or other services and facilities to provide some degree of personal choice, which ultimately enhances the traveller’s satisfaction (Smith, 1994:590).

According to Bennett and Strydom (2001:202) frontline service staff plays a critical role in achieving customer satisfaction, as their behaviour is a positive or negative reflection on the quality of service. Research by Ekinci, Prokopaki and Cobanoglu (2003:61-62) on British tourists perceptions of the quality of accommodations in a South-Eastern European island of Crete confirms Bennett and Strydom's opinion. Their findings showed that the intangible aspects of the services given by hotels were very important to British tourists being satisfied with the accommodations on the island. These intangible aspects were:

- a) Employees never being too busy to respond to requests.
- b) Employees being consistently courteous.
- c) Employees being prompt in delivering services.
- d) Employees being sincere in solving guests' problems.

(Ekinci, Prokopaki & Cobanoglu, 2003:61-62)

Customer satisfaction is an integral part of this research as in the Hajj industry, Hajj agents constantly have problems with cancellation of flights and unexpected accommodation changes, which occur in the external business environment and affect the image of their service delivery. This situation is sensed by the tourists and results in customer dissatisfaction when the standards of services advertised does not match what is being produced during their stay (Augustyn, 1998:152).

## **2.7 Service Delivery**

Service delivery is primarily linked to government duties and responsibilities to its citizens. In the past, service delivery was mainly government controlled and near to the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, governments looked towards outsourcing various types of organisations to provide services to its citizens. The service delivery of the KSA regarding its Hajj management has also been affected by outsourcing and making use of external service providers.



### **2.7.1 Public Sector Involvement in Tourism**

Inkson and Minnaert defines public sector as “...*central and local government and their administrative departments – organisations that are funded by taxation and corporations that are owned by the state*” (2012:315). Elliott (1997), cited in Inkson and Minnaert (2012:315) shows the importance of the public sector in tourism by mentioning that the central government provides key services which tourism depend on such as the issuing of passports, roads and public transport facilities and negotiates with other governments about issues such as visa entry requirements.

The control of the public sector in the delivering of services is a new phenomenon because in previous civilizations like Greece, Ancient Rome and Ancient Egypt the rulers used private parties extensively to perform governmental functions (Levi 1988; Sobel 1999; Megginson & Netter 2003 cited in Alford & O’Flynn, 2012:6). As time passed, government’s involvement in the public’s interest changed and a major factor for greater government involvement was the expansion of commerce in the industrial revolution and the restructuring of the class system (Alford & O’Flynn, 2012:7). As a result of the industrial revolution, government had to be more involved in the provision of infrastructure such as transport and it also impacted on the class system as the working class increased, the middle class contracted and the social problems such as poverty and hunger, homelessness and disease grew rapidly which needed government to manage the situation.

Later the working class rose to become the masses of the nation and government was pressured to provide social services such as education, health care, housing and income security (Alford & O’Flynn, 2012:7). Governments learnt tough lessons through the Great Depression and started to play a role in economic stabilization and provide a variety of services to citizens through tax revenue (Alford & O’Flynn, 2012:7). By the 1970’s citizens and industry felt too regulated and it resulted in the search for non-governmental ways to deliver public services which led to the global trend to privatise

government functions (Salamon 1981; Savas 1983; Kristensen 1987; Wolf 1998; Hughes 2003 cited in Alford & O'Flynn, 2012:7).

This trend is apparent in the KSA where the government department dedicated to Hajj known as the Hajj Ministry in Chapter Three Figure 3.1 extends a two-year contract to a private organisation to manage the National Establishment for Hajj Affairs who is responsible for providing various services to pilgrims in the KSA (KSA Hajj Ministry, 2006b).

Presently government's involvement in service delivery in tourism has been by shaping the laws of a country to encourage or discourage tourism, for example visa policies, which restrict access for foreign visitors to a country. The public authority for tourism can lay with either national government or local government. When the authority for tourism lies with national government then tourism is included in one of the departments of the government such as in South Africa it is included in the Department of Environmental Affairs and the UK where it is part of the Department of Culture, Media and Sport. When the authority for tourism lies with local government, they have full control of decisions and policy regarding tourism. An example of this scenario would be the Flemish and Wallonian regional governments of Belgium (Inkson & Minnaert, 2012:316).

Naidoo (2011:8) summarises government's role in service delivery as being both a promoter and at times a hindrance, as government would be productive in guiding market place activities, but in contrast it would be also be causing destructive dysfunctional behaviours in society. Farazmand 2005, cited in Naidoo (2011:9) further explains that government's role in society and the economy has become redefined due to mega trends occurring in the last 25 years of rapid global changes. These trends are the rise of globalisation of corporate capitalism and the rise of the global 'Quality Movement' in the public and private sectors of service delivery. These trends have influenced government's relations with society, private sector, global relations and the nature and functions of government.

The scope of local governments control or influence on tourism can range from owning and operating local recourses such as national parks, museums, art galleries as well as the provision of tourist information centres and delivering destination management systems (Hall, 1995; Stevenson & Lovatt, 2001, cited in Inkson & Minnaert, 2012:328). Relating to the Hajj industry the Saudi Arabian national government control the religious tourism activities from the attractions in the form of the holy mosques, the laws pertaining to visiting times and accepted volume of tourists to delivering destination management systems.

Inkson and Minnaert (2012:328) further mentions that local government will often have regulatory function such as legislation on quality standards in hotels and inspecting and monitoring bars and restaurants. In the Hajj industry these functions are carried out by the Hajj Ministry of the KSA who ensures hotels, restaurants; buildings meet the health and safety regulations, which are updated by the Hajj Ministry each year. Failure to comply with the health and safety regulations will result in refusal of clearance certificates, which in turn would mean the building would be closed for business. Public sector is important as it creates the basis for tourism to take place, through the creation of ports of entry, passports, visa allowances and global travel relations.

### **2.7.2 Privatisation of Service Delivery**

Alford and O'Flynn (2012:86) explain how government's progression in privatising first occurred in the form of contracting out government functions.

*"It is important to note here that we use the term "contracting out", not just "contracting". Contracting (with the 'out'), refers to the distribution of roles. It is different from just 'contracting', which refers to the mode of coordination"* (Alford & O'Flynn, 2012:86).

In the beginning government would contract out blue collar work to private sector such as waste management and cleaning services, then move to ancillary services such as information technology or legal services and finally into "frontline" government services

such as fire-fighting, prisons or child welfare services. Alford and O'Flynn (2012:86-87) further points out that competitive tendering and contracting out grew rapidly in the 1980's and 1990's when governments were pressured to cut costs and outsourcing was the cheaper option.

Alford and O'Flynn (2012:86-87) continues in this vein by stating that there are many external parties who are capable of delivering public services and recently government functions such as garbage collection, cleaning, security and employment services have been contracted out. They further indicate that term externalization is born from the occurrence where some of the work of delivering public services is transferred from government organisations to non-governmental organisations and individuals (Alford & O'Flynn, 2012:86-87).

According to Farazmand (2005), cited in Naidoo (2011:14) by the late 1970's there were many countries finding themselves in a poor state capacity to govern and privatisation was given a platform by government moving away from being a welfare administrative state, privatising public services and governmental functions, and downsizing government organisations. These actions were taken for a number of reasons such as the economic situation of the country and so that the consumers could receive quality in service delivery, organisational performance and for consumers to be able to hold the service providers accountable.

Government can outsource their functions to external providers such as non-profit organisations, business firms, volunteer organisations and individuals in the external environment (Alford & O'Flynn, 2012:10-13). An example of this occurring in the Hajj industry is shown in Chapter 3, Figure 3.1 where the Hajj Ministry of the KSA contract the a private company to run the National establishments of Hajj Affairs in Saudi Arabia for a contracted period of two years (KSA Hajj Ministry, 2006b). It is also possible to encounter external providers that are not formal organisations such as volunteers, clients and regulatees. The following types of external service providers habitually engage with government:

a) The private for profit firm.

This firm normally receives contracts from government which would be renewed or terminated at the end of its course. These firms could range from small businesses, private partnerships such as accounting firms right up to larger corporations such as defence contractors.

b) The voluntary/non-profit/third sector organisation.

This sector also receives contracts from government and is normally focused in areas such as human services or environmental conservation. These organisations may appear in the form of a neighbourhood watch, an association of volunteer members or a fully incorporated non-profit company.

c) Individual volunteers.

These volunteers also service government and do not receive contracts; they are however sometimes supported by non-profit organisations. They help government on the grass roots level in programmes such as rural fire fighting, community safety and environmental conservation (Alford & O'Flynn, 2012:10-13).

Another external provider that needs clarification is the 'client' in the public sector organisations. The clients are the people at the receiving end of the government agencies efforts such as people receiving welfare, pupils in government schools, road users, public hospital patients or employment programme participants (Alford & O'Flynn, 2012:10-14). Regulatees refer to members of the public who do not wish to receive a service but are compelled or forced to, such as prisoners or those people under regulatory obligations such as pollution tax for the industrial sector and income tax for every citizen, (Alford & Speed 2006 cited Alford & O'Flynn, 2012:10-14).

### **2.7.3 Globalisation and its Effect on Service Delivery**

Globalisation was given a platform in the last two decades when countries like USA, Great Britain, Japan and other powerful countries adopted an approach of opening new global frontiers and removing barriers, which allows capitalism to grow globally. The results could be seen during the 1980's as corporations who transacted throughout the world became the forerunners in expanding global markets for higher profits. These

corporations profited and expanded on the back of inexpensive labour forces, cheap natural resources, and deregulated environments with little or no government interference (Farazmand 2005, cited in Naidoo 2011:15).

Farazmand 2005, cited in Naidoo (2011:16) view globalisation as the continuing process of capitalism's pursuit of profit and the pursuit of having more than what is needed worldwide. He further mentions that it causes consequences for the state, governance, society, economy as well as implications for developing nations. He warns of the fast rate globalisation has been growing and the fact that almost all functions of government including core functions such as defence, health and human services having been taken over by corporate capitalism. According to Farazmand 2005 cited in Naidoo (2011:19-20) there are two main challenges, which arise from globalisation, which requires management by the state:

- a) Government need to manage their responses to the global forces of competition, co-operation and pressures. This will be accomplished through directing the economy of a country through carefully planned allocation of national resources into directions that would strengthen the country's national and global competitiveness.
- b) Government needs to create an enabling environment in infrastructure areas, such as: natural resources, health, education, environment quality and human capitals, which will allow the citizens of the country to grow, develop and prosper. As a strategy to manage globalisation, he suggests that the concept of total quality management be implemented by government to enhance the enabling environment through building human capital in knowledge-based age of governance and administration. He adds that this may seem like a domestic challenge but it directly affects the government's ability to respond to globalisation pressures of competitiveness (Farazmand 2005 cited in Naidoo 2011:19-20).

#### **2.7.4 BRICS (Brazil Russia India China South Africa) Partnership Facilitating Globalisation in South Africa**

One of the ways globalisation is taking shape in South Africa is through a coalition formed by developing emerging countries to strengthen economic, political and social ties. These countries are Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa and form the BRICS coalition. BRICS is a partnership between these countries and the fifth annual summit took place in Durban, South Africa during 2013 (McCauley, 2013:10).

O'Neill (2012:37) mentions that the characteristics of a true BRIC country is to have a large population, strong productivity and the country should produce at least 5% of the global gross domestic product (GDP). He further elaborates that South Africa has to consider itself fortunate to be included in the BRICS partnership. This is due to the fact that South Africa's GDP does not match the necessary requirements and there are many countries such as Turkey and South Korea with larger GDPs than South Africa who are themselves keen to be part of coalitions which can benefit their countries (O'Neill, 2012:37). McCauley (2013:10) agrees and is of the view point that South Africa is not part of the G8 countries and is not represented in those summits neither is the African Union present, therefore the chances of South Africa's interests being taken care of is unlikely.

The positives out of 2013 BRICS summit was the formation of the 25 member BRICS business council which is intended to stimulate intra BRICS trade and investment which South Africa will be part of (McCauley, 2013:10). Mnyandu (2013:28) cautions that the BRICS summit should deliver on promises made during the summit and not fall short on the expectations created.

Desai (2012:12) points out that one of the ways the BRICS coalitions has stood up against and side stepped the business western powers who maintain the world economic order is through the intention to establish the development bank, in this way resources can be mobilised for infrastructure and sustainable development projects.

Mnyandu (2013:28) critiques the fact that very little have been done on the creation of the mutual development bank at the fifth annual BRICS summit in Durban as he was expecting details that are more concrete on the bank's set-up plans at the summit.

South Africa's posture in the BRICS partnership is to keep Africa included (McCauley, 2013:10). O'Neill (2012:37) is of the opinion that South Africa should use being part of the BRICS club to increase her productivity through introducing more policies to encourage productivity growth and boost the country's growth potential.

## **2.8 The SERVUCTION System**

The components of the service delivery system in tourism are illustrated in Figure 2.4 including the SERVUCTION system. According to Bennett and Strydom (2001:210), the service delivery system "*...embodies the people; elements and processes involved in delivering travel and tourism products*". The service delivery system consists of five main components which will be discussed below and illustrates how it impacts on customers receiving services.

Figure 2.4 reveals the effects that Customer B has on the primary Customer A. Customer A, represents the tourist who bought the tourism product, such as the six-week pilgrimage to Mecca. The tourist now becomes a member of Hajj tour group affording him/her the services expected and paid for during the pilgrimage. Customer B is indicative of another customer in the same tour group using the same facilities as customer A. For example Customer B would represent another passenger on the airplane which form part of Customer A's Hajj tour group. Customer B therefore may impact positively or negatively upon the experience of customer A. Common examples wherein Customer B may impact negatively on Customer A would be if Customer B is rowdy in the corridors of the hotel late at night or customer B snores in his sleep while sitting next to customer A in the airplane.

The inanimate environment in Figure 2.4 is the background of where the service encounter is taking place. It could be the lighting, signage, decor, furniture, indoor greening, layout of the facility and background music present at the reception area when



checking into a hotel. The customer is surrounded by the inanimate environment and it adds positively or negatively to the tourist's perception of the service received and the organisation. (Bennett & Strydom, 2001:210).

The contact personnel or service provider illustrated in Figure 2.4 refers to the employees that make contact with the tourist during the service encounter; they are also referred to as front stage or frontline employees. These employees are crucial to the organisation as the service they deliver to the tourist reflects the standards and quality of service of the organisation. Bennett and Strydom (2001:202) refer to contact employees as walking billboards of the organisation. It is important that contact personnel are trained in service excellence and customer care and are updated on customer-related courses as these skills will positively impact the organisation and help in reducing dissatisfied clients and help in managing customer crisis situations (Bennett & Strydom, 2001:210). In the Hajj industry these contact staff are the people who accompany the pilgrims on their six-week pilgrimage and it is important that they be trained in these fields of customer care, dealing with irate clients and service excellence. This is important, as they need to be equipped with the necessary skills to deliver good service over a six-week contact period with their customers.

When looking at Figure 2.4 it becomes clear that some aspects of the production of a tourism service are visible to the tourists, which other aspects remain out of view of the tourist. For instance, the backstage staff ensures that the administrative and background processes of the tourist's holiday experience runs smoothly, but is seldom seen by the tourist. This backstage is referred to as the invisible organisation and system (Bennett, 2000:301). The backstage staff working in this part of the organisation is important, as they complete essential tasks, which support contact personnel. Case in point is when the tour leader of a Hajj group is at the airport about to depart for pilgrimage to the KSA. In order for this stage to be reached, the administrative staff in the invisible environment in Figure 2.4 had to have: secured the best flights to the KSA for the group, arranged the deposits and payment for the flights and accommodation, set up contracts to secure the group's accommodation and other services in the KSA during the Hajj period. This ensures a smooth hassle free pilgrimage.

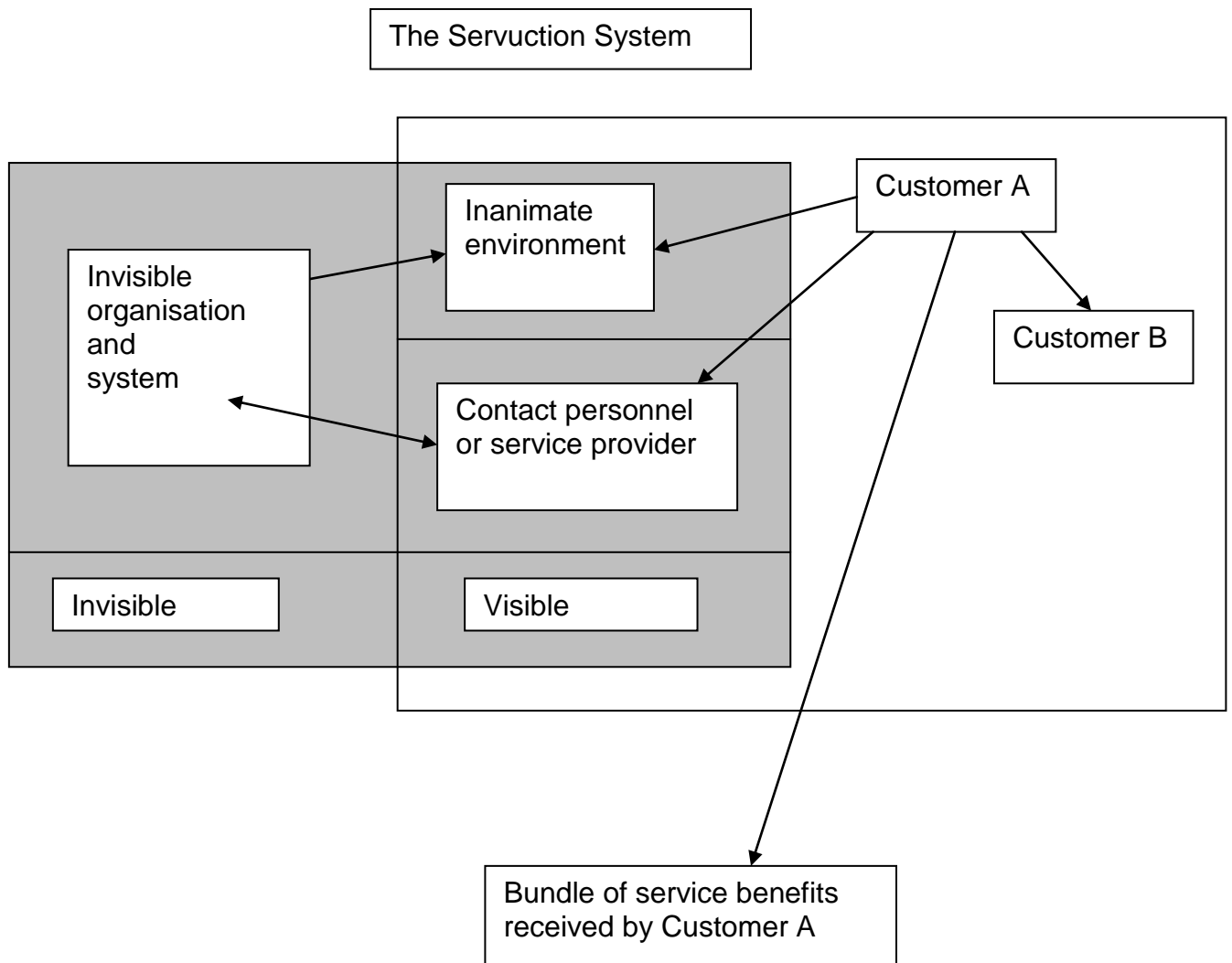


Figure 2.4 The service delivery system (Bennett & Strydom 2001:210)

## 2.9 The Schmoll Decision Making Model

According to Bennett (2000:90-91), there are several travel decision making models, which explain the decision-making process of tourists. Schmoll's decision making model includes more specific factors that are related to the tourism industry and provides a greater understanding of travel decision making. Schmoll's model comprises four stages or fields, which are known as:

- a) Travel stimuli.

- b) Personal and social determinants of travel behaviour.
- c) External variables.
- d) Characteristics and features of the service destination.

Motivations, desires/needs and expectations are collectively referred to as personal and social determinants of travel behaviour. According to Bennett (2000:91), Schmoll's model has two disadvantages, namely:

- a) There is no feedback loop, which, in turn, does not make the model dynamic.
- b) There is no provision for any input on attitude and values – there is no indication as to what forces shape attitudes and values.

Bennett (2000:91), further mentions that Schmoll's model emphasises the several aspects that do influence the decision-making process and tourism demand in general. All tourists participate in some form of decision making before embarking on travel. Schmoll's example of the decision-making process occurs in the centre of Figure 2.5 and is shaded. The decision-making process is further illustrated in Figure 2.6. The decision-making process is extracted from a model of consumer behaviour in Strydom *et al.*, 2000 cited in Bennett (2000:91)

There are six steps in the decision-making process and the first involves consumers realising that they require a break from their everyday routine and hence a travel desire materialises. The second step relates to consumers deliberately seeking information about destinations and services that they offer. The third step entails weighing up different travel destinations, particularly relating to affordability, perceived image of the destination, perceived quality of the destination, safety, and so on. The fourth step involves narrowing down possible travel destinations and making a decision.

Several times the person who pays for the holiday does not always make the final decision, for example, in a family vacation where the father pays for the holiday, but the mother or children decide on the destination. Once the decision has been made, the fifth step occurs, which involves purchasing the tourism offering via travel agencies, tour

operators or directly from airlines, hotels and service operators. The sixth step occurs once consumers have experienced the tourism offering and then evaluates whether or not the holiday was value for money and generally, a good experience. If the holiday experience is perceived positively, it may produce a return visit in future and positive word-of-mouth advertising for the destination. The opposite may occur if the experience was a negative one.

There are four fields in Schmoll's decision-making model (Figure 2.5), which surround the decision-making process. The second field, which is known as personal and social determinants of travel behaviour, influences the travel desire step in the decision-making process. For example, if a person has disposable income, which he saved, it might be a motivation to take a holiday. If that person lives in Cape Town by the cold Atlantic Ocean his personality features might long for warm waters, hence a desire to visit his neighbouring country Mozambique might manifest. The person then mentions his idea to a colleague and the colleague shares his memories of his holiday to Mozambique the previous year.

The colleague elaborates on the fourth field in Schmoll's model, which concerns characteristics and features of the service destination by explaining how he travelled to Mozambique, specifically the cost of the journey and various attractions that were found there. If the information is positive, it further heightens a desire to travel to the destination. The person then has expectations of a four-hour flight, clear warm beaches, water sports, abundance of seafood and a favourable exchange rate. This scenario demonstrates how personal and social determinants of travel behaviour and characteristics and features of the service destination in Schmoll's model affected the person's travel desire to grow and be motivated to make a decision.

If one were to add the first field of travel stimuli into this example, the person's interest in what his colleague was saying and awareness of the possibility to travel to Mozambique would motivate him to gather more information. The person would then launch an information search in the form of:

- a) Checking for promotions to visit Mozambique at travel agencies.
- b) Obtaining suggestions or reports from travel agencies or tour operators.
- c) Reading up on attractions, accommodation establishments and places of interest in the country.
- d) Obtaining travel tips from colleagues or friends who have been to Mozambique.

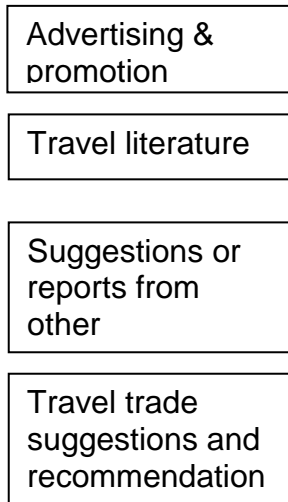
From the findings of the information, the person will be able to compare Mozambique to another destination he may have had in mind, which will help him to make a decision. Other factors, which the person might consider before making the decision to travel to Mozambique include:

- a) Safety of the destination, for example after forty years of civil war, has the image of the country changed.
- b) If travel agencies and tour operators that provide travel services to and in Mozambique are of good standing and reliable.
- c) When the person has free time, extra money and correct documents to perform the travel to Mozambique.

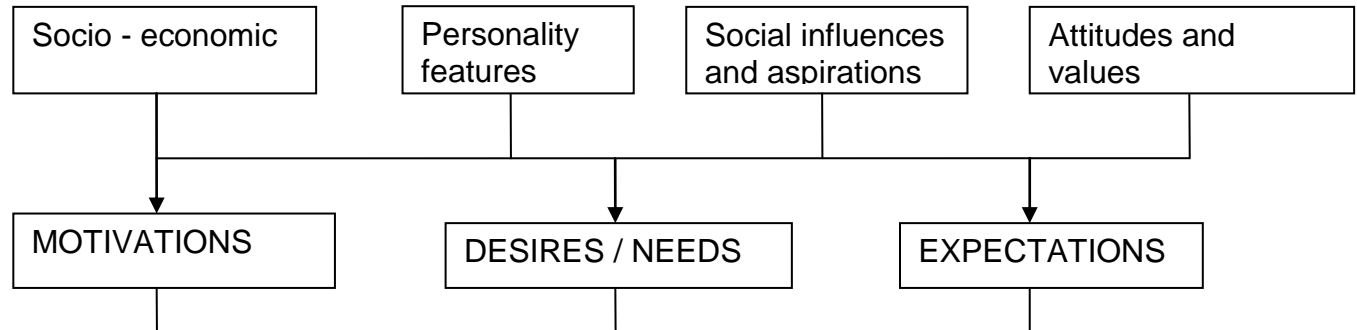
These factors refer to the third field in Schmoll's model and relate to external variables, which the consumer would consider before travelling to Mozambique and these factors would affect all stages of the decision-making process including the final decision to travel to Mozambique.

The above example is a scenario, which interprets each field within Schmoll's decision making model in Figure 2.5, and shows how this affects the decision-making process of a potential traveller.

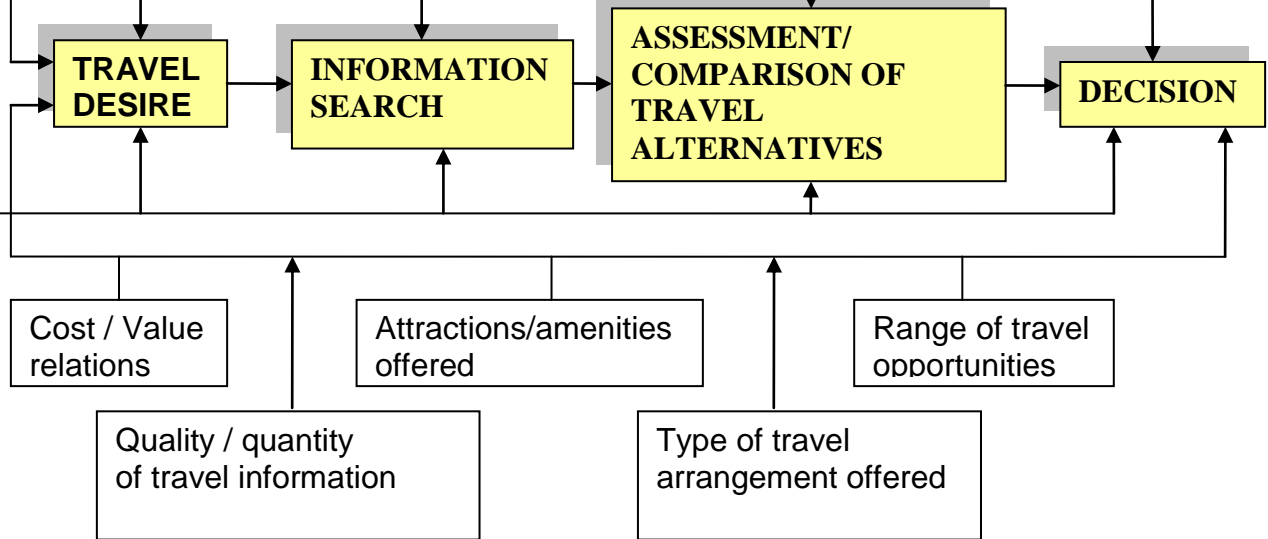
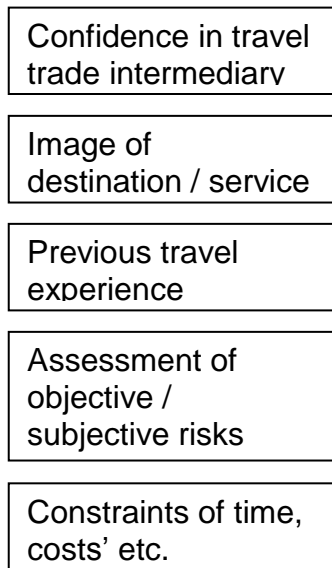
**1. Travel Stimuli**



**2. Personal and Social Determinants of Travel Behaviour**



**3. External Variables**

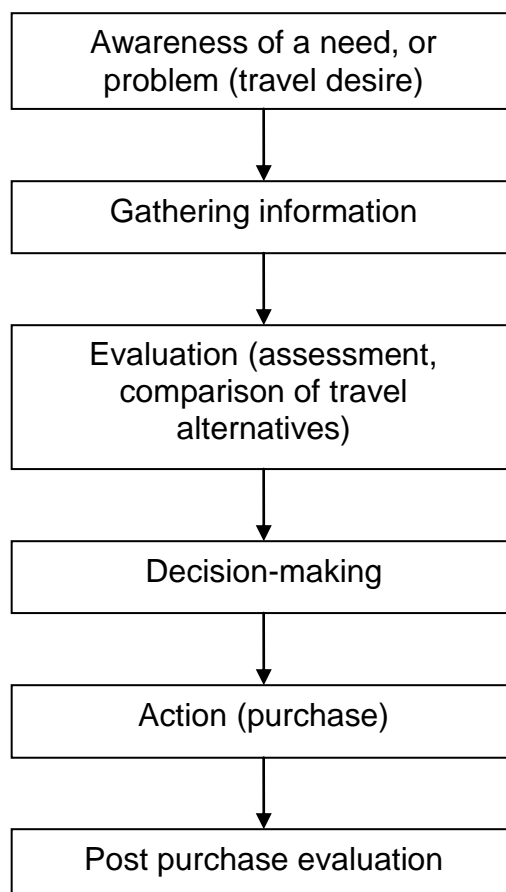


**4. Characteristics and Features of Service Destination**

Figure 2.5 Schmolli's Decision Making Model (Bennett, 2000:92)

## 2.10 The Decision-making process in Relation to the Hajj Pilgrimage

A decision making model was shown earlier in Figure 2.5 and it outlines consumer behavior in tourism. According to (Strydom *et al.*, 2000 cited in Bennett, 2000:91) decision-making involves six steps, which are illustrated below.



**Figure 2.6 Decision-making process**

Extracted from (Strydom *et al.*, 2000 cited in Bennett, 2000:91) Consumer Behavior Model.

The decision-making process appears in the centre of Schmoll's Decision-Making Model (Figure 2.5). Schmoll's model illustrates clearly all the factors which influence the prospective tourist/pilgrim in reaching a decision to travel on Hajj. In Figure 2.6 is the decision-making process extracted from (Strydom *et al.*, 2000 cited in Bennett, 2000:91).The Consumer Behavior Model clearly show the six steps involved when the

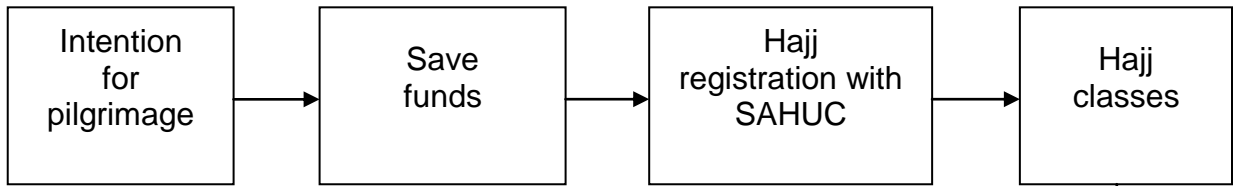
pilgrim decides to travel on a pilgrimage. These six steps will be discussed below with regards to the Hajj pilgrimage and compared to the pilgrimage planning sequence in Figure 2.7.

The first step involves the pilgrim having the desire to perform Hajj. This may manifest as the individual realising the need to perform the once in a lifetime journey before reaching old age. The individual could have a change in spiritual outlook and there are many other motivations each individual could go through before deciding to perform Hajj, as illustrated in Figure 2.5. The first step (travel desire) of the decision-making process in Figure 2.6 is expressed by the pilgrims in the pilgrims planning sequence in Figure 2.7 step one and two. During the first step of the decision-making process, pilgrims are making their intention to perform pilgrimage and saving funds for the journey.

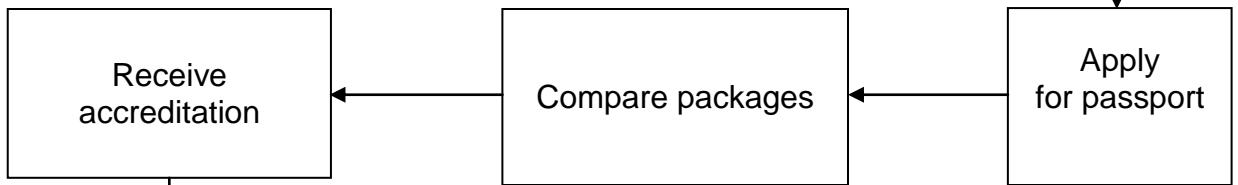
According to Bennett (2000:94), the second step of the decision-making process is when the prospective tourist is motivated to make deliberate attempts to gain knowledge about the travel services, products or the destination which the tourist is interested in visiting. The second step (information gathering) of the decision-making process in Figure 2.6 is expressed by the pilgrims in the pilgrims planning sequence in Figure 2.7 step three, four and five. During the second step of the decision-making process pilgrims are attending Hajj classes, contacting and registering with SAHUC and applying for passports to enable the journey to take place.



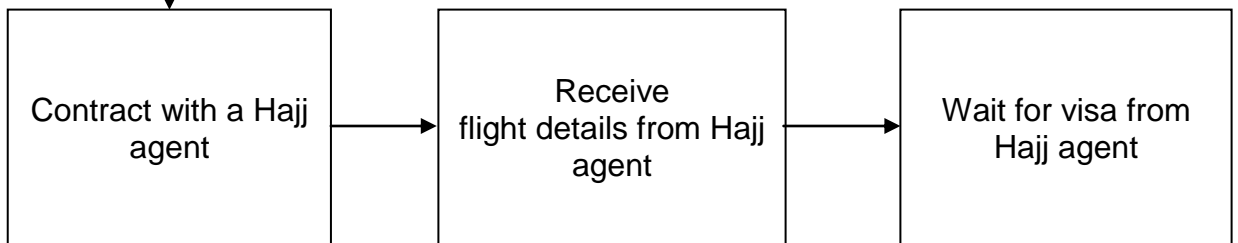
Step 1 to 4



Step 5 to 7



Step 8 to 10



Step 11 to 13

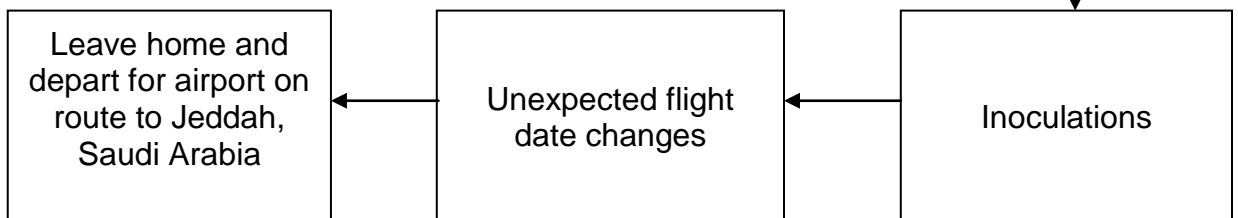


Figure 2.7 Pilgrimage planning sequence of pilgrims

The third step of the decision-making process is comparable to travel alternatives known as the evaluation phase. According to Bennett (2000:95), during this phase travelers will compare services based on price, quality and aesthetic qualities such as the image of the product or country before committing to a particular offer. The third step (evaluation) of the decision-making process in Figure 2.6 is expressed by the pilgrims in the pilgrims planning sequence in Figure 2.7 step six. During the third step of the decision-making process, pilgrims are comparing Hajj packages on offer from the various Hajj agents in South Africa. As in mainstream tourism, in the Hajj pilgrimages a variety of different packages are available to cater for different needs. Some Hajj packages focus on being the cheapest while others focus on special needs such as the elderly market. Others may focus on luxurious travel or shorter packages to accommodate the businessperson or pilgrims with time restrictions.

The fourth step in the decision-making process is the actual decision taken to travel to a certain destination or in the case of the Hajj industry to contract with a Hajj agent who acts as the service provider to and from the KSA. The average traveller puts a great deal of effort in reaching a decision to choose a travel destination or provider and thereafter the actual purchasing action follows (Bennett, 2000:96). The fifth step in the decision-making process is the action of purchasing the pilgrimage package. The fourth and fifth step (decision making and action) of the decision-making process in Figure 2.6 is expressed by the pilgrims in the pilgrims planning sequence in Figure 2.7 step eight. During the eighth step of the decision-making process, these two steps occur simultaneously. The pilgrims are contracting with Hajj agents who they are comfortable with and this involves paying a sizable deposit or the full cost of the Hajj package. Once this step is completed, the pilgrim has now completed his or her side of the contract and the responsibility is now on the service provider to deliver what have been promised.

The six step of the decision-making process in figure 2.6 is post-purchase evaluation. This step occurs once the pilgrim has performed the pilgrimage and has returned home. *“During post-purchase evaluation the customer’s decision is evaluated in the light of the*

*actual experience with or benefits derived from the purchased product”* (Bennett, 2000:96).

Pilgrims would usually reflect on the spiritual journey as well as the services and performance of their chosen Hajj agent. If the pilgrims perceive the Hajj agent, to have delivered on what has been promised then satisfaction would have been established (Donaldson and Runciman 1995, cited in Hasan and Zakaria 2009:2). If they pilgrims perceived the Hajj agent as one that provided committed care, excelled in providing service and delivered value for money then it is likely that such a customer would return to the Hajj agent should they perform Hajj or Umrah in the future. The delighted customer will also act as a good will ambassador for that Hajj agency through positive word of mouth advertising. However, in situations where the steps outlined by Strydom *et al.*, 2000 cited in Bennett, (2000:91) was not adequately reached; the pilgrim may opt against making the decision to travel with a particular Hajj agent.

## **2.11 Chapter Summary**

This chapter dealt with dimensions of tourism as a service, the progression of improving tourism through quality approaches as well as the various organisations involved in steering tourism to continuous improvement. The service quality model (SERVQUAL model) was discussed in relation to improved service quality. In this regard, the history of service delivery was also outlined and a link between service delivery, tourism and globalisation was established. The theory regarding Schmol's model for consumer buying behaviour and the decision-making process in tourism was explained.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW (PART TWO)**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

Thus far, the saliency of quality in tourism, tourist satisfaction, influences on a tourist's behaviour, rise of service delivery and its present changes have been discussed. This chapter will discuss those parties who are responsible for delivering services to the pilgrim and implementing quality management practices to ensure the Hajj is successful globally. These parties are the role players in the South African Hajj industry with distinct roles such as governing the Hajj globally, setting up international relations in the KSA for South Africans, regulating the Hajj within South Africa and providing travel services the pilgrim needs during their six-week pilgrimage. These role players are the Ministry of Hajj of the KSA, the South African Department of Foreign Affairs, South African Hajj and Umrah Council and the Hajj agents. These role players will be discussed and the concepts of service delivery, quality in tourism and tourist satisfaction will surface, as these are fundamental responsibilities and goals of these role players.

#### **3.1 Hajj Ministry of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA)**

In 1993, a new law, which prioritises caring for the needs of pilgrims as a state duty was passed in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Article 24 of Part Five pertaining to the rights and duties of the Kingdom's Governance Statutes announced that the state will assume responsibility to serve the two Holy Mosques (specifically Masjid Al-Garaam in Mecca and Masjid Al-Nabewi in Medina) and any reconstruction thereof. The state would also provide security and care for pilgrims that visit these holy mosques in Mecca and Medina and enable them to perform Hajj or Umrah and visit the Mosque of Prophet Mohamed (PBUH) (KSA Department of Hajj Ministry, 2009a).

### **3.1.1 Role of the Hajj Ministry (KSA)**

The Hajj Ministry is the authority that implements all state policy relating to the Hajj. The Hajj Ministry is the governing body of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia that coordinates all government authorities and sectors within Saudi Arabia, which are concerned with Hajj and Umrah. The Hajj Ministry also coordinates and makes arrangements with officials of Islamic countries and countries where the Muslim population is in a minority. They would make contact with the heads of delegations of the Hajj regulators in each country that come for Hajj that year and discuss arrangements for the forthcoming Hajj year (KSA Department of Hajj Ministry, 2009a).

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is a role player in the South African Hajj industry because the KSA is the host destination of the pilgrimage and sets up laws, which govern the global Hajj process. These laws affect each country around the world on policy relating how many pilgrims are allowed, when pilgrims are allowed to enter the KSA and travel arrangements ranging from visas to transport and accommodation. These laws cause the South African Hajj regulator to adapt and implement the new policies in South Africa which in turn affects how the Hajj agents conduct their business and services. It also affects how South African pilgrims are able to perform Hajj each year, therefore the KSA is a role player in the South African Hajj industry as it steers the global Hajj industry (KSA Department of Hajj Ministry, 2009a).

### **3.1.2 Responsibilities and duties of the Hajj Ministry**

Part of the ministry's objectives is to prepare all service amenities for Hajj and to provide pilgrims with comfort and safety.

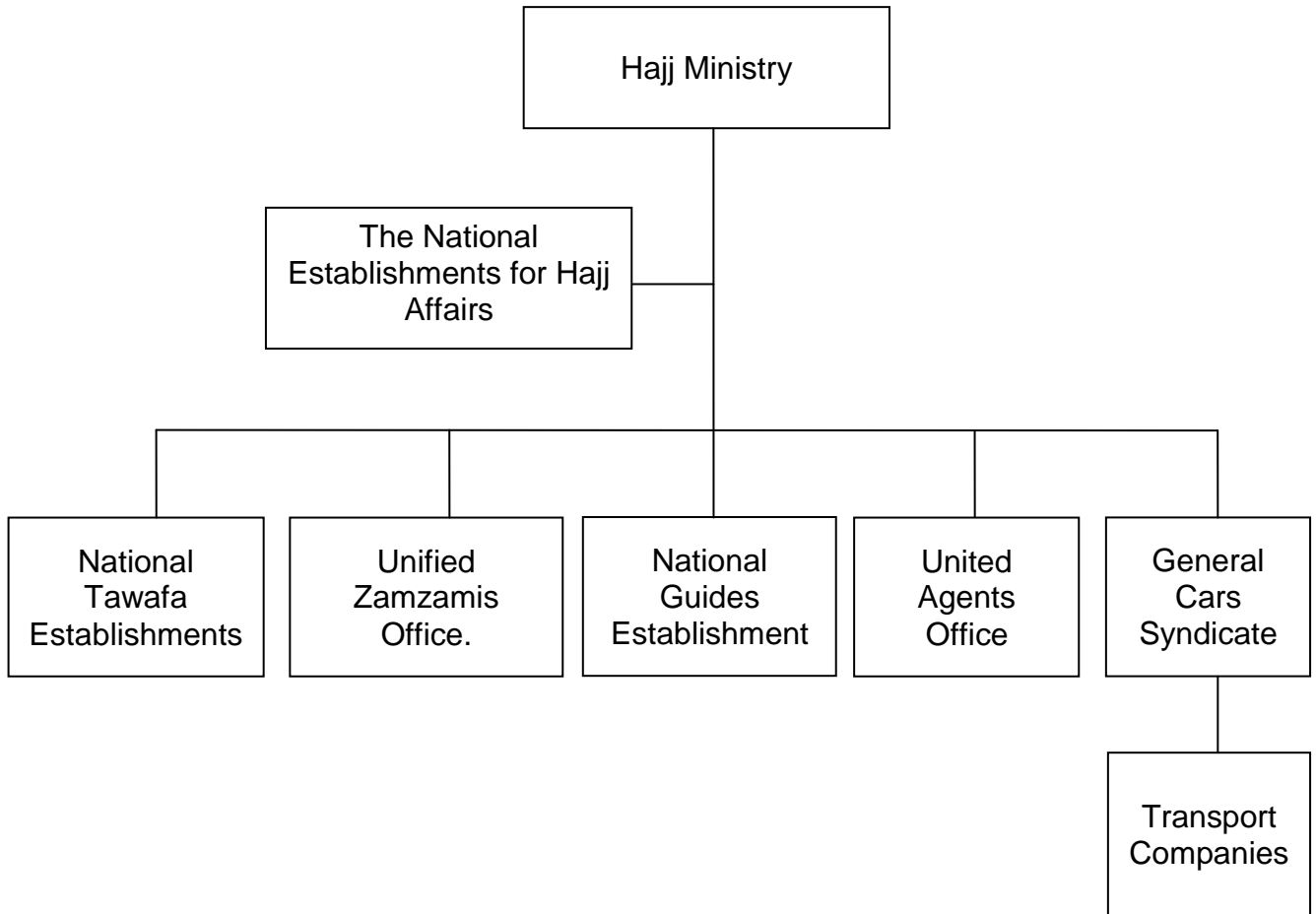
*“The Ministry also takes into account the aspirations of the private sector that seeks to increase its income and reduce its cost, and makes sure that these religious duties are not transformed into a commercial commodity”* (KSA Hajj Ministry, 2009a).

The ministry manages the planning, implementation, supervision and control of the Hajj system in Saudi Arabia. It also dictates to visitor countries related rules and regulations that should be followed. Due to various categories of people performing the Hajj, the ministry aspires to raise the standard of services that are provided to pilgrims whilst ensuring that various sectors that provide these services are supervised and meet pilgrims' expectations, which are consistent with global tourist destinations (KSA Hajj Ministry, 2009a).

The Hajj Ministry has defined 16 main duties and responsibilities, which it focuses on, to produce a successful Hajj each year. These are stated below:

- a) To provide general supervision of services provided to pilgrims from arrival in the Kingdom until pilgrims' safe departure from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.
- b) Total supervision of departments in charge of delivering services, and developing these departments in a manner that is consistent with the directives of the state. These departments are: the National Tawafa Establishments, the National Guides Establishment, the Unified Agents Office and the Unified Zamzamis Office as indicated in Figure 3.1.
- c) To prepare annual operation plans for the National Establishments of Hajj Affairs and to improve the policy for the benefit of the pilgrims.
- d) Complete supervision of the General Cars Syndicate (transport services) and pilgrim transport companies that provide services to pilgrims arriving from abroad.
- e) Coordinating with all pilgrim missions, discussing and resolving issues concerned with serving pilgrims so that future obstacles and difficulties could be minimal and the pilgrim will enjoy an easy and comfortable Hajj.
- f) Ensuring that all government agencies, departments, and seasonal staff work together towards one goal, which is serving pilgrims and making them comfortable.
- g) Providing customer feedback and evaluation by considering pilgrims' complaints and suggestions relating to services provided by the ministry.
- h) Resolving issues between the National Establishments for Hajj Affairs and the service establishments shown in Figure 3.1.

- i) Issuing a Hajj and Umrah magazine, this serves as an intellectual forum for local and visiting scholars and thinkers relating to pilgrimage, the pilgrims and various topics that are aimed at improving the current system. During Hajj season a visual magazine is issued and serves as a platform for marketing.
- j) Participating in issuing regulations pertaining to the planning and coordination of Hajj matters, in general, for the benefit of serving the pilgrims.
- k) Supervision of services provided to citizens and residents of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the establishment of local service providers that provide ease and comfort to pilgrims.
- l) Supervising services that are delivered to Umrah pilgrims and regulating matters locally and abroad through companies that are licensed to serve Umrah pilgrims.
- m) Hosting seminars with academics and thinkers in the Islamic world.
- n) Hosting training for staff involved in field services.
- o) Providing information and material to pilgrims.
- p) Establishing an annual unified policy for all Hajj missions worldwide for the guidance of pilgrims before they leave their respective countries (KSA Department of Hajj Ministry, 2009).



**Figure 3.1 Hierarchy of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia’s Hajj Ministry**

### **3.1.3 The National Establishments for Hajj Affairs (NEHA)**

NEHA as indicated in Figure 3.1 is a government agency of the Hajj Ministry of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), which is responsible for overseeing the other departments within the Hajj Ministry. These departments in Figure 3.1 are responsible for providing different specialised services to the pilgrims. The Hajj Ministry who represents the public sector in the KSA outsources the governmental functions of NEHA to a private company who is an external service provider capable of managing NEHA for a two-year contract. This contract is renewed every two years based on performance and goals achieved. NEHA oversees the National Tawafa



Establishments in Mecca, the National Guides Establishment in Medina and the Unified Zamzamis Office. Other departments under NEHA's management include the United Agents Office in Jeddah, the General Cars Syndicate and the Transport Companies (KSA Hajj Ministry, 2006b). The outsourcing of a Saudi Arabian government agency to manage the Hajj industry is an example of how service delivery trends which was discussed earlier, is manifested in the service delivery of Hajj industry.

#### **3.1.4 National Tawafa Establishments in Mecca**

The hierarchy of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's Hajj Ministry in Figure 3.1 shows the National Tawafa Establishments in Mecca as one of the departments of the Hajj Ministry. The National Tawafa Establishments is responsible for dividing pilgrims from all around the world into geographical locations. Six clusters are formed and each cluster is assigned to one of six specialized establishments that focuses on affairs of their pilgrims and provides them with services in Mecca and the Holy sites. To the South African Hajj agents and pilgrims these specialized establishments are known as the Muassasa. The Muassasa also serves as a mediator between the pilgrims and Hajj agents should problems arise (KSA Hajj Ministry, 2006b).

#### **3.1.5 National Guides Establishment in Medina**

It is custom for South African pilgrims to spend eight days of their six-week pilgrimage in the city of Medina and the remaining time in the city of Mecca. In Medina, pilgrims will visit Prophet Mohamed's (PBUH) mosque and surrounding sites for the purpose of the remembrance of God. The National Guides Establishment in Medina in Figure 3.1 specializes in serving pilgrims that visit the Prophet Mohamed's (PBUH) mosque from arrival to departure (KSA Hajj Ministry, 2006b).

### **3.1.6 Duties of the National Guides and Tawafa Establishments**

The National Guides and Tawafa establishments in Figure 3.1 receive pilgrims at the provincial border entrances of the cities of Mecca and Medina, and provide a guide for each coach, which collects pilgrims at the air and seaports. The establishments are required to welcome and honour the pilgrims, assist with seeking accommodation (if necessary) and transport pilgrims to their accommodation establishments. The establishments should ensure that pilgrims are comfortable whilst residing in Mecca and should have adequate staff to service the pilgrims. The establishments should be vigilant concerning unauthorised houses accommodating pilgrims and should report it. Officials who help pilgrims to fulfil their rituals should request cooperation from the establishments and it is advised that special groups should be created to help pilgrims who live in hotels.

The United Agents Office requests that the establishments cooperate and emphasises cleanliness and safeguarding of residences. When travelling between cities, the pilgrims' passports, travel documents and travel tickets should be kept with the guide on the coach and later delivered to the United Agents Office. The establishments should help pilgrims to process their documents at government departments. When pilgrims are lost, the necessary authorities should be contacted and the establishments should conduct a follow-up enquiry every six hours.

The security departments should be notified when: pilgrims cannot be located, have lost their luggage or when pilgrims fail to leave on their departure dates. The establishments should notify the health centres of any contagious diseases that may have spread and they should help pilgrims report to hospital or call an ambulance if pilgrims are not able to report to hospitals. The belongings of deceased pilgrims should be reported to the Hajj Ministry. The establishments should ensure that families are not split up when travelling on coaches and at their lodgings. The establishments should be on the lookout for pilgrims who attempt to travel before the

official date of departure and if pilgrims are successful, then the establishments will be responsible (KSA Department of Hajj Ministry, 2006b).

### **3.1.7 Unified Zamzamis Office and its duties**

The Unified Zamzamis Office in Figure 3.1 is the local office, which is responsible for providing water from the Holy Zamzam well. They provide the areas of Mecca, Medina, the Holy Sites and centres, where pilgrims gather for water from the Zamzam well. The water is known as Zamzam. The KSA is a desert land and water is a scarcity in the country. The Zamzam well is one of few natural water sources in the country and plays a major role in supplying the pilgrims with the basic need of water during their six-week pilgrimage. The rest of the KSA relies on desalination plants along the coast of the country to turn seawater in drinking water. During Hajj season an average of three million tourists visit the holy cities at the same time and a specialised department known as the Unified Zamzamis Office is needed to manage service delivery relating the water requirements of the pilgrims. The Zamzamis Office may make use of third parties to perform its duties, and usage of third parties is at the own expense of the Zamzamis office but the Hajj Ministry is responsible for third parties that are contracted (KSA Hajj Ministry, 2006b).

The duties of the Unified Zamzamis Office are:

- a) They provide Zamzam upon arrival and departure of pilgrims at the Group Despatching Control Centres.
  
- b) Zamzam should also be made available in accommodation establishments in Mecca.
  
- c) The Zamzamis office should ensure that tankers are filled with cold Zamzam and that the Holy sites have an adequate supply of Zamzam during the peak period.
  
- d) In Medina at Prophet Mohamed's (PBUH) Mosque, Zamzam should be distributed in plastic containers amongst visitors.
  
- e) The Zamzamis office is also expected to place supervisors at various locations whose responsibility it is to monitor the provision of the Zamzam supply.

### **3.1.8 United Agents Office (UAO) in Jeddah and its duties**

The UAO as shown in Figure 3.1 is one of the departments of the Hajj Ministry servicing the pilgrims in Saudi Arabia. Their role becomes apparent when pilgrims arrive in the KSA at the Jeddah airport. The pilgrims are then received by the United Agents Office at the airport and their passports are collected which they will receive upon departure from the KSA. The office is also responsible for checking if all necessary service fees have been paid and for transporting pilgrims to Mecca and Medina.

The United Agents Office should welcome pilgrims at various ports into KSA and then guide them to their accommodation in the Hajj cities. The office should also transport pilgrims' luggage at all air, sea and land ports and should provide labour to carry it, where necessary. There should be cooperation between the office and the National Tawafa Establishments and the Hajj Missions so that allocating pilgrims to field service groups and residences are swiftly executed. The office should help pilgrims at the ports of entry to board coaches departing to the Hajj cities of Mecca and Medina. Thereafter, the pilgrims' final departure data should be captured and the pilgrims' passports should be handed over to the guide accompanying pilgrims to the Hajj cities. The United Agents Office is responsible for receiving and safeguarding pilgrims' passports and should provide the General Passport Department with the necessary data concerning the pilgrims. They should also indicate on the paperwork the number of persons that are accompanying the pilgrims (KSA Hajj Ministry, 2006b).

The UAO office is also responsible for collecting service fees at the ports of entry and will stamp the pilgrims' passport to confirm payment. The pilgrims will be assisted in completing forms and routine matters at government departments. If any pilgrim is lost, the necessary authorities will be informed, while follow-up checks should be conducted every six hours. The office should notify the nearest health centre of any diseases amongst pilgrims and if a pilgrim has died, the details and belongings of the

deceased should be provided to the nearest branch of the Hajj Ministry (KSA Hajj Ministry, 2006b).

The UAO has offices at all air, sea and land ports and will observe that all pilgrims heading to Mecca or Medina of the same nationality are on a coach and have one field service group that is responsible for them. In order to avoid families from being split up, they should be placed in one coach when travelling to the Hajj cities because if they are split up, the UAO and the Ministry branch in Jeddah will be responsible. Usage of third parties is allowed to help perform duties, but it is at the expense of the United Agents Office who is responsible for third parties that are contracted. Lastly, the office should keep a clear record of all pilgrims of each year, as they are responsible for answering any queries regarding pilgrims who were in their care (KSA Hajj Ministry, 2006b).

### **3.1.9 General Cars Syndicate and the Transport Companies**

Transport is an integral role for the successful completion of the pilgrims' rituals regarding the rites of the Hajj. On the eighth day of the month of Hajj, approximately three million pilgrims need to be transported from the city of Mecca to the village of Mina in preparation for the pinnacle of the Hajj on the ninth day. The General Cars Syndicate as illustrated in Figure 3.1 supervises companies that are accredited to transport pilgrims and is responsible for securing suitable transport every year for Hajj as well as organising transport for pilgrims who have paid transportation fees. The Transport Companies shown in Figure 3.1 are the official accredited companies, which transport pilgrims between Hajj cities and the Holy sites. These transport companies fall under the umbrella of the General Cars Syndicate (KSA Hajj Ministry, 2006b).

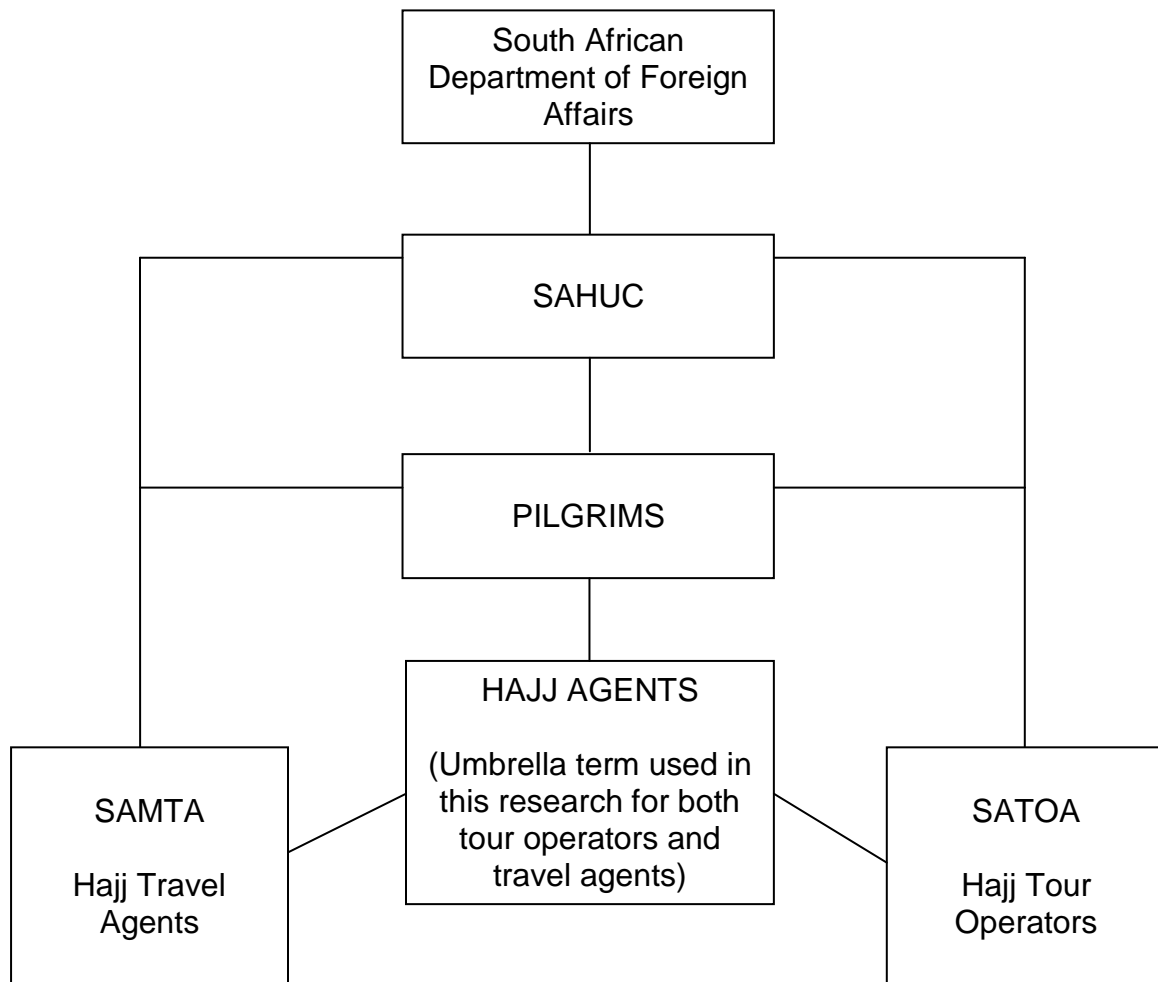
### **3.1.10 Duties of the General Cars Syndicate and the Transport Companies**

In order to provide quality service and ensure a safe and comfortable travel for the pilgrims, the KSA has specifications, which their transport sector should follow. The

General Cars Syndicate and the Transport Companies as illustrated in Figure 3.1 are required to provide comfortable, well-serviced coaches, which transport pilgrims. There should be fixed and mobile workshops along the routes so that prompt assistance is ensured for coach failures. The transport companies will also be held liable if drivers load pilgrims on top of coaches and are guilty of other traffic violations. Transport companies should ensure that all coaches have safes for passports, seatbelts, first aid kits and ropes or covers for luggage. Pilgrims should be issued with tickets, which indicate their destination and price of the coupon. Maps should be made available to drivers and, to prevent exhaustion, drivers are not allowed to work beyond their daily hours (KSA Hajj Ministry, 2006b).

### **3.2 South African Department of Foreign Affairs**

The South African Department of Foreign Affairs in Figure 3.2 is one of the role players, which are involved in South African Hajj industry. It occurs at the back stage of the Hajj operation, but its role is vital when South African pilgrims require assistance with formalities in the KSA. The Consul General at the South African Embassy in Saudi Arabia during 2006 to 2008 agreed to assist in the research and is referred to as DFA Official A, (2008). DFA Official A, (2008) answered four questions relating to Hajj from the Department of Foreign Affairs' point-of-view through email correspondence, which is summarised below.



**Figure 3.2 Hierarchy of the South African Hajj operation**

### **3.2.1 Responsibilities and duties of the South African Consul General regarding South African pilgrims**

According to the DFA official A, (2008) the South African Consulate is responsible for the following duties:

- a) Attending to reports of missing persons.
- b) Visiting the sick in hospital to ensure that proper health care is provided.

This is in accordance with the Vienna Convention. Discretion is also used to assist in various other scenarios if and when the Consulate's intervention is required.

### **3.2.2 South African Hajj industry problems in the KSA**

DFA official A, (2008) highlighted common problems as follows:

- a) Selected Hajj agents do not honour terms of contracts entered into by them with pilgrims.
- b) Unconfirmed flight reservations for pilgrims occur too often which leaves pilgrims stranded at the airports.
- c) Poor quality of accommodation is provided to South African pilgrims.
- d) There is a lack of personnel at the SAHUC Hajj Mission. SAHUC needs more workers in the field in the KSA during Hajj season.
- e) SAHUC has a limited mandate, which results in a problem.

When pilgrims are accredited by SAHUC to perform Hajj, they contract with a Hajj agent of their choice in South Africa. The Consul General recommends that pilgrims should bring copies of the contracts with them to the KSA. This action will give the pilgrim solid evidence to prove to authorities in the Kingdom that the Hajj agent has not honoured the agreement and the Hajj Ministry will take action against such guilty Hajj agents (DFA official A, 2008).

Regarding stranded pilgrims in the KSA, the Consul General states that in the past, selected South African Hajj agents arrived in the Kingdom on business visas, which were in contravention of the regulations. The visa, which should be used is called the "Ashrafiya visa", which prevents Hajj agents from departing from the Kingdom until their last pilgrim leaves, hence ensuring that pilgrims are not left stranded. The Consul also mentions that such past actions have caused various problems and should be avoided in future (DFA Official A, 2008).



The Consul General points out two mistakes on the part of Hajj agents that occur frequently and cause pilgrims to be stranded at airports in the Kingdom. These mistakes are:

- a) Arrival details of pilgrims which were not submitted timeously to the Muassasa's Head office (National Tawafa Establishments in Mecca).
- b) Departure details were not submitted, which made departure arrangements of pilgrims rather challenging for the authorities (DFA official A, 2008).

The Consulate further recommends that the South African Muslim Travel Association (SAMTA) and the South African Hajj Tour Operators Association (SATO) should work closely with SAHUC in order to ensure a smooth running of operations regarding South African pilgrims. It is imperative that all role players should work together to obtain a high standard of service for all South African pilgrims. Service delivery is imperative and should be continuously upgraded (DFA official A, 2008).

### **3.3 South African Hajj and Umrah Council (SAHUC)**

The South African Hajj and Umrah Council (SAHUC) in Figure 3.2 is a nationally-based constituted organisation, which was established by the South African Government and was duly recognised by the various Hajj Authorities and Government Ministries in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as the official structure that is responsible and accountable for facilitating the affairs of the South African pilgrims and monitoring and regulating Hajj processes within South Africa and the KSA (SAHUC, 2005).

#### **3.3.1 Core responsibilities and duties of SAHUC**

According to one of the senior management of SAHUC, SAHUC Official B, (2008), the Saudi Arabian authorities required South Africa to establish a Hajj Mission and they approached the South African government in 1994 to do so. The government, under leadership of then Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Aziz Pahad, attended to

the task. Minister Pahad invited the United Ulamaa Council of South Africa, which is the umbrella structure for Islamic councils in South Africa. Other Islamic councils such as the Muslim Judicial Council, the Ashura organisation and other organisations such as the South African Muslim Travel Association, as well as business people of good standing, came together ultimately manifesting into what is now known as SAHUC. SAHUC Official C, (2007) agrees and clarifies that the Muslim Judicial Council is one of the founders of SAHUC and the organisation has two representatives in SAHUC.

SAHUC Official C, (2007) explains the management structure of SAHUC as consisting of a national executive committee known as the NEC which forms the constituent membership within SAHUC. He was nominated by the United Ulamaa Council of South Africa to lead the organisation and became the president of the organisation. SAHUC also has individuals in charge of operating the offices on a day-to-day basis.

According to SAHUC Official B, (2008), from 1994 until present SAHUC has evolved in a completely different way, becoming more streamlined, more focused and dedicated to pilgrims as well as their responsibilities towards the Hajj agents. SAHUC Official C, (2007) emphasizes that the main responsibilities and duties of SAHUC is to produce a regulatory framework to protect consumers' as well as people who are in the Hajj industry. SAHUC Official C, (2007) reveals that a meeting between the South African Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Hajj Watch and SAHUC was undertaken so as to respond to a request by a representative of the DFA which required a considerable amount of reflection on SAHUC's responsibilities and duties.

SAHUC Official B, (2008) outlines below some of the duties and responsibilities of SAHUC.

- a) Obtain quota for South Africa.
- b) Register and qualify prospective pilgrims.
- c) Meet branches of Hajj Ministry in Saudi Arabia and receive feedback.
- d) Represent and care for South African pilgrims in the KSA.
- e) Provide information updates and serve the prospective pilgrims while in South

Africa.

- f) Report to the SA Consul General who in turn gives a report back to the South African government on Hajj.

### **3.3.2 Instructions that regulate agreements between Hajj missions and the Ministry**

The Hajj Ministry of the KSA has several policy documents which guide and regulate service sectors, government sectors and Hajj organisations within the KSA and abroad. Most countries have a Hajj regulator in their country, and in South Africa, this organisation is SAHUC. Its task is to regulate Hajj within South Africa and to represent South Africa in the KSA. Each Hajj regulator has a Hajj mission, which is a group of people from the regulatory body that acts as field agents for the regulator in the KSA. During the six-week Hajj period these field agents facilitate the well-being and administration duties of their citizens in the KSA.

The Hajj Ministry has stipulated instructions for Hajj missions globally in the policy document known as KSA Hajj Ministry (2006c). The document focuses on ensuring full compliance of the South African Hajj mission with regulations set out by Saudi as well as compliances with all agreements concluded in the KSA. (KSA Department of Hajj Ministry, 2006c). It is also emphasised that the South African Hajj mission ensure it adheres to the percentage quota of pilgrims set aside for their country and that staff of the regulator and Hajj agents do not have unauthorised accommodation at the holy site of Mina (KSA Hajj Ministry, 2006c). The Hajj Ministry also place importance on the aspect of airlines being licensed and accredited and pressures the South African Hajj regulator to ensure these requirements are met (KSA Department of Hajj Ministry, 2006c). The Hajj Ministry allows the respective Hajj missions to use their own transport to execute their duties on condition of prior arrangement before entering the KSA . Facilities and services for pilgrims with special needs must be arranged with the National Tawafa Establishments (KSA Department of Hajj Ministry, 2006c).

### 3.3.3 Hajj process in South Africa as stipulated by SAHUC

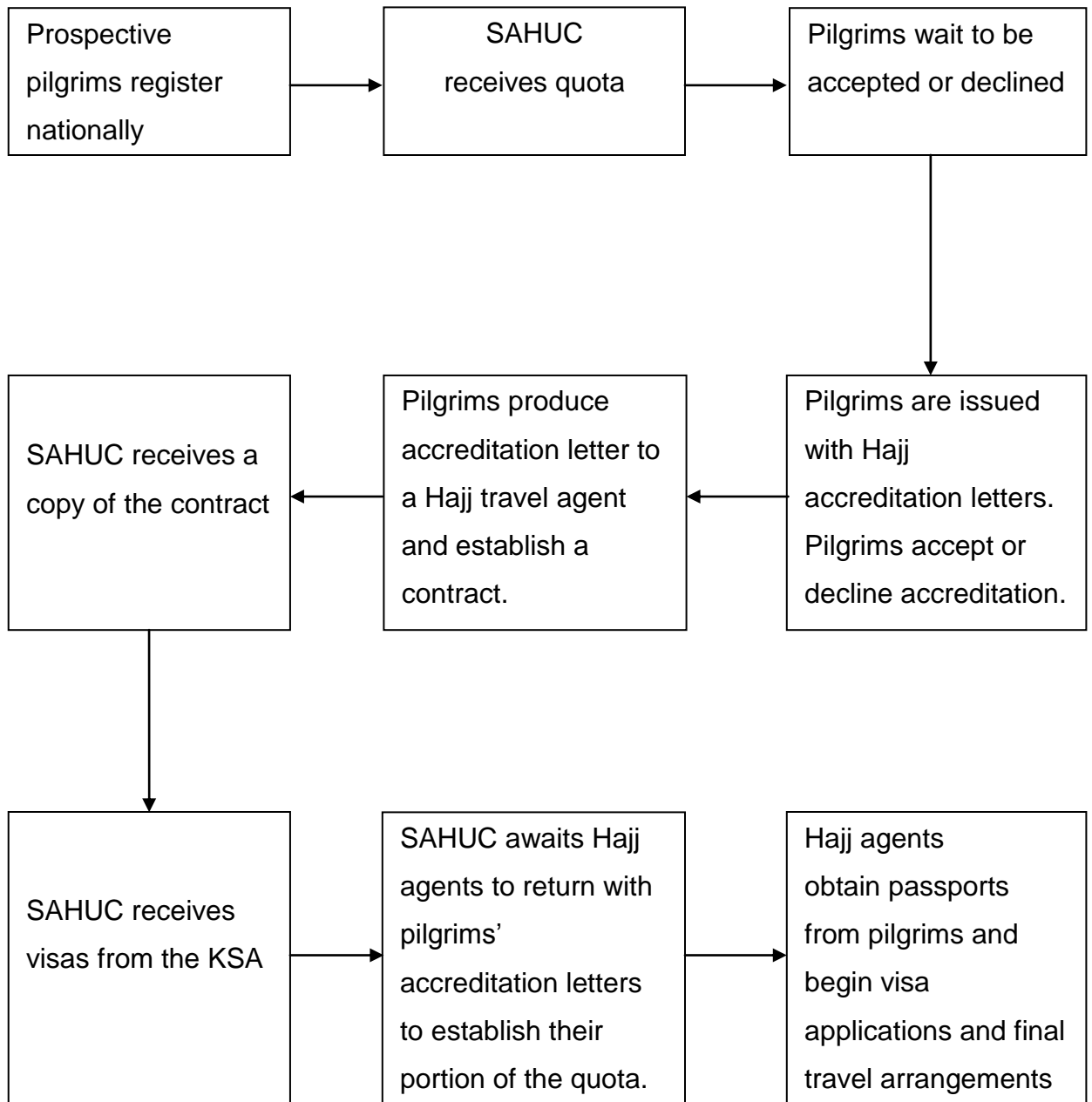


Figure 3.3 The Hajj process in South Africa

The Hajj process, which the South African Hajj industry and the pilgrims adhere to is mentioned below and illustrated in Figure 3.3.

- a) Pilgrims register with regulating body for applicable Hajj season.
- b) Pilgrims wait for their accreditation to either be approved or declined by SAHUC.
- c) Hajj agents advertise to prospective pilgrims, but no money is collected until prospective pilgrims are accredited and can contract with a Hajj travel agent.
- d) Based on an estimation of the size of the Hajj agents group for the coming Hajj season, the Hajj agent visits the Kingdom before the Hajj season and secures accommodation facilities, transport and other amenities for their future group.
- e) A delegation of the South African Hajj Mission travels to Saudi Arabia and attends a briefing by the Saudi Arabian Hajj Ministry regarding requirements and changes for the up and coming Hajj season.
- f) The delegation receives a quota limiting the number of South African pilgrims embarking on Hajj from the Hajj Ministry.
- g) The Council accepts the quota and publicises it to the Hajj agents and the public.
- h) Each Hajj agent entices pilgrims to choose their Hajj package, which determine the number of pilgrims that they are allowed to escort to Saudi Arabia.
- i) Pilgrims choose and contract with a Hajj agent to render services from South Africa to and from the KSA over a six-week pilgrimage.
- j) Pilgrims apply for Saudi Arabian visa.
- k) Pilgrims adhere to required inoculations.
- l) Based on the agreed number, the Hajj agent finalises accommodation and transport agreements. Upon arrival in South Africa visa and flight arrangements are finalised and Hajj agents prepare for departing with their group for Hajj.
- m) Pilgrims are allowed to arrive in the KSA at a maximum of six weeks before the actual Hajj period and Hajj agents will embark with their groups during this time (SAHUC Official B, 2008).

SAHUC also regulates Hajj agents as to the number of members per group i.e. Each group is allowed a minimum of 50 pilgrims. Each travel agent should have an official

who represents the organisation when accompanying pilgrims from South Africa to the KSA (KSA Ministry of Hajj, 2006c:4).

Row two of the Hajj process in Figure 3.3 deals with the issuing of Hajj accreditation letters. Those applicants who were successful for Hajj accreditation for that particular year are issued with a Hajj accreditation letter by SAHUC. Those applicants who were unsuccessful will remain in the queue until they are within the first 2500 people in the queue, which will enable them to be selected. There are also situations where pilgrims who are accredited may refuse to perform Hajj that year due to unexpected sickness or a family member not being accredited which may cause the entire family to forfeit that year.

The accreditation letter is a priority for both pilgrim and Hajj travel agent. The letter guarantees the pilgrim a place within the allocated quota for South Africa and signals to the Hajj agent that this person is a potential customer. SAHUC made it mandatory for Hajj agents to only contract with pilgrims that have been accredited for that particular year of Hajj. This was done to ensure that the Hajj agent did not utilise resources for an individual that was not cleared for pilgrimage for that year. This would inevitably lead to a financial loss on behalf of the Hajj agent and pilgrim. For Hajj agents the accreditation letter are important as they signal that this pilgrim is a viable client and hence travel bookings can proceed.

### **3. 4. Hajj Pilgrims in relation to the hierarchy of the South African Hajj operation**

With reference to the hierarchy of the South African Hajj operation in Figure 3.2, the pilgrims appear in the centre of the illustration as they are affected by and interact with all the role players in the Hajj industry. As represented in Figure 3.2 the pilgrims are affected by the DFA through the country's foreign policy and it having an embassy in the KSA with a Consul General available to serve South Africans during their stay in the KSA. The pilgrims interact with SAHUC as it manages the process of pilgrimage from South Africa to Saudi Arabia. The pilgrims' are also dependent on

SAHUC to approve them for Hajj and in the KSA; SAHUC also assumes the role of protector and guardian of South African pilgrims while in the KSA.

When reviewing Figure 3.2 it is apparent that the pilgrims interact and are influenced by Hajj agents. For example Hajj agents may decide to sell a Hajj package that provide a full stay of the six-week pilgrimage in Mecca, but the price may not be in everybody's reach. This is due to the fact that during the last 5 days of Hajj, accommodation prices in Mecca rise sharply which cause a full stay Hajj package in Mecca to be very expensive. Pilgrims eventually contract with a Hajj agent and form part of that Hajj agent's group, who is then responsible for ensuring their groups perform the pilgrimage and returns safely to South Africa. The Hajj agents belong to the South African Muslim Travel Association (SAMTA) and the South African Travel and Hajj Association (SATO) respectively and these associations represent the Hajj travel agents Hajj tour operators in the South African Hajj industry. These associations will be discussed next.

### **3.5 South African Travel and Hajj Association (SATO)**

SATO as illustrated in Figure 3.2 is the organisation that represents Hajj tour operators in the industry and membership to this organisation is voluntary. SATO chairperson, Hajj agent T, (2007) describes the organisation in relation to SAHUC as below:

#### **3.5.1 South African Travel and Hajj Associations Vision**

Hajj agent T, (2007) states that SATO in Figure 3.2 has in its vision to make the Hajj as easy as possible for the pilgrims and to make sure that there is no conflict amongst Hajj tour operators so that they can provide service excellence to pilgrims. He explains that SATO should become one voice for all Hajj tour operators, while the same applies when Hajj tour operators should be addressed, since the organisation receives the message and distributes it to all Hajj tour operators.

### **3.5.2 South African Travel and Hajj Associations Objectives**

SATOA as illustrated in Figure 3.2 is governed by policy set out by the regulator but Hajj agent T, (2007) states that SATOA tries to work closely with those who administer the Hajj system such as SAHUC, the Hajj Ministry and, especially, the Muassasa in Mecca. He mentions that the Muassasa does appreciate SATOA speaking on behalf of all South African Hajj tour operators, because they like to deal with a spokesperson or representative of the Hajj tour operators instead of each tour operator individually.

SATOA in Figure 3.2 represents the Hajj tour operators and Hajj agent T, (2007) points out that SATOA was formed to police itself. They have a working relationship with Hajj tour operators and are able to bring about discipline amongst themselves. SATOA promotes integrity and honesty within the industry as one serves the guests of God, and guards against ill-discipline and unethical practices, as well as unethical competition.

### **3.5.3 South African Travel and Hajj Associations relations with SAHUC**

SATOA in Figure 3.2 is on the National Executive Council of SAHUC. Hajj agent T, (2007) points out that SATOA is clearly in a minority at meetings in comparison to SAHUC and its affiliates, hence when issues are voted upon, SATOA's viewpoints are not heeded (Hajj agent T, 2007). According to Hajj agent T, (2007) once decisions are made, the outcomes are broadcasted to the public, which gives the impression that SATOA was part of the decision. Mention is not made of any position by SATOA against the vote (Hajj agent T, 2007).

### **3.5.4 Problems facing the South African Travel and Hajj Association**

Hajj agent T, (2007) believes that SATOA in Figure 3.2 is marginalised at the final stages of the Hajj process when protocols are discussed and signed. He feels that Hajj tour operators are left out of the equation because SAHUC believes that Hajj tour



operators cannot be included in the entire process because they have vested interests. Hajj agent T, (2007) states that the Hajj tour operators form an integral part of the entire process, and would like to see one or two members of SATOA included in future delegations, that negotiate the quota with the Hajj Ministry in Saudi Arabia.

### **3.6 South African Muslim Travel Association (SAMTA)**

SAMTA's Secretary, Hajj agent M, (2007) describes how the organisation represents normal travel agents and Muslim Hajj agents and how it fits into the Hajj Industry below:

#### **3.6.1 Vision of SAMTA**

According to Hajj agent M, (2007) the vision of SAMTA is to offer smooth travel operations in holiday travel and Hajj-related travel. The organisation is recognised by the South African authorities and the Saudi Arabian authorities. SAMTA also envision unity amongst Hajj travel agents wherein they work as one towards service excellence.

#### **3.6.2 Objectives of SAMTA**

Hajj agent M, (2007) mention that SAMTA tries to foster good relations between members in the Hajj industry. Hajj agent M, (2007) states that SAMTA tries to build relations with airlines and hotels as well as attempting to keep abreast of regulations that are handed down from the Hajj Ministry and SAHUC. The organisation also tries to negotiate better deals for fares and accommodation, whilst offering cheaper products to consumers. SAMTA had 30 members in 2007 and charge members an annual fee. SAMTA provides one voice for all members in the industry and assists the Hajj travel agents when they have problems with clients, accommodation, airlines and tries to work together as much as possible. He cites an example where they had a meeting with Saudi Arabian airlines because they had some concerns. SAMTA

negates infighting and focuses on service excellence towards both Hajj travellers and mainstream travellers.

### **3.6.3 South African Muslim Travel Association's Relations with SAHUC**

According to Hajj agent M, (2007) relations between SAMTA and SAHUC is good and he mentions that it was only under the new management in 2007, that SAHUC recognised SAMTA's input and took them seriously. Hajj agent M, (2007) regards this as a huge improvement and mentions that SAMTA normally compiles a report highlighting issues that Hajj travel agents face as well as other problems that relate to Hajj. These issues are then sent to SAHUC before the delegation departs to sign the protocols in Saudi Arabia. This is done so that SAHUC is made aware of pressing issues and bear them in mind when negotiating the protocols.

### **3.6.4 Hajj agents in relation to the hierarchy of the South African Hajj operation**

In the mainstream tourism, industry there is a clear distinction between tour operators and travel agents. In the South African Hajj industry however there is a blurring of responsibilities between the travel agent and tour operator. Bennett (2000:62-65) mentions that the two main intermediaries in the tourism industry are tour operators and travel agencies. Tour operators are often referred to as the wholesalers and the travel agents as the retailers in the tourism industry. Tour operators would buy accommodation, transport products in bulk together with other travel services, and package it in an all-inclusive tour where the consumer pays one price for a complete holiday with all the bookings and other arrangements.

The travel agent would act on behalf of the principals who comprise of hotels, airlines, car rental companies, cruise ship companies and others in the tourism industry. They would then sell the respective services to the final consumer and in return receives a commission for each sale. The travel agent sells flights, rooms and other tourism offerings as the tourist demands it and does not carry the huge risk as a

tour operator. He further acknowledges that the travel agents serve a dual role of providing information about a travel destination and requirements for the prospective tourist to embark on the journey, whilst providing a distribution point where principals can sell their tourism products to consumers.

Bennett (2000:62-64) indicates that the business functions of a tour operator include tour preparation, tour marketing and administration. Some of the aspects that tour preparation concern include preparation of detailed tour specifications such as departure dates, tour length, modes of transport and ground services that should be utilised. He further states that once ground services have been negotiated, supplier agreements are signed and transportation commitments are made. Other aspects that tour preparation includes are researching the needs of the market and taking familiarisation trips to establish tour potential. Bennett (2000:62-64) also mentions that the tour operator usually focuses on brochure design and brochure distribution, media advertising and personal selling as main forms of tour marketing. The brochures will be designed to stand out amongst other brochures on the travel agents' rack and would be distributed to retail travel agencies.

The general tasks that travel agents perform are:

- a) Advising clients about resorts, carriers, travel companies and travel facilities worldwide.
- b) Making reservations and travel arrangements.
- c) Planning itineraries.
- d) Computing airline and other fares for clients.
- e) Issuing travel tickets and vouchers.
- f) Corresponding by telephone, post and email with travel principals and clients.
- g) Maintaining files on reservations.
- h) Maintaining and displaying travel brochures.
- i) Negotiating with principals in the case of customer complaints.

(Bennett,2000:64-65)

Within the Hajj industry, the Hajj travel agent is primarily responsible for flights and bookings, but often also has a component or department, that acts as a tour operator thereby touring with pilgrims in Mecca. This department fulfils the duties of a Hajj tour operator such as accompanying pilgrims from South Africa to the KSA; provide services in the KSA and ensuring their safe return to South Africa. In this research, it became clear that both Hajj tour operator and Hajj travel agent fulfil largely the same roles and duties for the consumer, with the exception that Hajj tour operators did not have the ability to access airline reservation systems and book flights. The researcher should add that this is not normal in mainstream tourism and this research refers to both the travel agents and tour operators as Hajj agents so as to address the evident overlap between both parties as is illustrated in Figure 3.2.

### **3.7 Chapter Summary**

This chapter dealt with the role players within the South African Hajj industry describing their functions and reveals the importance of synergy amongst the role players in the industry. It is evident that each role player has a huge responsibility and one realises how dependent the role players are upon each other in order to ultimately serve pilgrims. The following chapter explains how the researcher approached all role players, including pilgrims, to partake in the research of the development of a service delivery framework for South African pilgrims travelling to Saudi Arabia. The research methods research design and limitations to the research will be elaborated

.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

#### **4.0 Introduction**

As stated previously the main aim of this thesis is to give a descriptive account of the service level experienced by Muslim pilgrims from South Africa during the period of 2006 to 2007. To garner data from a large number of Muslim migrants, the researcher undertakes a largely quantitative approach, supplemented with lesser data gained from a qualitative approach. Quantitative methods are suitable when dealing with a large data sample group and is especially efficacious as it draws on empirical studies, which produce objective results. The statistical findings of the questionnaires are provided in graphs in the data analysis chapter to follow.

#### **4.1 Research Design**

The research is broadly divided into qualitative and quantitative research. The qualitative section focuses on the pilot study and in-depth interviews, while the quantitative section refers to the survey and questionnaire. Thereafter a detailed breakdown of the sampling procedure, selection and collection is provided.

##### **4.1.1 Qualitative Research**

Although the quantitative method is largely used, it is considered beneficial to include qualitative research methods as well, particularly face-to-face interviews with key informants from the various stakeholders. Qualitative methods yield interesting and invaluable results in that it provides for a deeper engagement with the subject matter. Firestone (1987:16) posits that qualitative methods “...express the assumptions of a phenomenological paradigm that there are multiple realities that are socially defined”. This approach also allows the researcher to become immersed in the subject material and better understand the situation. In this way, interviews were undertaken, as it was

believed that data collected in this manner would offer up invaluable insights into more personal and subjective views of the Hajj service.

#### *4.1.1.1 Pilot study*

A pilot or feasibility study is a scaled down version of the main research method planned for within a larger research project. A pilot study is important as it can reveal potential problems in the design and implementation of the proposed research method. In this case, piloting of questionnaires is useful as it allows the researcher an opportunity to check the applicability of the research tool prior to conducting full-scale and in-depth data collection. Generally speaking, when pilot studies do not lead to the modification of research tools (as with the case in this research) data sourced can be used in the main research design (cf. Lancaster, Dodd & Williamson, 2004:1).

Importantly, it was ascertained that the questionnaire itself was adequate for research and for this reason, the data collected from the pilot study is added to the final data findings chapter. In 2007, fieldwork began with a pilot study at O.R. Tambo International Airport in Johannesburg South Africa. The questionnaires were distributed to returning South African pilgrims originating disparately from all of the nine provinces of South Africa. Although 1200 questionnaires were handed out (with self-addressed stamped envelopes for easy return) only 141 were returned.

The questionnaire consists of six pages. Kindly refer to Appendix A. The questionnaire is divided into two sections, namely Section A and Section B with the first section comprising of five questions, each containing statements that the respondents answers by means of a type of Likert scale model. More discussion regarding the structure and design of the questionnaire is provided in Section 3.1.3 of this chapter.

#### 4.1.1.2 *In-depth Interviews with suppliers*

The researcher found it useful to interview key role players within the South African Hajj stakeholders, specifically: Hajj agents, South African Department of Foreign Affairs and senior SAHUC officials.

a) **Hajj agents:** For the Hajj year 2006 to 2007 there were 41 registered Hajj agents in South Africa. More than half of this figure operated solely in the Western Cape Province of which 15 were randomly selected for open schedule interviews. Two Hajj agents from the Gauteng and another two from KwaZulu-Natal province were telephonically interviewed, totalling 19 randomly selected Hajj agents for open schedule interviews.

b) **South African DFA:** The Consul General represents the South African DFA and is on standby during South Africa's preparation for Hajj, as well as the actual Hajj period.

22 October 2008: DFA official A, (2008) was the former South African Consul General in Saudi Arabia and South Africa. This individual was based primarily in Jedda (Saudi Arabia) and was often too busy to accept calls. For this reason, the researcher corresponded with this individual via email only.

c) **SAHUC:** Three key officials from SAHUC were interviewed. In the interest of anonymity, the names have been removed and only the affiliation and date of interviews are provided below:

23 April 2007: SAHUC Official A (Secretary Office, Cape Town)

04 Jan 2008: SAHUC Official B (Secretary General (Johannesburg))

12 Nov 2007: SAHUC Official C (President: Cape Town)

All interviews were audio recorded and later transcribed and analysed thematically in relation to key questions in the survey.

#### **4.1.2 Quantitative (Survey)**

Importantly, as the majority of responses from the pilot study came from the Western Province, the researcher found it logical to proceed with the focused questionnaire survey in this region only. This decision was further deepened by the fact that the Western Cape Province has the highest percentage of Muslims in the country (South Africa. Census, 2001). An argument in favour of this methodological move is provided in section 3.2 dealing with sampling population below. The sites where questionnaires were distributed are provided below:

a) Site 1: Islamic Unity Convention, Athlone (January 2008)

A total of 2000 people attended, of which approximately 1300 were pilgrims of the recent pilgrimage. Of the 490 distributed questionnaires, 165 questionnaires were completed and returned.

b) Site 2: Kensington Civic Centre, Kensington (February 2008)

An event hosted by the Hidayatul Islam Mosque in celebration of returning pilgrims. A total of 20 questionnaires were completed and returned.

In sum, a total of 1690 questionnaires were distributed, 326 were completed and returned.

#### **4.1.3 Questionnaire (sampling, layout and content)**

Questionnaires were circulated to pilgrims who performed their pilgrimage in the 2006 to 2007 Hajj season. Only South African pilgrims were the focus of this research. The Hajj agents from the Western Cape, Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal provinces were randomly selected and interviewed. According to Welman, Kruger and Mitchell random sampling “is the most attractive type of probability sampling” (2005:59). They differentiate between simple random sampling and stratified random sampling. The former occurs when any member of the population has an equal possibility of being selected in the sample. The



latter is more systematic as only members of a particular subpopulation within the larger population is considered. This means that the researcher uses one or two variables to create a subgroup in which to select random participants for the study. In this case, the single most important variable used to stratify the populace was that the subgroup had to consist of Hajj agents who serviced the South African Hajj industry during 2006 to 2007. During this period there were 41 Hajj agents, of which 19 were randomly selected.

Three officials of SAHUC were also selected through purposive data sampling. Welman *et al* (2005:69) state that purposive sampling is “the most important type of non-probability sampling.” For them, this particular type of sampling draws on the researcher’s own experience in the field of study as well as their particular needs and creative flair. In the case of this study, the researcher used prior knowledge of key role players in the Hajj industry to select ‘high ranking’ and influential individuals to interview regarding the South African Hajj industry. After the selected individuals were interviewed, data was thereafter transcribed and analysed thematically.

The main scale, which was used in this research, is based largely on the Likert scale model. This model was first introduced by Rensis Likert in 1932. This model provided a scale in which a respondent’s attitude towards a particular phenomenon is measured. Likert’s scale had 5 response choices, specifically: Strongly Approve, Approve, Undecided, Disapprove, and Strongly Disapprove.

Clason and Dormody (1994) point out that recent use of the Likert scale has undergone modification from the classical five-point system with some researchers opting to reduce the categories to an even number of choices with others omitting the neutral response altogether. For this research, the wording of the five-point Likert scale was modified slightly to: Strongly Agree, Agree, Undecided, Disagree, Strongly Disagree. The Likert scale is useful for procuring respondents’ reactions to a series of statements, in this case respondents’ were questioned as to their experiences of pilgrimage. This method of acquiring data is widely used within the social sciences and is considered a practical choice when surveying large numbers of people.

The questionnaire was designed using largely close-ended statements. The statements were structured in a manner in which an extensive picture of the Hajj process could later be ascertained. The sequence and content of the statements is provided below:

- a) Section One: focus on Hajj agent and pilgrims. Aspects covered accommodation; meals; rating of assistance and staff; accuracy of brochures; perceptions of Hajj agents' services.
- b) Section Two: focus on airlines that operated within Hajj industry. Aspects covered: chartered flights and availability of commercial flights.
- c) Section Three: focus on SAHUC, which regulates the Hajj industry. Aspects covered: SAHUC medical service; number of SAHUC officials in Saudi Arabia; SAHUC's assistance towards pilgrims while in South Africa and Saudi Arabia; SAHUC's administration of the quota system.
- d) Section Four: focus on Hajj Ministry in Saudi Arabia. Aspects covered: Hajj Ministry quota system and transfer during the five (most spiritually crucial) days of Hajj.
- e) Section Five: focus on improving Hajj preparation for pilgrims. Aspects covered: Hajj classes; public awareness of changes within the Hajj industry; brochures and Hajj itineraries; SAHUC; well-wishers at airports.

Section B dealt with independent variables, specifically: gender, language, age groups and educational qualifications, location and frequency of pilgrimage to Mecca.

## **4.2 Sampling Population**

South Africa is divided into nine provinces, namely: Western Cape, Eastern Cape, Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo, Mpumalanga, Northern Cape, North West and Free State. According to Statistics SA 2001 there are 654 064 Muslims in South Africa. Of this

figure the largest number of Muslims are located in the Western Province with 44.7% (292 908), followed by Gauteng with 22.9% (150 081) and KwaZulu-Natal with 22% (142 459). The remaining 10.4% are scattered disparately throughout the other 6 provinces of South Africa. Notably the most recent census (2011) did not indicate differences in religious denominations. The City of Cape Town is situated in the Western Cape Province and has a well-documented history of the Muslims first arrival in the Cape (cf. Mahomed Mahida, 1993).

### **4.3 Participant selection strategy**

For the questionnaires, participants were selected on the following criteria:

- a) They had to be returning pilgrims for the previous Hajj year
- b) They had to be older than 18 years
- c) They had to be residents of South Africa

For the interviews, participants were selected based on the following criteria:

- a) Involved as service providers i.e. Hajj agents.
- b) Involved in Hajj regulator i.e. SAHUC.
- c) Allowed the conversation to be recorded.

### **4.4 Sampling and data collection technique**

According to Polkinghorne (2005: 138) sampling is important as it “...*carries the connotation that those chosen are a sample of a population and the purpose of their selection is to enable findings to be applied to a population*”. In this research, purposive sampling was used for selection of interviewees and is detailed below. A five-point type of Likert scale was used as a method in which to analyse data collected from questionnaire respondents.

Individuals selected for interviews were chosen through purposeful sampling. This type of sampling allows the researcher to methodically select participants in relation to their ability to provide rich data about issues regarding the Hajj process. Patton (1990:169) discusses the selection for purposive sampling as involving:

*“...information-rich cases for study in depth...from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research, thus the term purposive sampling”.*

This combination of quantitative and qualitative methods lies in the advantage of triangulation.

*“Triangulation does not serve to verify a particular account but to allow the researcher to move beyond a single view of the experience. The use of multiple participants serves to deepen the understanding of the investigated experience; it is not for the purpose of making claims about the distribution of the experience in a population” (Polkinghorne 2005:140).*

#### **4.5 Data analysis**

The expertise of a registered statistician was procured for analysis of the survey data. Specifically, the data was analysed by using the Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) software. Statistical tests comprised of tables and frequencies, which showed percentages and comparisons of the results of role players relating to the needs and wants of pilgrims and areas of improvement within the Hajj industry.

##### **4.5.1 Type of analysis utilised**

The interviews were analysed through thematic analysis. “Themes can be described as ‘umbrella’ constructs which are usually identified by the researcher before, after, and during the data collection” (Welman *et al* 2005: 211). According to Ryan and Bernard (no date) cited in Welman *et al* (2005:211), there are eight overarching theme identification methods, namely: (a) ‘counting words and repetition of words’, (b) ‘indigenous categories and keywords in context’, (c) ‘comparison and contrast’, (d) ‘searching for missing information’, (e) ‘metaphors and analogies’, (f) ‘transitions and connectors’, (g) ‘unmarked text’ and (h) ‘pawing, cutting, and sorting’. Of these potential

identification methods, the one used in this study is (e) metaphors and analogies. This particular type of theme identification method is applicable when, as in this study, the respondents draw on metaphors and analogies or examples to convey their personal views and beliefs about the research topic. In this particular study, the occurrence of small anecdotes were given as evidence by the respondents as to their views on the subject of the Hajj industry in South Africa.

#### **4.5.2 Likert Scale model**

The Likert scale model is one of the more commonly used models for quantitative research. It uses a five-point scale system to indicate agreement or disagreement. Respondents are provided with statements and their responses are then viewed as a way to measure difference in attitude. Simply put, responses are "...turned into a numerical scale by assigning numerical values to each response and summing up the results" (Bouma and Ling, 2004: 71). According to (Ryan and Garland, 1999: 107) "...many surveys include questions that address subjective phenomena and the use of Likert-type scales is a common research method for eliciting opinions and attitudes in the social and business sciences". Similarly, this study finds the Likert scale model to be an effective model in which to gauge attitudes and opinions of the current service delivery experienced by pilgrims. According to Welman *et al* (2005:156) an attitude may be directed at *inter alia* a group or individual, a custom or a political or social issue. In the case of this study, the attitudes of the respondents are directed at the broader sociopolitical issue of the Hajj service delivery framework in South Africa.

In the design of the questionnaire, two important variables were introduced namely independent and dependent variables.

### **4.5.3 Independent variables**

The independent variable is described as the variable that occurs first and is subject to the parameters outlined out by the researcher. According to Welman *et al* (2005:16) the independent variable “is that factor which the researcher selects and manipulates in order to determine its effect on the observed phenomenon”. In this study, the independent variables found in the questionnaire were determined by the demographic factors as well as additional information such as education, province of origin and whether the respondent was a first-time pilgrim.

Importantly, the independent variables discussed above was carefully selected by the researcher to ensure that the phenomena under investigation is observable.

### **4.5.4 Dependent variables**

The dependent variable is the variable which takes place second and is referred to by Welman *al* (2005:17) as “that factor which the researcher observes and measures to determine how it was affected by the independent variable”. In this study, dependent variables were ascertained as the altitudinal responses relating to the Hajj service delivery framework in South Africa. Using the Likert scale model, respondents attitudes were systematically rated in accordance with the numerical weighting accompanying each response. Each statement was rated on a five-point scale and a weighting (ranging between 1-5) was allotted to each response.

In this study, a set of dependent variables was systematically assigned to each of the twenty-two statements. The questionnaire was divided into two main sections, specifically:

Section A: Dependent variables, which deal with attitudes. In this section there are twenty-two statements.

Section B: Independent variables are those that feature the demographic details and information relating to the Hajj industry.

#### **4.5.5 Mode**

To calculate the responses of the Likert scale, this study uses the 'mode' in order to ascertain the average response for each statement. According to Babbie (2007: 412) a mode is "...an average representing the most frequently observed value or attribute."

#### **4.6 Appropriateness and alignment with thesis statement and/or research questions**

This thesis set out to investigate the Hajj service delivery framework at a national level. As argued earlier in this chapter, it is believed that the focus on the most Muslim-dominant province allows for later extrapolation and generalisation about the state of service nationwide.

#### **4.7 Delimitations of the research and researcher bias**

Formal academic research related to Hajj in South Africa is sparse. Two previous studies were completed in 2007 (Ebrahim, 2007) and (Hendricks, 2007), respectfully. Hendricks 2007 thesis focused on the performance and governance of SAHUC as a regulator and Ebrahim's 2007 thesis focused on the transition of Management of the Hajj and Hajj traditions in the Cape. These studies formed a much-needed background to the current research, and assisted towards development of a service delivery framework for South African pilgrims travelling to Saudi Arabia.

At the commencement of studies, the researcher formally requested details of pilgrims registered with SAHUC in the hopes of communicating with them directly. This request was declined by SAHUC stating "Pilgrim Confidentiality". Additionally, when taking into account the diverse linguistic repertoire of the respondents, the researcher ultimately

selected English for both the questionnaires and interviews as it is the lingua franca of the country.

The notion of researcher bias refers to instance wherein the research prejudices the outcomes of research in some way. According to Babbie (2007:G1) bias refers to “the quality of a measurement device that tends to result in a misrepresentation of what is being measured in a particular direction”. In this study the researcher assumed that the large number of migrants may not be able to return the survey by mail due to financial constraints. In an attempt to mitigate this occurrence, the researcher provided a self-addressed stamped envelope to the respondents so that they would not incur any financial burden when participating in this research. As the researcher is of the Islamic faith, a pressing concern may be that of the researcher’s bias towards expressing a particular personal view of Islam and the pilgrimage as a whole. The researcher has attempted to mitigate this bias by relying solely on the findings of the questionnaire and not any subjective views on this topic.

#### **4.8 Ethics: Procedures for ensuring ethical research and ethical use of the research**

Informants were disclosed as to the aim of the research and questionnaires were completed anonymously. Additionally, consent was given for the recording of all interviews. Names have been changed to ensure anonymity of interviewees as seen with the omission of Hajj Agents A-S from the reference list. Although details of these interviewees have been omitted, recordings of said interviews have been placed on compact disc and include additional information such as date and venue of interviews

#### **4.9 Proposed methods for analysis of data collected**

The analysis of the questionnaires is undertaken through descriptive statistical analysis. This method of analysis was further aided by the inclusion of bar graphs showing the frequency of the weighted responses as well giving an accurate percentage representation of the sample group. This type of analysis focuses on describing what the researcher uncovers from the graphs as opposed to making judgement calls regarding



the data. For transcribed interviews, the researcher undertakes a thematic analysis. This type of analysis allows the researcher to select themes, which speak to phenomena procured initially from the questionnaires. Furthermore, the input of various stakeholders during the interview process serves as a manner of triangulation, which is useful in expanding the view of the Hajj process.

#### **4.10 Chapter Summary**

This chapter provided a detailed outline of the research methodology and design. It expounded upon the decision-making processes of the researcher and the theoretical and analytical toolkit. The next chapter elaborates upon the results obtained through the methodological strategies discussed here.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS**

#### **5.0 Introduction**

This chapter presents findings and analysis of results obtained from questionnaires and interviews. Where necessary data from the questionnaire was reproduced in the form of bar graphs, tables and other graphic for easy analysis. Each question within the questionnaire is discussed and where applicable relations are drawn to interview responses. Similarly, interview data is discussed in relation to views ascertained from the questionnaire. The researcher relates data generally to the SERVQUAL and SERVUCTION systems outlined in chapter two. Emphasis is also placed on the Schmall consumer buying behaviour model. To begin the researcher provides information regarding the demographic profile of questionnaire respondents. Thereafter the statements are structured as follows:

SECTION 1: Statements 1-8 deal with service delivery of Hajj agents,

SECTION 2: Statements 9-10 is related to airlines operating during the Hajj periods;

SECTION 3: Statements 11-15 relate to SAHUC as a regulating body

SECTION 4: Statements 16-19 relate to the Hajj Ministry of KSA

SECTION 5: Statements 20-24 relating to improving Hajj preparation for pilgrims

A graphical representation of the responses to the twenty-two weighted statements in the questionnaire is provided next in Table 5.1.

**Table 5.1 Data-Summarisation sheet**

Full Question	Weighted scores	n =	SD	D	U	A	SA
Accommodation grading was on par with what was promised by the Hajj agent.	1247	315	2.49%	3.37%	1.68%	40.74%	51.72%
Meals that form part of the package were provided as promised by the Hajj agent.	1280	310	1.02%	3.13%	4.45%	37.50%	53.91%
The Hajj agent that I contracted with provided adequate assistance throughout the pilgrimage.	1226	316	3.02%	3.59%	5.63%	30.67%	57.10%
Hajj package brochures, which were provided by the Hajj agent, were clear and accurate.	1182	307	2.37%	4.06%	7.36%	37.56%	48.65%
I had access to the Hajj agent's spiritual leader during the entire trip.	1236	314	2.18%	5.50%	3.40%	31.07%	57.85%
Service personnel from the Hajj agent were courteous and helpful while attending to us during our pilgrimage.	663	317	2.50%	3.71%	4.12%	38.42%	51.25%
For future Hajj travel I would choose this Hajj agent again.	1221	316	3.52%	2.95%	7.86%	22.60%	63.06%
I would prefer to use chartered flights for pilgrimage in the future	767	308	19.56%	21.38%	29.34%	17.21%	12.52%
Commercial airlines that fly to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia should be more available during Hajj season.	476	312	3.15%	4.20%	8.82%	45.80%	38.03%
If Yes, the service regarding your medical treatment was efficient and of an exceptionally good standard.	742	187	1.89%	3.23%	5.26%	40.43%	49.19%
More SAHUC officials are needed in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia during Hajj season.	629	305	19.87%	13.99%	17.17%	27.34%	21.62%
SAHUC assisted me with administrative preparations for Hajj and during my stay in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.	766	300	12.01%	19.58%	18.02%	25.59%	24.80%
I am satisfied with the manner in which SAHUC handled the Hajj situation / crises of 2006-2007 regarding to the quota system.	856	308	45.87%	17.74%	17.54%	14.52%	4.33%
I am dissatisfied that South Africa is on a quota system.	577	313	1.46%	3.38%	7.15%	18.45%	69.56%

Full Question	Weighted scores	n =	SD	D	U	A	SA
The quota system should be set for a five-year period.	835	303	5.90%	6.51%	23.19%	21.16%	43.23%
I am satisfied with the new law, which stipulates pelting times for each country during the stoning ritual of the Hajj.	1210	312	2.98%	3.14%	8.68%	26.12%	59.09%
Transfers during the pilgrimage were efficient.	1141	307	1.58%	6.31%	9.47%	49.78%	32.87%
I would like to see travel related information as a component included in Hajj classes.	473	317	3.17%	3.38%	6.98%	46.51%	39.96%
Information pertaining to Hajj should be publicised in community print, audio, physical and audio-visual mediums newspapers, radio stations, mosques and television to create public awareness of changes within the Hajj industry.	434	319	4.61%	0.00%	2.76%	41.94%	50.69%
Detailed brochures and itineraries, which describe Hajj packages, should be more accessible.	433	318	3.46%	0.92%	4.85%	39.72%	51.04%
I would like SAHUC to supply booklets that contain Hajj information regarding the journey, health aspects, dietary concerns in Saudi Arabia, do's and don'ts in the Kingdom, and so on for prospective pilgrims.	452	320	7.74%	1.77%	5.97%	35.40%	49.12%
Well-wishers should be prevented from attending at airports.	1141	317	52.59%	22.79%	13.67%	7.89%	3.07%

SD = Strongly Disagree

D = Disagree

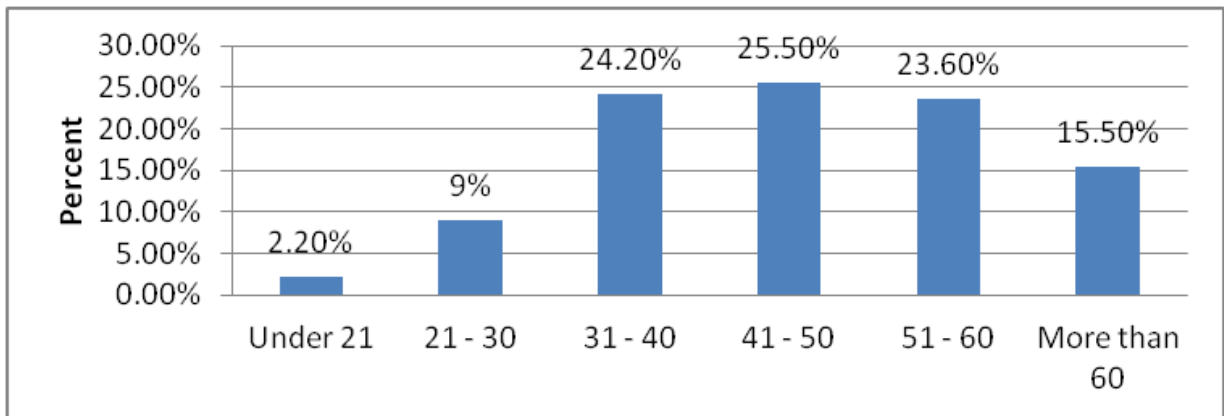
U = Undecided

A = Agree

SA = Strongly Agree

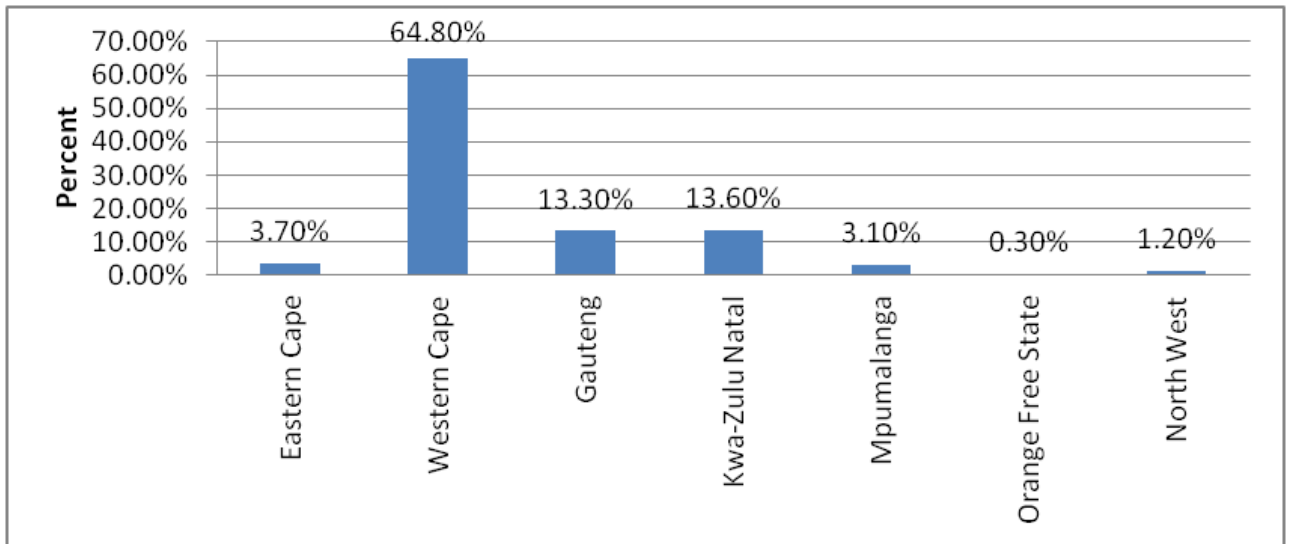
## 5.1 Demographics of respondents (independent variables)

The questionnaire distribution showed 44.3% of the population were males and the remainder females. Concerning home language, those respondents who spoke English as their first language totalled the majority with 84.5%, while 15.2% were Afrikaans speaking. The percentage of respondents who spoke Urdu as their first language amounted to 0.3 %. A figure of 0.9% of respondents did not respond to this question. The reason for the lack of response regarding home language is unclear and with no way to communicate with the respondents directly, the researcher feels that this is one of the limitations of self-administered questionnaires. This point was constructed as a possible limitation in the previous chapter. A graphic of the varying age groups, of respondents are provided below:



**Figure 5.1 Demographic profiles of respondents (n=322; 100%)**

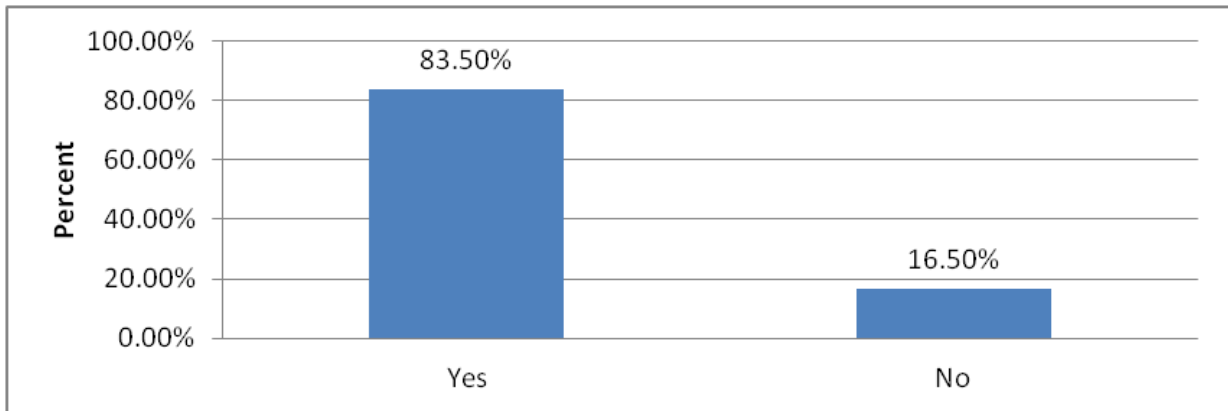
Respondents between the ages of 31 to 40 comprised 24.2% of the sample, while 25.5% were between the ages of 41 to 50 and 23.6% were between the ages 51 to 60. Respondents over the age of 60 years, comprised 15.5 % and those under the age of 21 years, comprised 2.2%. Respondents, who did not complete this question, totalled 1.2%. The education levels indicated that 28.3% of the sampled population completed secondary school, while 27.8% completed the certificate/diploma category, and 11.4% represents the First degree and Postgraduate degree categories respectively while 3.1% respondents did not respond to the question.



**Figure 5.2 Distribution of pilgrims by province (n=324; 100%)**

The majority of the respondents (64.8%) were from the Western Cape Province. The second largest respondents came from KwaZulu-Natal (13.6%) and third largest respondents came from Gauteng Province (13.3%). Respondents from these three provinces are in line with the national distribution of Muslims nationwide (specified in chapter one). The Eastern Cape Province had 3.7%, while the Mpumalanga province was shortly behind (3.1%). The results confirm that the main pilgrim generating regions in South Africa are the Western Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng provinces. The results also show that the provinces of Eastern Cape, Mpumalanga and the North West also contribute to the percentage of the South African Pilgrim population. A total of 0.6% of the respondents did not respond to the question.

Respondents were asked whether this was the first time that they performed the Hajj. A total of 83.5% answered yes, while 16.5% had undertaken the pilgrimage before and 1.2% of respondents did not respond to the question. A graphic of the responses is provided next:



**Figure 5.3 Distribution of first time pilgrims (n=322; 100%)**

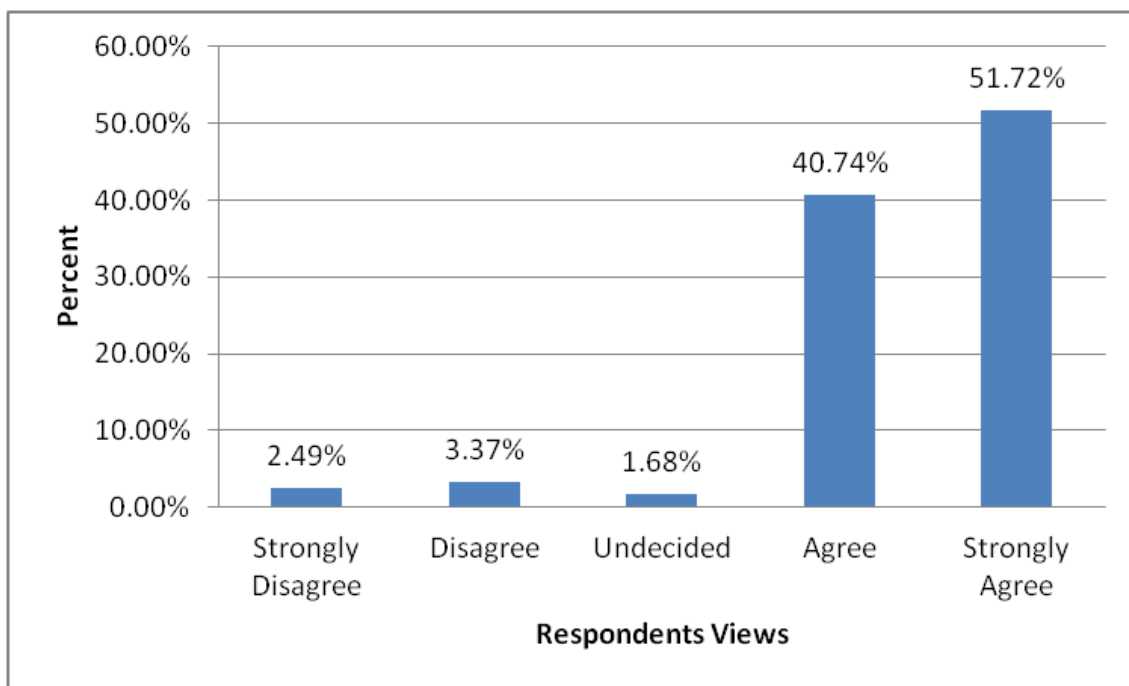
The quota system placed a huge strain on pilgrimage demand, since the number of prospective pilgrims were close to 10 000, while 2500 visas were issued. The above result is a positive one, as 83.5% of the sample indicated that they were first time pilgrims who deserved to perform their once-in-a-lifetime journey. In most cases the pilgrims who were not first time Hajj pilgrims comprised a minority percentage of 16.3%. These were (most likely) Mahrams (male chaperones). In Islam, a woman may only travel with a group of other women or with a Mahram i.e. a man that she cannot wed such as a father, brother or uncle.

Registration criteria placed priority on “first time” pilgrims, females that required Mahrams and the elderly. SAHUC Official C, (2007) emphasises that only after the three priority groups have been attended to, are repeat pilgrims considered on a ratio of one Hajj in every five years. The normal first time pilgrim’s application was then placed in a queue based on time of application and points scored. Families were broken up because of different scores obtained by family members, which resulted in only high scoring family members being accredited. In some cases one of the family members had been to Hajj recently and, therefore, had a low score, which caused the person not to join their family on their pilgrimage. Another factor was when a Mahram who is a father, brother or uncle of a single travelling female not being registered with the female’s application, which caused only the female or the Mahram to be accredited.

One of the problems, which further compounded the registration process, is the “lie factor” (SAHUC Official B, 2008). Due to pilgrims’ fear of not being accredited (as they had conducted Hajj before), would reply ‘no’ to the question as to whether they had performed Hajj in their lifetime. The result was that some pilgrims managed to perform their second Hajj, while others who applied for Hajj for the first time, were not accredited. A person’s travel cannot be solely traced by his or her passport as passport numbers change when the passport expires. SAHUC has been keeping a record of every South African pilgrim’s identity number (social security number) who has performed Hajj since 2005. SAHUC has added it to their database, which will help SAHUC to build a verification system to prevent such dishonest occurrences by a minority of pilgrims in future.

**5.2 SECTION ONE: Statements relating to the Hajj tour operators and Hajj travel agents.**

**5.2.1 Statement 1: Accommodation grading was on par with what was promised by the Hajj agent.**



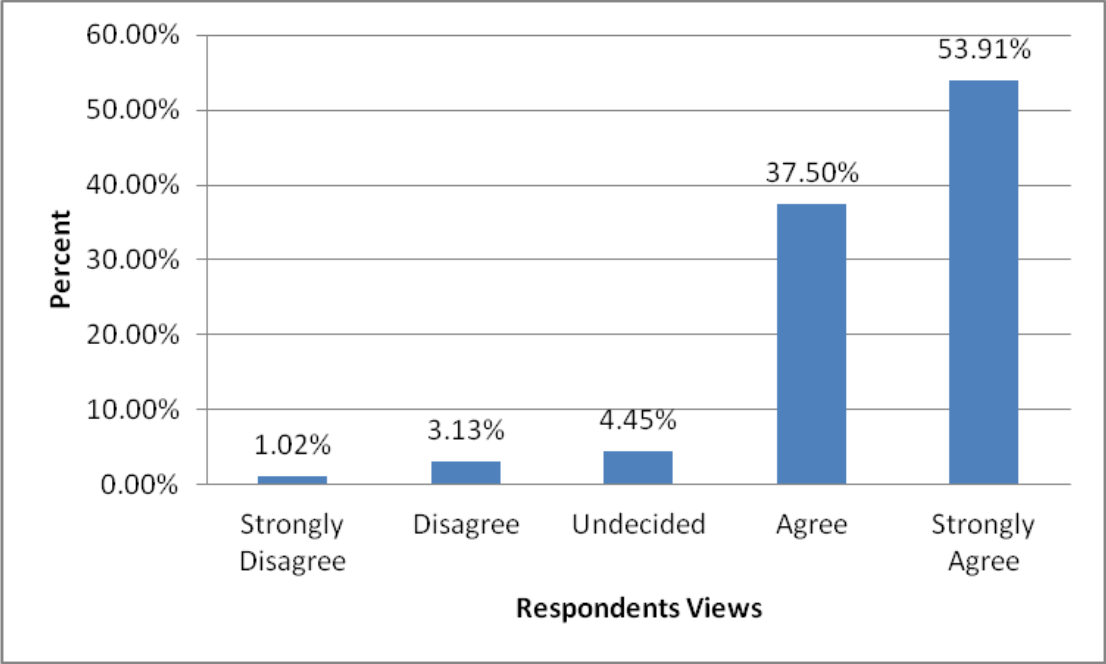
**Figure 5.4 Distribution of respondents who were satisfied with the accommodation (n=315; 100%)**



This graph showed an overwhelmingly positive response regarding the accommodation secured by Hajj agents. The agreed percentage totalled 40.74% and 51.72% of respondents strongly agreed with this statement. Results indicate that a majority of respondents were satisfied with their accommodation. Respondents who strongly disagreed with this statement totalled 2.49%, while 3.37 % disagreed with this statement. The total disagreed percentage totalled 5.86%. The undecided percentage of respondents totalled 1.68%.

This graph can be attributed to Bennett’s (2000:247) point concerning ‘implicit service promises’ and tangibles linked to a service, specifically accommodation during their pilgrimage. By the respondents’ positive response, it can be ascertained that this aspect of service delivery was met.

**5.2.2 Statement 2: Meals that form part of the package were provided as promised by the Hajj agent.**

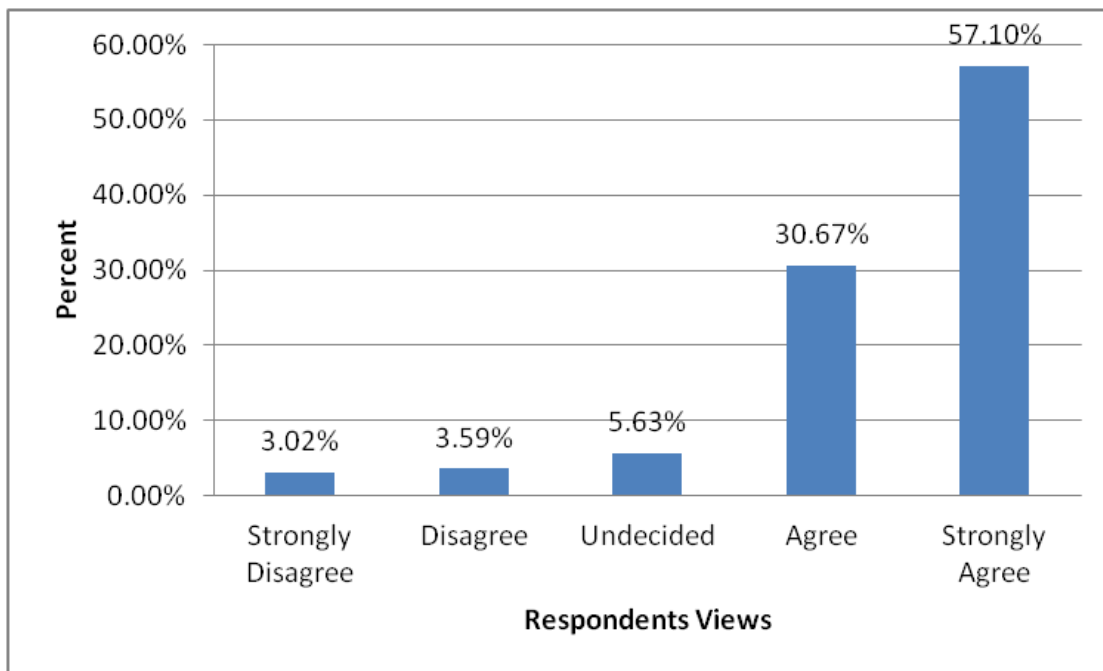


**Figure 5.5 Meals that form part of the package were provided as promised by the Hajj agent (n=310; 100%)**

Respondents who strongly disagreed with this statement totalled 1.02%, while 3.13 % disagreed with the statement. The total disagreed percentage totalled 4.15%. The agreed percentage totalled 37.5%, while 53.91% of respondents strongly agreed with this statement. Results indicate that a majority of the respondents were pleased with the meals provided during the five main days of Hajj, while the undecided population totalled 4.45%.

Considering the five dimensions by Parasuraman *et al.*, (1988) it becomes clear that the respondents felt that their Hajj agent kept their promise regarding adequate meals. This result indicates that the respondents found the Hajj agents to be reliable.

**5.2.3 Statement 3: The Hajj agent that I contracted with provided adequate assistance throughout the pilgrimage.**

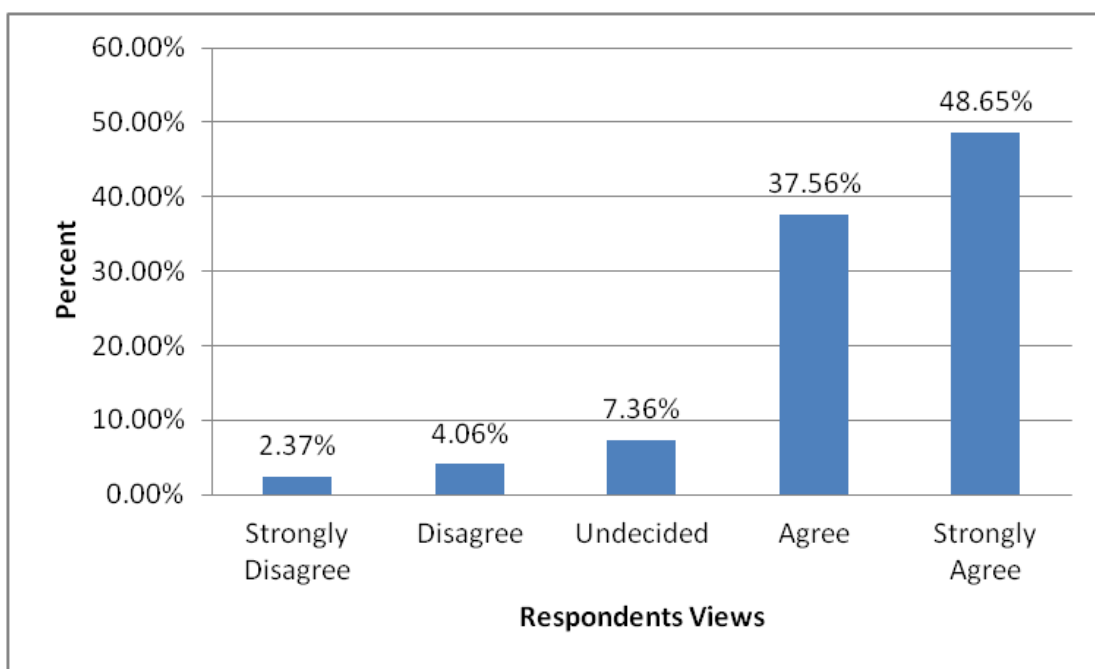


**Figure 5.6 Distribution of responses regarding adequate assistance throughout the pilgrimage (n=316; 100%)**

The number of respondents who strongly disagreed was 3.02% of the sample population, while 3.59% disagreed with this statement, and the total disagreed

percentage comprised 6.61%. The agreed percentage totalled 30.67%, while 57.10% of respondents strongly agreed with this statement. The results show that a majority (87.77%) of the population show contentment with the assistance that was provided during their contract with the Hajj agent. The undecided respondents totalled 5.63%. The positive response here can be attributed to Parasuraman *et al.*, (1988) responsiveness dimension of a tourism service, as the respondents felt that adequate assistance was given.

**5.2.4 Statement 4: Hajj package brochures, which were provided by the Hajj agent, were clear and accurate.**



**Figure 5.7 Distribution of respondents concerning whether Hajj package brochures were clear and accurate (n=307; 100%)**

Results indicate that a majority (86.21%) of the sample population had a clear idea of what services and products to expect from their Hajj agent. Respondents who strongly disagreed with this statement comprised 2.37%, while 4.06% disagreed with this statement. The total disagreed percentage was 6.43%. The agreed population totalled 37.56%, while 48.65% of respondents strongly agreed with this statement. The results indicate that a majority of the respondents had a clear idea of what services and

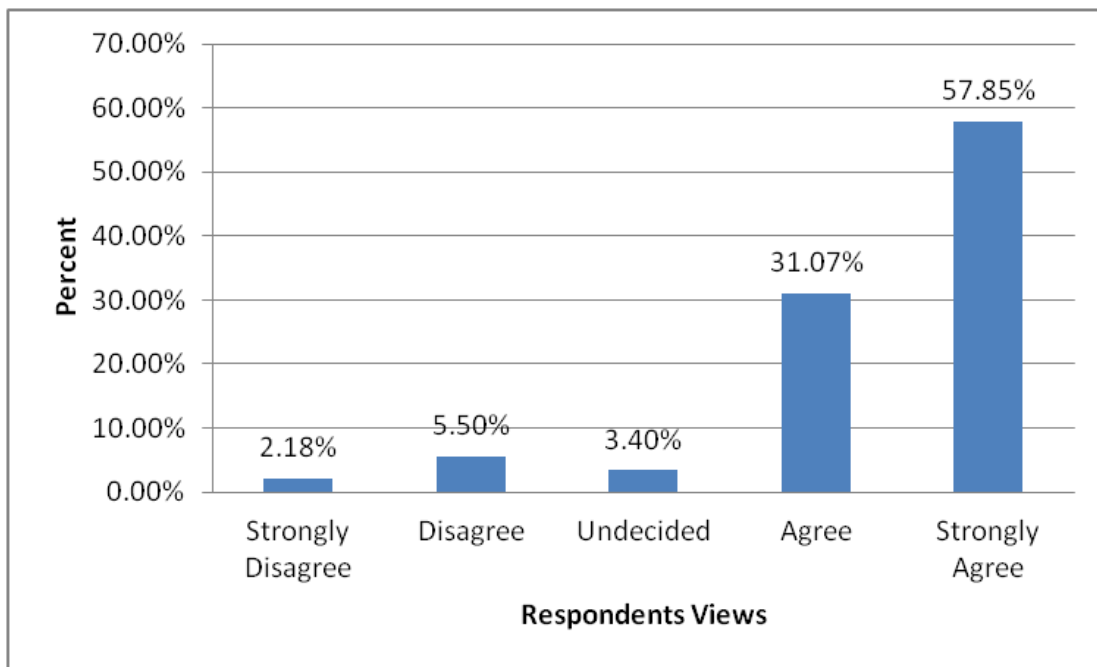
products to expect and it accurately matched what they received. The undecided population comprised 7.36% and several respondents pencilled in on their questionnaires that no brochures were provided.

In the tourism industry, a brochure is helpful to adjust the traveller's expectations, and while it does not have to be printed on colour paper and have lots of pictures, it should have relevant information, which will help the prospective pilgrims during their decision-making process.

The undecided respondents comprised 7.36%, where several respondents opted to pencil in on their questionnaires that no brochures were provided. In such cases, pilgrims would be informed verbally of the prospective package and prospective pilgrims would accept it in good faith. The contract, which the pilgrim and Hajj agent sign is a binding document for both parties and could protect both the pilgrim and the Hajj agent when a dispute occurs.

As stated elsewhere UNWTO has created six tourism standards, one of which is 'transparency'. In this case transparency here can be directly linked to the brochures given to pilgrims. For the most part, the responses indicated that information displayed on the brochure was satisfactorily received.

### 5.2.5 Statement 5: I had access to the Hajj agent's spiritual leader during the entire trip



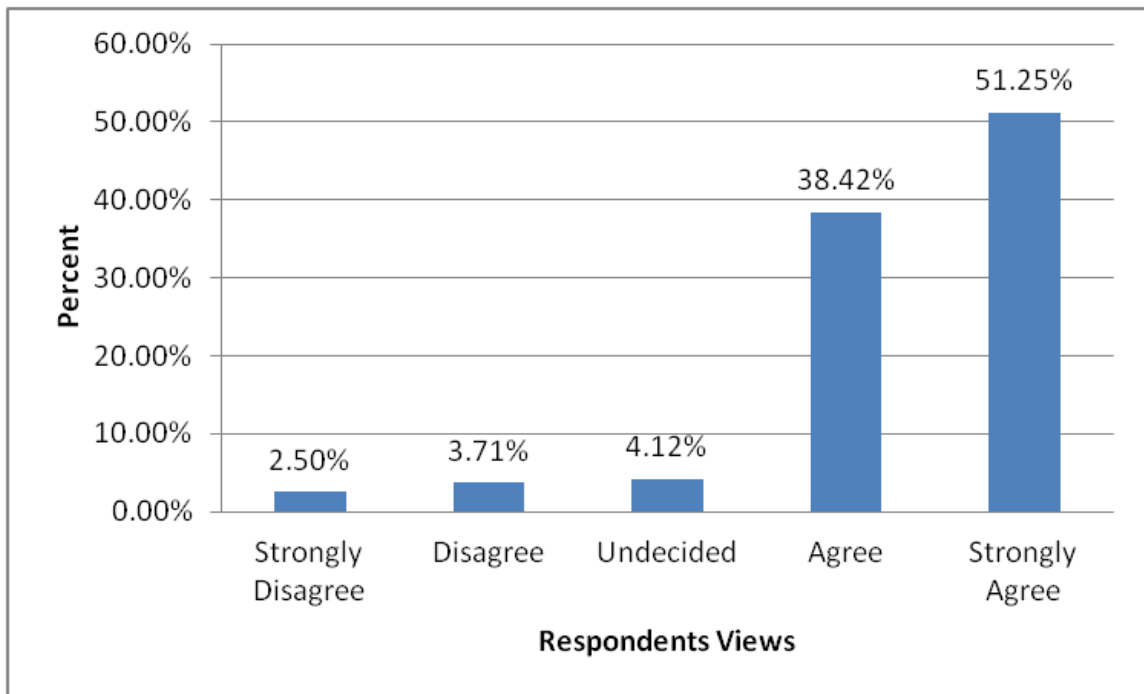
**Figure 5.8** Distribution of respondents regarding access to the Hajj agent's spiritual leader (n=314; 100%)

Respondents who strongly disagreed made up 2.18% of the sample population, while 5.50 % disagreed with this statement. The total disagreed percentage comprised 7.68%. The agreed percentage was 31.07%, while 57.85% of respondents strongly agreed with this statement, which shows that majority of the respondents had access to the group's spiritual leader. The undecided respondents totalled 3.40%.

A result regarding accessibility to the spiritual leader of the group was positive, which indicates the satisfaction of a majority of the sample. The spiritual leader focuses on clarifying and guiding pilgrims through the rituals, which should be performed. During periods of free time the spiritual leader would motivate and spiritually strengthen the group through constant prayer meetings and lectures.

Spiritual leaders serve as religious-focused tour guides as they accompany the pilgrims from their home city to the various religious sites whilst on pilgrimage. This highlight the distinction between Hajj as a religious tourism offering and mainstream tourism travels.

**5.2.6 Statement 6: Service personnel from the Hajj agent were courteous and helpful while attending to us during our pilgrimage.**



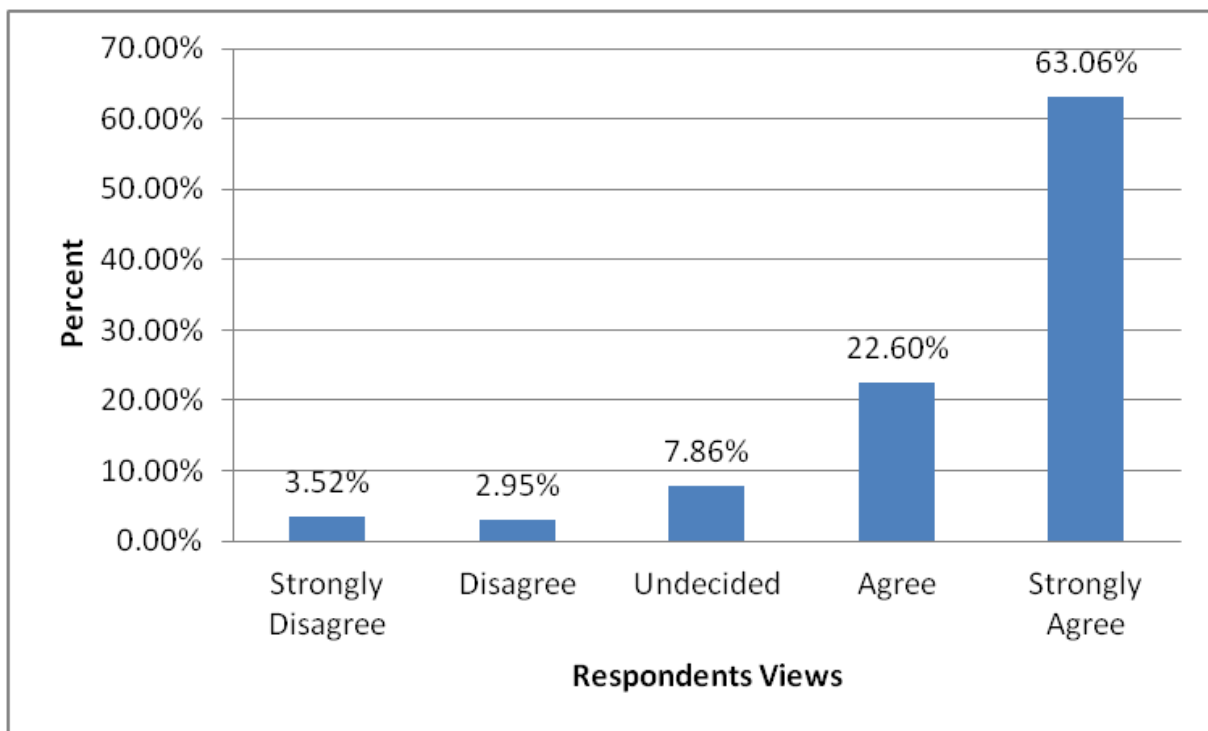
**Figure 5.9 Distribution of respondents regarding helpfulness of service personnel (n=317; 100%)**

The results indicate pilgrims' satisfaction with service personnel who worked for the Hajj agent. The agreed percentage comprised 38.42%, while 51.25% of the respondents strongly agreed with this statement. The total agreed percentage was 89.67%. Respondents who strongly disagreed comprised 2.50%, while 3.71% disagreed with this statement. The total disagreed percentage was 6.21%. Respondents who were undecided totalled 4.12%.

Being courteous and genuinely helpful are characteristics which Smith (1994:588-589) discusses as part of the hospitality aspect of tourism. In this case, the Hajj service is complemented by the hospitable demeanour of the Hajj agent and their staff. Furthermore, Minciu and Moisa (2009:1009, 1015) talks about the need for tourism service providers to be aware of the desires of their consumers and factors that influence their behaviour. In this case, the Hajj agents need to consider the Hajj as a fundamental accomplishment for each pilgrim. In other words, inhospitality on behalf of

the Hajj agent may irrevocably detract and besmirch the overall spiritual experience of the pilgrim.

### 5.2.7 Statement 7: For future Hajj travel, I would choose this Hajj agent again.



**Figure 5.10 Distribution of responses regarding pilgrims' becoming returning customers to their Hajj agent (n=316; 100%)**

Once again, there appears to be a largely positive response. The agreed percentage was 22.60% while 63.06% of respondents strongly agreed with this statement. This statement resulted in 3.52% of respondents strongly disagreeing and 2.95% disagreeing with the statement. The total disagreed percentage comprised 6.47%. The results show the pilgrims' agreement with the credibility and overall service excellence of the Hajj agent. The undecided respondents comprised 7.86%.

The evaluation of service by Hajj agents can also be described in terms of Strydom *et al.*(2000:91) consumer behaviour model, particularly post purchase phase, which is the sixth and final stage of the decision-making process of the traveller. Once the pilgrim has experienced the tourism product positively, they may then be more amenable to purchasing from the tourism provider again. The above results can be linked to

satisfaction as discussed by Agus, Baker and Kandampully (2007:abstract) in that high level of service quality benefits the Hajj agent, as recommendations by the pilgrim would then lead to return business and increased market share and profitability.

Added to this, the fact that the consumer will choose the same service provider for a second time can also be linked to Schmoll's decision making model (Figure 2.3). Part three of this model has to do with 'External Variables', specifically 'confidence in travel trade intermediary' and 'previous travel experience'. The former factor occurs when pilgrims trust the Hajj agent and believes that their interests have been respected; the latter occurs when pilgrims positively review the experience they received during interaction with the Hajj agent.

Section two of the Schmoll model is also applicable as it relates to 'Personal and social Determinants of Travel Behaviour'. Case in point are the pilgrims positive attitudes from their Hajj experience which then manifest motivations, desires and expectations of future travel, ultimately influencing pilgrims' decision to perform the pilgrimage with that particular Hajj agent again or recommend them to others.

From the one-on-one interviews, it was clear that their decision-making process regarding choice of Hajj agent was not a simple one. Price was an important factor for one interviewee, but she did not want her comfort to be affected by moving from Mecca to another suburb during the peak period of the last eight days of the pilgrimage. If she moved, the package would be cheaper, but then she would be further away from the holy mosque in Mecca and would have to take a taxi. Linking the above information to Schmoll's decision making model in Figure 2.3, aspects of the Travel Stimuli which relate to advertising and promotion, are displayed, as well as cost or value relations in the characteristics and features of the service destination field.

Two other women whom the researcher interviewed did not compare Hajj agent prices; they chose a Hajj agent purely based on a recommendation from family members who had performed Hajj with a certain Hajj agent. The family members were satisfied with the good service that they received at a time when many other pilgrims had complaints



about service providers. They mentioned that price did play a big role in their decision, but stressed that they would not have chosen a Hajj agent with a cheap price, and a poor reputation. These actions are an example of social influences and aspirations, which play a role in the consumer's decision-making process and are illustrated in Schmoll's decision making model in Figure 2.3 (Bennett, 2000:92).

Another interviewed pilgrim also chose a Hajj agent based on a family recommendation, but the decision was largely influenced by having their special requirements met. As the interviewees physical condition did not allow him to walk long distances, he opted to choose a Hajj agent whose accommodation was conveniently located closest to the holy mosque in Mecca. In Schmoll's decision-making model shown, the field relating to characteristics and features of the service destination was considered first, proving that aspects of the attractions and amenities that were offered through the Hajj agent's package played a major role in the decision to choose that particular Hajj agent.

### 5.2.8 Statement 8: A qualified medical person or team was assigned to the group by the Hajj agent

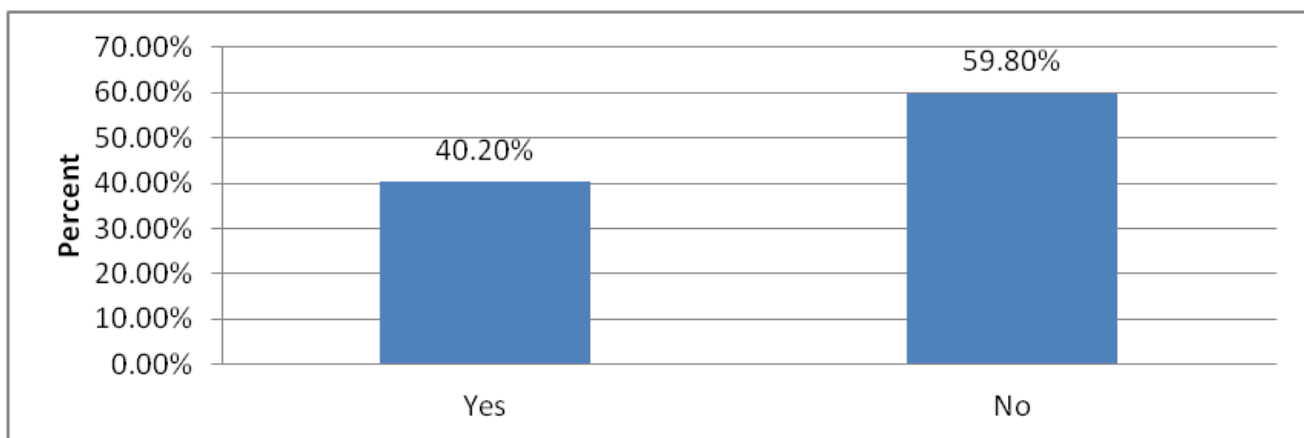


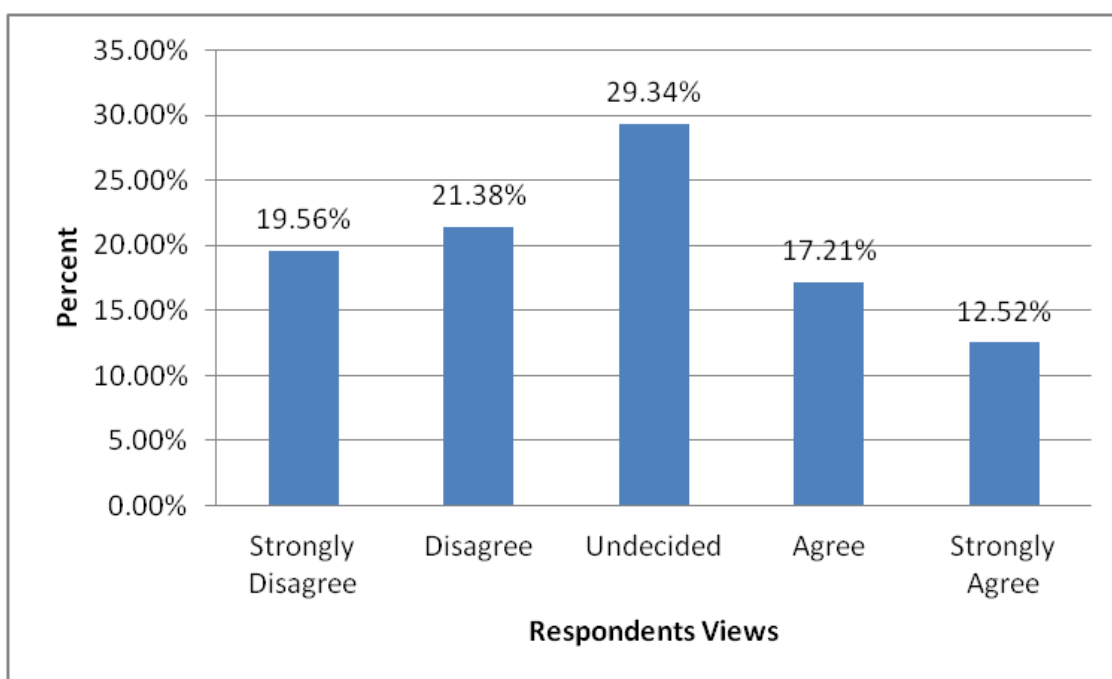
Figure 5.11 Distribution of responses regarding whether they had a medical person in their group as staff (n=316; 100%)

SAHUC and the KSA do provide medical service for pilgrims; this service is included in the pilgrimage levy which SAHUC charges pilgrims and Hajj agents. This being the case, several Hajj agents provide the services of a doctor or medical team, as a means of providing on-site services to their clients. It is clear from the results that only 40.2% of

Hajj agents of South Africa go the extra mile in this aspect of their business. The remaining 59.8% of respondents did not have a medical official as part of their Hajj agent's offerings. The percentage of respondents' who did not respond to the question comprised 7.7%.

### 5.3 SECTION TWO: Airlines

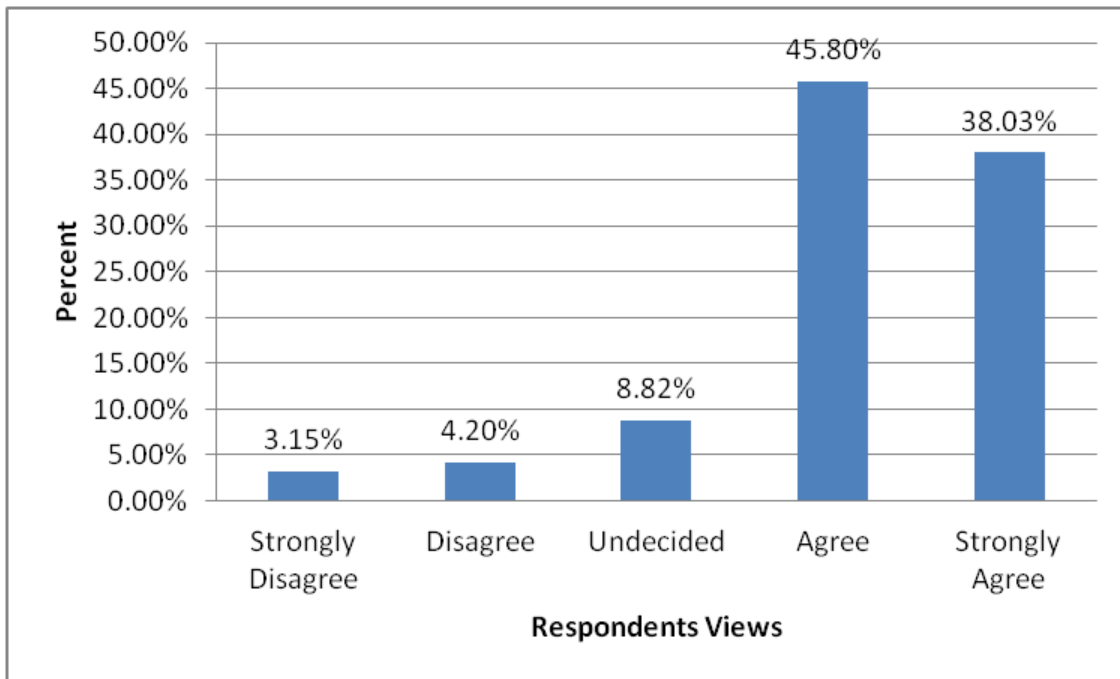
#### 5.3.1 Statement 9: I would prefer to use chartered flights for pilgrimage in the future



**Figure 5.12 Distribution of responses regarding their preference for chartered flights (n=308; 100%)**

The results indicate that 40.94% of the sample population would not welcome a change in the airline industry regarding flights to Mecca during the Hajj season. The researcher noted that several respondents pencilled in question marks next to this statement, which indicated that they may not have understood what chartered flights imply. This may also be reason why the undecided respondents of the sample population comprised 29.34%. Respondents who strongly disagreed comprised 19.56%, while 21.38 % disagreed with this statement. The agreed percentage comprised 17.21% and 12.52% of respondents strongly agreed with this statement. The total agreed percentage totalled 29.73%.

### 5.3.2 Statement 10: Commercial airlines that fly to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia should be more available during Hajj season



**Figure 5.13 Distribution of responses regarding whether more flights should be available during Hajj season (n=312; 100%)**

This statement is a key issue, which affects pilgrims before leaving and returning from pilgrimage. A total of 45.80% of respondents agreed and 38.03% of respondents strongly agreed with this statement. The total agreed percentage amounted to 83.83%. The results show that 3.15% of respondents strongly disagreed, while 4.20% disagreed with this statement. The total disagreed percentage comprised 7.35%. Respondents who were undecided totalled 8.82%. The results indicate a clear dissatisfaction with the current number of flight schedules for the Hajj pilgrimage period to and from Saudi Arabia.

In recent years upon departure to Mecca for pilgrimage, a pilgrim would never be entirely sure of their departure dates until a week or a few days before departure. Main factors that influenced this stage of the pilgrimage process were the visa issuing procedure and accommodation safety clearance by the Ministry of Housing in Saudi Arabia. Once the pilgrim has completed the pilgrimage six weeks later, approximately

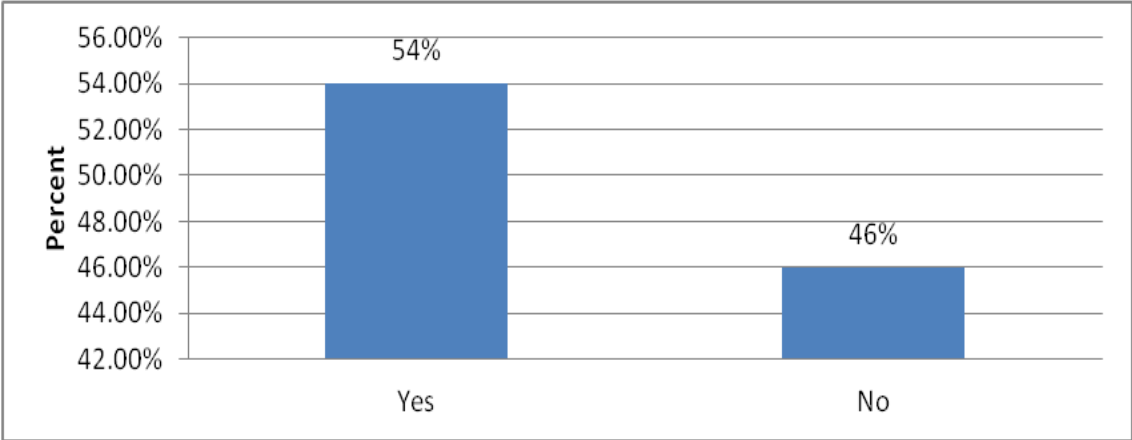
three million people try to return to their countries of origin and, at this stage, the main obstacle for South African pilgrims is flight availability to return home.

When pilgrims were given an option in the questionnaire to choose chartered flights in future, which can guarantee arrival and departure dates as pilgrims' request, 29.73% of the sample was in favour. Chartered flights are seen as an option owing to South Africa's national airline carrier, South Africa Airways, not flying to Saudi Arabia, as well as other limited international airlines that fly to and from South Africa and Saudi Arabia. South African Airways has a code share agreement with Saudi Arabian Airlines, which means that they buy seats on Saudi Arabian flights and sell it under the South African Airways name brand. Egypt Air, Qatar Air, Etihad Airlines and Saudi Arabian Airlines are the main carriers for South African pilgrims.

Hajj agent G, (2007) felt that they were exploited by airlines due to the fine print, which allows prices to be subjected to change without notice. He further argues that the Hajj agents' image is at stake when they approach their clients for additional funds after the Hajj package has been fully paid. Hajj agent E, (2007) disagrees and reveals that many times it is the ticketing agents and other larger companies that increase prices because they now own all the seats on the aircraft. He further points out that the lack of business ethics is rife within the Hajj industry, and it all revolves around demand and supply and, for many in the industry, making huge profits is a priority. Hajj agent D, (2007) further mentions that the flights departing from the KSA after Hajj are very unreliable which causes discomfort amongst pilgrims and affects service delivery negatively. Hajj agent R, (2007) agrees and explains that the unreliability derives from the high demand to leave the KSA after Hajj is completed and the wait to exit the Kingdom could reach two weeks.

**5.4 SECTION THREE: Statements relating to the Hajj regulatory body in South Africa, namely the South African Hajj and Umrah Council (SAHUC)**

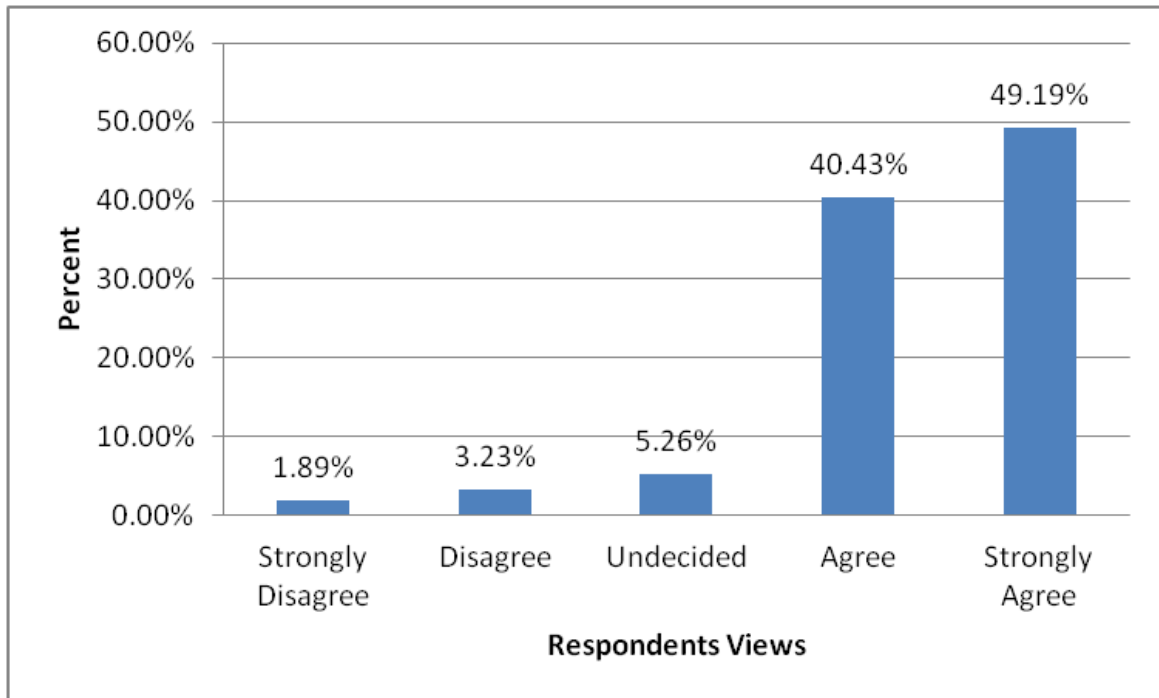
**5.4.1 Statement 11: The SAHUC medical team treated me during my pilgrimage**



**Figure 5.14 Distribution of responses regarding treatment by SAHUC medical team during pilgrimage (n=322; 100%)**

SAHUC does provide medical services for South African pilgrims during the Hajj period. A total of 54.0% of respondents answered “yes”, while 46.0% answered “no”. Respondents who did not respond to this statement totalled 1.2%. This service is included in the pilgrimage levy, which SAHUC charges pilgrims and Hajj agents. On average the pilgrims are in Saudi Arabia for five to six weeks, treatments could vary from consultations to hospitalisation.

#### 5.4.2 Statement 12: If Yes, the service regarding your medical treatment was efficient and of an exceptionally good standard



**Figure 5.15 Distribution of responses regarding whether the medical treatment was efficient (n=187; 100%)**

The results show that there was an 89.62% satisfaction rate with the medical services provided by SAHUC in Saudi Arabia. The agreed percentage was 40.43%, while 49.19% of respondents strongly agreed with this statement. A total of 1.89% of respondents strongly disagreed, while 3.23 % disagreed with this statement. The total disagreed percentage of the sample totalled 5.12%. Respondents who were undecided totalled 5.26%. Notably, 46.0% of the, respondents were not treated by the SAHUC medical team.

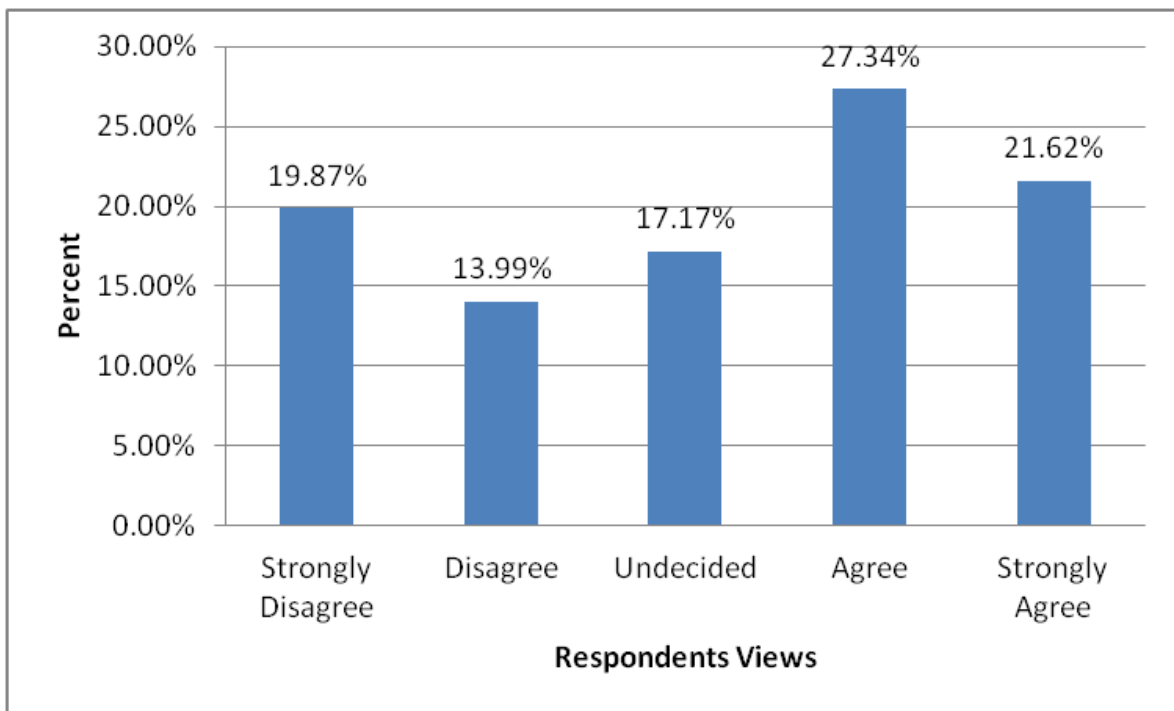
The total number of respondents that received medical treated by SAHUC totalled 187 from a population size of 322 respondents. The results indicate that SAHUC provides an outstanding medical service, which was observed by the pilgrims.

In a telephonic discussion with one of the senior management of SAHUC, SAHUC Official B, (2008), it was clarified to the researcher that this was part of the protocol that

SAHUC signs in the months before Hajj in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The Hajj Ministry makes it mandatory for each country to have their own medical teams for their citizens and if more care is needed, the Saudi Arabian hospitals will provide assistance, free of charge.

It is clear that of the 54.0% of pilgrims who received treatment by SAHUC medical officials, the majority of them were satisfied with the service. The inclusion of SAHUC's medical team/department can be linked to the concept of Total quality management. TQM refers to service quality across an organisation from products used to production and finally frontline service. Working with the premise of medical officials as an added service, the researcher argues that the entire organisation of SAHUC would benefit by adopting the same ethos or attitude towards service delivery. This is largely surmised from the fact that most of the pilgrims that received the service, liked it which shows both the need for the service as well as the appreciation by the pilgrims of said service. However, as Eraqi (2006: 477) points out, the delivery of one good quality service does not irrevocably change the tourism product or quality perception. This means that of the 46.0% of pilgrims who did not receive treatment no change in the perception of SAHUC can be expected.

### 5.4.3 Statement 13: More SAHUC officials are needed in the KSA during Hajj season



**Figure 5.16** Distribution of responses regarding their preference for more SAHUC officials during the Hajj (n=305; 100%)

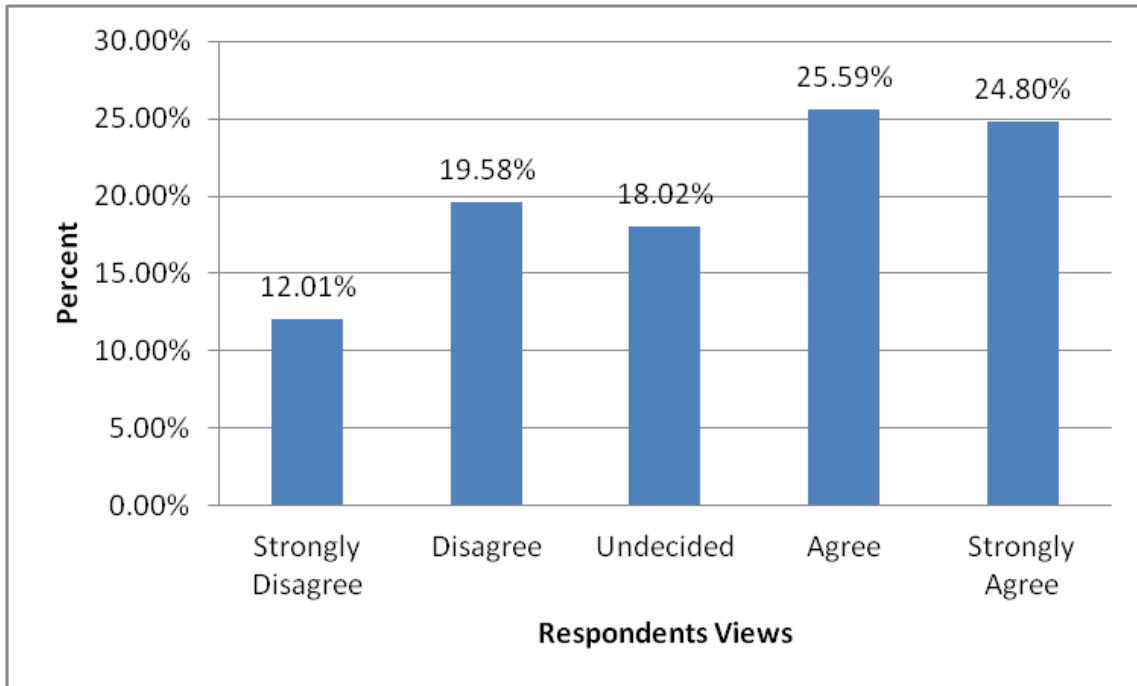
This statement elicited desperate responses. When respondents were asked if they would like to see more SAHUC officials in the Kingdom during the Hajj period, 48.96% agreed and the researcher found comments such as “SAHUC have well trained members that service pilgrims in Saudi Arabia”, written on some completed questionnaires. At the same time, 33.86% of respondents disagreed and did not want to see more SAHUC officials in the Kingdom.

The results indicate that a majority of the pilgrims agree that there should be an increase of SAHUC officials to assist and attend to their needs during the Hajj period. The agreed percentage comprised 27.34%, while 21.62% of respondents strongly agreed with this statement. The total of 19.87% of respondents strongly disagreed, while 13.99% disagreed with this statement. The researcher noted that on some of the questionnaires respondents pencilled in the words “trained”, “well equipped” and “not anyone off the



street”, which indicates that they require more assistance, albeit the kind that will bring more efficiency and higher service levels to both the pilgrims and SAHUC. This may be a reason why 17.17% of respondents were undecided to this statement.

**5.4.4 Statement 14: SAHUC assisted me with administrative preparations for Hajj and during my stay in the KSA**



**Figure 5.17 Distribution of responses regarding whether SAHUC assisted before and during the Hajj period (n=300; 100%)**

The percentage of respondents who agreed with the statement comprised 25.59% and 24.87% of respondents strongly agreed with this statement. The results indicate that 50.39% of the pilgrims agree that SAHUC assisted them either before or during their pilgrimage. The percentage of respondents who strongly disagreed comprised 12.01%, while 19.58% disagreed with this statement. The total disagreed percentage of the sample population totalled 31.59%. Respondents who were undecided to this statement comprised 18.02%.

What is concerning is that 31.59% of the respondents felt that SAHUC did not assist them before they went on pilgrimage or during their pilgrimage in Saudi Arabia and

18.02% of respondents were undecided. The Hajj mission, which SAHUC sends to the Kingdom each year, comprises about 35-40 people who are faced with a highly people-intensive task. Pilgrims have needs and complaints that should be heard and Hajj agents have requests, which require attention as well. Pilgrims often have a negative attitude towards SAHUC officials because of the registration process or the Hajj levy or some other reason, which relates to SAHUC and these conditions place further strain on SAHUC's service staff. One person left the following comment on a returning questionnaire: "SAHUC should focus on individual pilgrim needs and not only on the travel agents' needs".

There appears to be a perception amongst a percentage of 31.59% of pilgrims that SAHUC did not assist them in administrative preparations for Hajj or while they were in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The research results indicate that 18.02% of the population were undecided and 50.39% were in agreement that SAHUC assisted them before embarking on pilgrimage, as well as during pilgrimage. This result indicates an area of concern. Either SAHUC does not assist pilgrims in South Africa or Saudi Arabia, or the pilgrims do not perceive the tasks and services that SAHUC delivers, as assistance. In 2006 SAHUC was faced with a late quota and implemented criteria by which prospective pilgrims would be selected. Although pilgrims may feel that SAHUC is lacking administrative competency, it is noted that for the Hajj year 2006 to 2007 SAHUC executed the below administrative acts:

- a) SAHUC prepares the South African Hajj system each year by sending a delegation months before the Hajj season to sign protocols, which govern South Africa's Hajj related actions for that particular year.
- b) SAHUC prepares a structured registration process for prospective pilgrims.
- c) SAHUC provides the administration process to accredit Hajj agents.
- d) SAHUC provides field workers and medical teams to service South African pilgrims while they are in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. SAHUC provides medical teams in Mecca and Medina, as well as over the five days of Hajj at the ritual sites of Mina and Arafat. SAHUC has an outpost in Mecca, which forms the base station for field workers. About 35-40 field workers were employed for SAHUC's Hajj Mission of 2006 to 2007.

Initially they were spread between the cities of Jeddah and Medina to aid pilgrims and Hajj agents, and once all South African pilgrims departed from Medina for Mecca, they were stationed at the base station in Mecca.

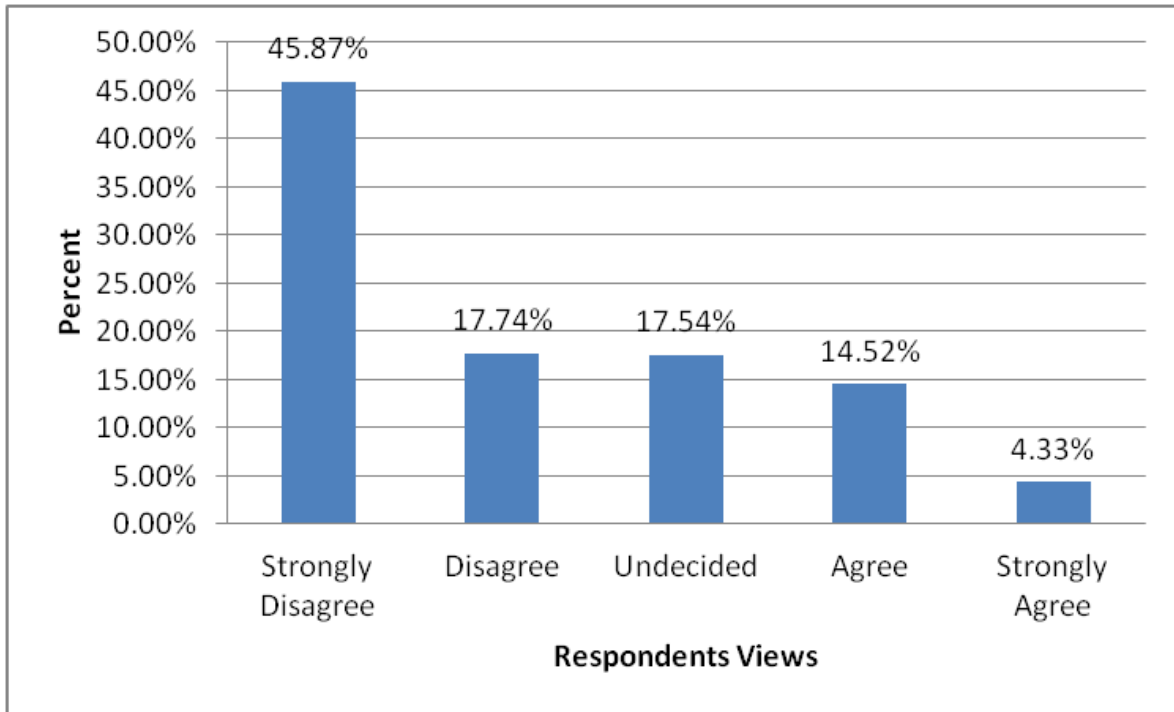
e) SAHUC ships South African medicines to Saudi Arabia to complement the medical teams.

f) SAHUC facilitates mediation between Hajj agents and pilgrims when disputes arise in the Kingdom, as well as upon return to South Africa.

In 2007 SAHUC further refined its selection process by opening online registration nationwide, which allowed pilgrims to avoid long queues and to reduce the amount of paper used. Bulk text messages were sent out to prospective pilgrims who did not reply within the cut off accreditation period. Upon departure from South Africa, and upon arrival, SAHUC provided officials at Cape Town, Durban, Port Elizabeth and O.R Tambo airports to assist pilgrims.

The administrative duties of SAHUC are also greatly impacted by costing, specifically regarding the size of SAHUC's Hajj mission. Hendricks (2007:30) who researched management performance and governance of SAHUC in the Hajj economy of South Africa noted that a majority of SAHUC's funds that are obtained through Hajj levies from Hajj agents and pilgrims. He states that the number of service staff are directly dependent on the state of SAHUC's available funds. In 2008, SAHUC indicated that for that Hajj year, an increase in the Hajj levy for pilgrims and Hajj agents would be implemented. This included the introduction of a non-refundable registration fee for pilgrims. These actions combined may result in a bigger, more visible and improved SAHUC mission.

**5.4.5 Statement 15: I am satisfied with the manner in which SAHUC handled the Hajj situation / crises of 2006-2007 regarding the quota system**



**Figure 5.18 Distribution of responses regarding pilgrims' satisfaction with manner in which SAHUC handled the quota system in 2006 to 2007 (n=308; 100%)**

The results indicate that the agreed percentage was 14.52% and 4.33% of respondents strongly agreed with this statement, which showed a 18.85% agreement that SAHUC handled the situation in an ethical and well-controlled manner.

A joint percentage of about 63.61% of the sample population felt that SAHUC could have done more to negotiate a higher quota and to possibly select prospective pilgrims by using different criteria. A total of 45.87% of respondents strongly disagreed, while 17.74% disagreed with this statement. The total disagreed percentage of respondents was 63.61%. The respondents who were undecided about the manner in which SAHUC handled the Hajj situation amounted to 17.54%.

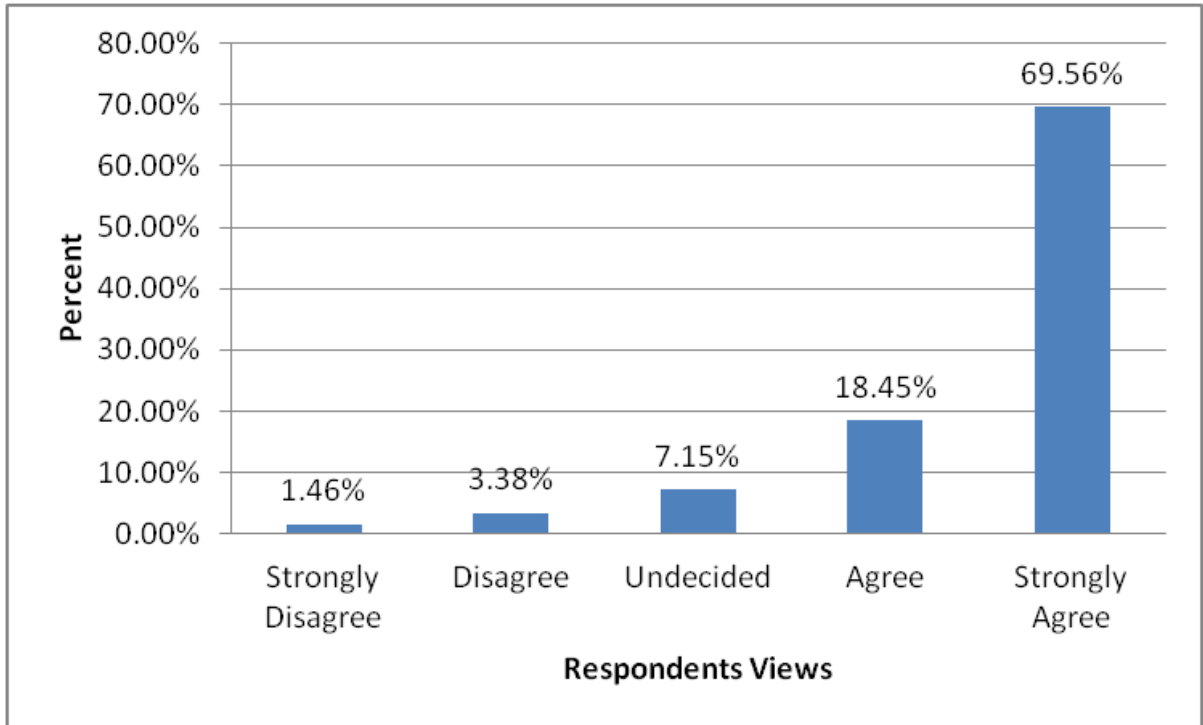
For the Hajj season of 2006 to 2007, the number of available visas for the South African Hajj population was reduced in accordance with the Hajj Ministry in the KSA. In this way, the KSA Hajj Ministry can be viewed as the invisible organization in the SERVUCTION System (Bennett, 2000:300) who set stipulation regarding quotas for South Africa, but were not visible to the pilgrims. At this point SAHUC became the frontline service providers for pilgrims in this scenario. SAHUC as the official regulator was then obliged to devise ways of selecting 5000 pilgrims from a demand of about 10 000 pilgrims.

The Hajj agents also face challenges with SAHUC's handling of the quota crisis. Hajj agent C, (2007) criticised SAHUC for not revoking the licences of those Hajj agents who committed extreme crimes in the Hajj industry. Hajj agent A, (2007) stated that the South African Hajj industry was overregulated, while Hajj agent D, (2007) criticised SAHUC for their high staff turnover and recommended that they consider hiring permanent staff. Hajj agent E, (2007) echoed similar sentiments as Hajj agent D, (2007), stating that he wanted SAHUC to draw on the knowledge and experience of Hajj agents before implementing any new policies.

Hajj agent I, (2008) explains that before 2006 SAHUC would give each accredited Hajj agent 50 to 100 pilgrims as its customers out of the quota received from the KSA. The Hajj agents would then have many months prior to the Hajj season to secure accommodation as well as book flights in South Africa for their confirmed customers. It is standard practice by the hoteliers in the KSA that a non-refundable deposit is given by the Hajj agents upon contracting and shortly afterwards the full amount should be paid. Since 2006, SAHUC gave the right to pilgrims to choose which Hajj agents they contract with and Hajj agents now do not know how many pilgrims they will have in their group each year. Hajj agent I, (2008) admits that this system is beneficial to the pilgrims (as they can choose the Hajj agents with a great service delivery reputation), but at the same time, this new policy created uncertainty and high risk to the Hajj agent. The Hajj agent could expect huge losses when faced with securing accommodation, flights and other services for pilgrims who may or may not decide to contract with them.

## 5.5 SECTION FOUR: Statements relating to the Hajj Ministry of the KSA

### 5.5.1 Statement 16: I am dissatisfied that South Africa is on a quota system



**Figure 5.19** Distribution of responses regarding whether pilgrims were dissatisfied with South Africa being on the quota system (n=313; 100%)

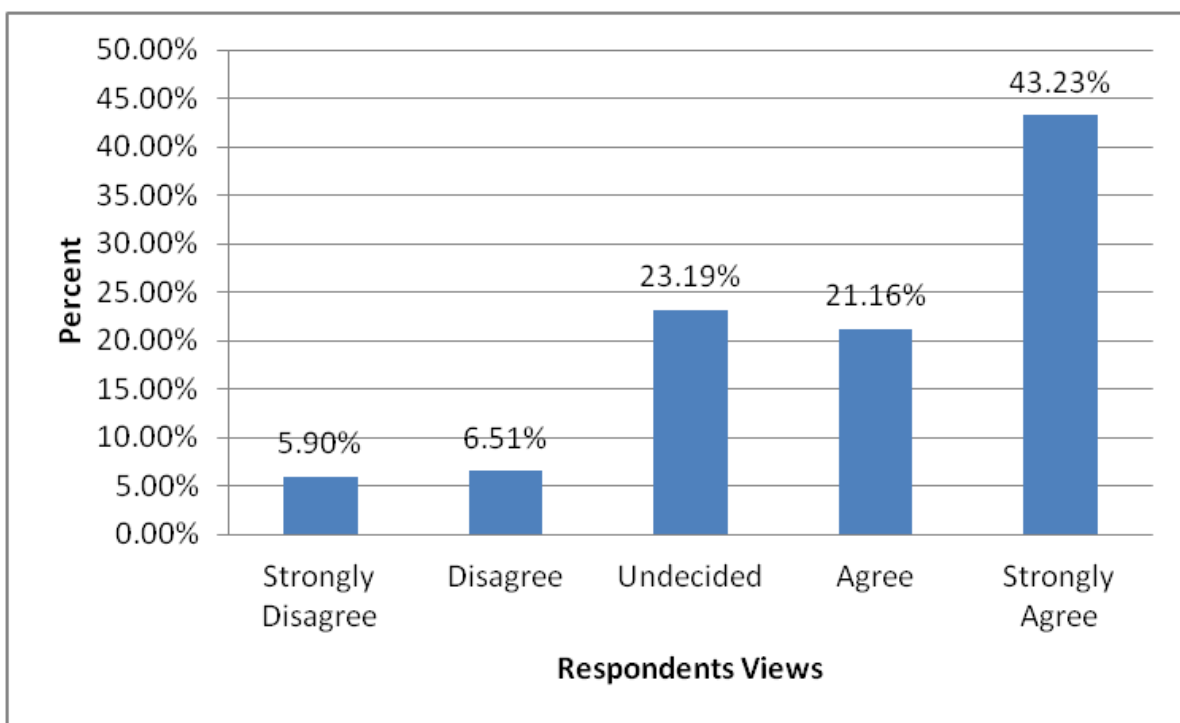
The results indicate that a majority of respondents (88.01%) were dissatisfied with South Africa being on the quota list. Of this total, the majority of respondents who strongly agree were 69.56%, with 18.45% making up the agreed. Respondents who strongly disagreed with this statement comprised 1.46%, while 3.38% disagreed with the statement above. The total disagreed percentage of the sample totalled 4.84%. The undecided respondents totalled 7.15%.

It is clear that pilgrims have a negative perception of South Africa being on quota system. Their dissatisfaction can be linked to the 'zone of tolerance' as defined by Williams and Buswell (2003:63). The level of tolerance, which a customer exhibits in relation to the service provider, ranges from delight, desirable, satisfactory and

unacceptable service. In this case, the customer is the pilgrim, who appears dissatisfied with the service provider. The service provider here would then be the KSA Hajj Ministry.

Notably, not all countries in the world have a quota set out by the Hajj Ministry of Saudi Arabia, with South Africa only recently being placed on this list. In order to gage the range of tolerance from the respondents, a hypothetical scenario was given wherein SAHUC purportedly would receive an established quota for a set period of five years at a time. The results to this hypothetical scenario were not unanimous.

### 5.5.2 Statement 17: The quota system should be set for a five-year period



**Figure 5.20** Distribution of responses regarding whether the quota should be set for a five-year period (n=326; 100%)

On the one hand, 64.39% of respondents agreed that a set quota for a five-year period would be welcomed. On the other hand, 23.19% of respondents was undecided. And 12.41% of respondents disagreed and preferred annual negotiations between the regulator and the Hajj ministry. From a practical point of view, a five-year period may be useful for Hajj agents planning their trips and setting their contracts with airline and accommodation providers. Nevertheless, due to the erratic nature of quota setting,

South African Muslims may miss out within a five-year period on any concessions made by KSA during this time.

Importantly, since 2006 SAHUC members have travelled to Saudi Arabia months before the Hajj period begins in order to negotiate a quota for South Africa. In 2006 the Figure was 2500 and later amended to 7000 pilgrims. In 2007 the initial Figure was 2000, which was changed to 5020, following negotiations. The above statement is based on the premise that South Africa cannot escape the quota system, therefore, SAHUC should negotiate a quota once every five years instead of on an annual basis.

### 5.5.3 Statement 18: I am satisfied with the new law, which stipulates pelting times for each country during the stoning ritual of the Hajj

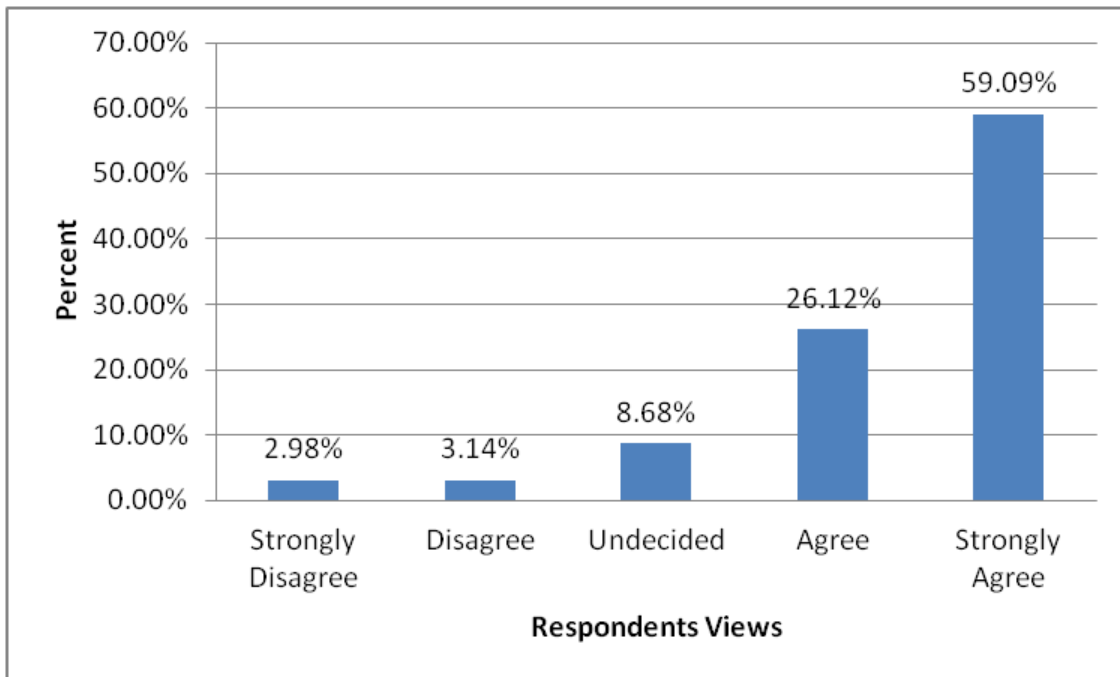


Figure 5.21 Distribution of responses regarding whether the pilgrims were satisfied with the implementation of the new pelting times (n=312; 100%)

A percentage of 2.98% of respondents strongly disagreed, while 3.14% disagreed with this statement. The total disagreed percentage of the respondents comprised 6.12%. Respondents who agreed with the statement totalled 26.12%, while 59.09% of respondents strongly agreed with this statement. The results show that a majority

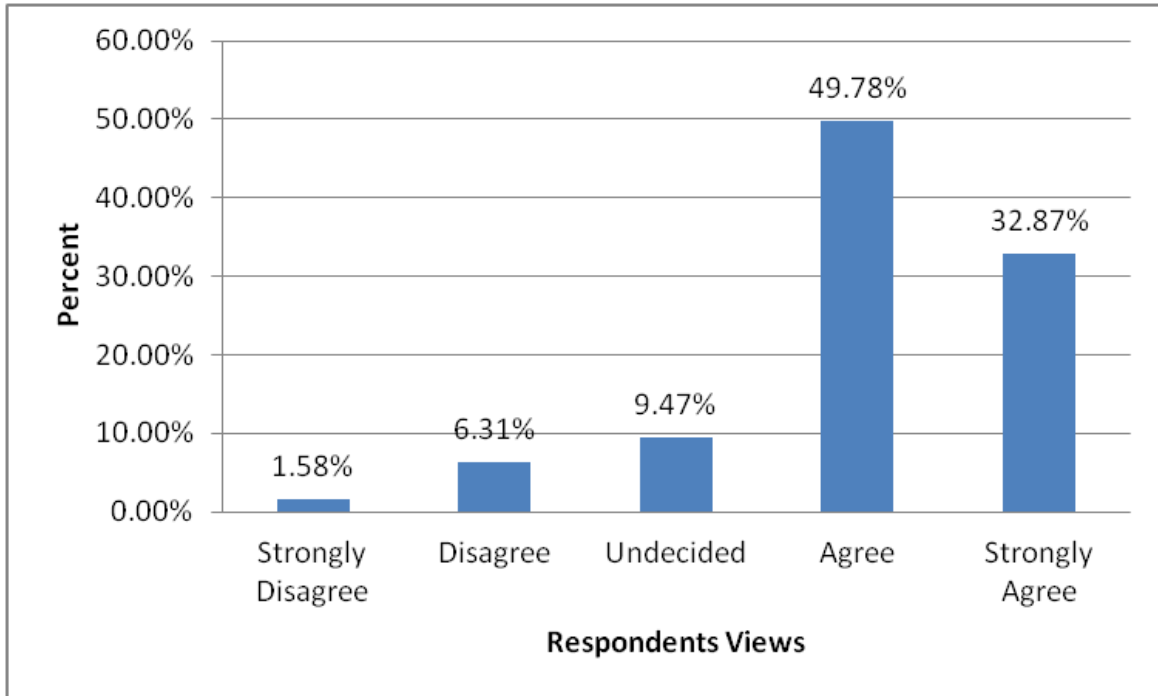


(85.21%) of respondents are satisfied with the new policy. The undecided respondents comprised 8.68%.

Pelting rituals is also known as 'the stoning of the Jamarats', is one of the important rites of the Hajj. During this time, pilgrims become highly emotional and pelting on mass oftentimes led to devastating human stampedes during the five main days of Hajj. At this time in the research, a new law stipulating specific times for each country to conduct the stoning ritual was implemented. In the past, all countries could perform the ritual at the same time and normally stampedes were common, therefore, the aim to regulate the flow of movement of people during the rituals became an objective of the Saudi Hajj Ministry.

By introducing the new pelting system, the Hajj Ministry of KSA appear to follow one of UNWTO six tourism quality standards particularly that of 'safety and security'. This tourism quality standard is defined by Eraqi (2006:477-478) as "*tourism offering should not be a danger to one's life even if it is under the category of adventure tourism, the law relating to safety standards and protocols should still be followed*". In this way it is clear that the danger and potential violence associated with this Islamic practice was seriously considered by the KSA as impacting negatively on the pilgrims overall experience.

#### 5.5.4 Statement 19: Transfers during the pilgrimage were efficient



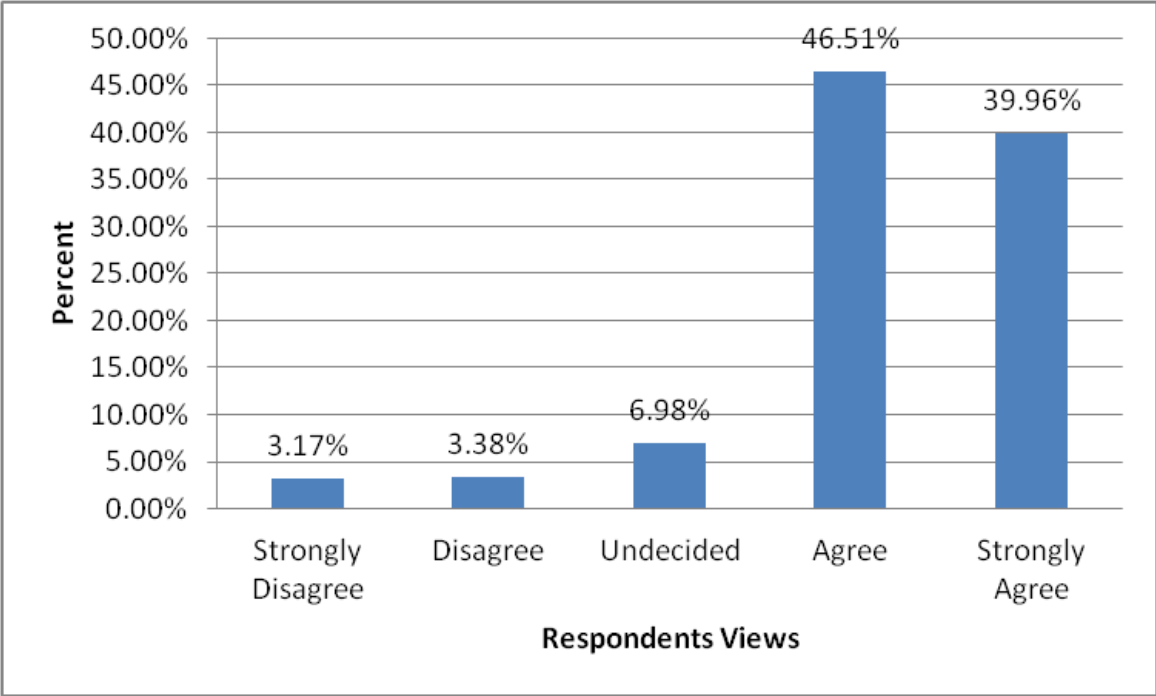
**Figure 5.22 Distribution of responses regarding whether the pilgrims felt that the transfers were efficient (n=307; 100%)**

The results show that 82.65% of respondents are satisfied with the transfer process. The agreed percentage comprised 49.78%, while 32.87% of respondents strongly agreed with this statement. A percentage of 1.58% of the respondents strongly disagreed, while 6.31% disagreed with this statement. The total disagreed percentage of the sample comprised 7.89%. One of the reasons for this figure could be the fact that at the height of the Hajj period, a distance of 10 kilometres could take hours in bumper-to-bumper traffic, hence pilgrims may prefer to walk, rather than use coaches. The undecided sample population comprised 9.47%. Hajj transfers refer to vehicle transfers from one holy site to another. KSA Hajj Ministry dedicates one department namely, the General Car Syndicate (see Figure 3.2) and furthermore outsources other transport companies for transfers during the Hajj period. Payment for use of transport during the five main days of Hajj was included in the pilgrims' Hajj package. Coaches are used to transport the approximately three million pilgrims to various holy sites that they need to visit at specified times.

It is clear from the responses that pilgrims rate this service positively. It seems that the Hajj Ministry has strategically and effectively managed the large numbers of pilgrims through their specialized transport department within the Ministry. The General Cars Syndicate also supervises outsourced companies that are accredited to transport pilgrims during the peak period of the Hajj. According to Alford & O’Flynn (2012:10-13) it is not uncommon for Government to outsource their functions to external providers as is deemed necessary for particular situations i.e. Hajj period.

**5.6 SECTION FIVE: Statements relating to improving Hajj preparation for the pilgrims**

**5.6.1 Statement 20: I would like to see travel related information as a component included in Hajj classes**



**Figure 5.23 Distribution of responses regarding whether the pilgrims would like to see travel-related information included in Hajj classes (n=317; 100%)**

The results show that a majority of respondents (86.47%) felt there is a need for travel related information to be included in Hajj classes. A percentage of 46.51 % agreed and 39.96% of respondents strongly agreed with this statement. A percentage of 3.17% of

respondents strongly disagreed, while, 3.38% disagreed with this statement. The total disagreed percentage of the sample population comprised 6.55%. The undecided sample population comprised 6.98%.

When respondents were asked if they would like to see travel related information as a component in Hajj classes, a vast majority agreed. Hajj classes normally occur in mosques, madrassa's (Muslim schools), a hall or residence. Instructors may have a different style or manner of teaching, but there is set criteria regarding the Hajj, which is outlined in Islamic law, or Shariah. For this reason, there are not much creative additions, which can be added to the content regarding Hajj classes. The Hajj course consists of the history of Hajj, the significance of each ritual; actions that need to be taken and prayers that needs to be recited during each ritual. In this regard travel-related information is often omitted.

There is no given time frame for the classes, but they generally occur several months before Hajj and may end a month before the pilgrims depart for Saudi Arabia. A key point emerging from interviews was that younger pilgrims were on the increase when compared to the demographic profile seen in previous years when the elderly formed a bulk of the pilgrim population. Hajj agents pointed out that these factors made the "new age" pilgrims more selective and, to a certain extent, harder to please. A portion of this answer relates back to the time when the apartheid regime was still prevalent in South Africa and people of colour had low income jobs by law, hence travelling was seen as a luxury or, in certain times, a necessity.

For the last 20 years, since 1994, all South Africans have had opportunities to fill positions of power and to take their careers to new heights, which meant increases in personal incomes that led to more disposable incomes. These factors may explain why, for many pilgrims, Hajj will not be their first travel and expectation of Hajj agents would therefore be greater. Hajj agents state that now they would find couples aged in their early thirties buying a package compared to previous years when couples aged in their fifties and sixties. In the past, Hajj classes primarily dealt with religious rites of the Hajj, however, with the rise in numbers of first-time travellers there is a need to complement

religious teachings with practical tourism-related aspects of the Hajj. In this way, a departure from the spiritual emphasis of the Hajj needs to be made so as to acquiesce to the travel needs of the pilgrims.

### 5.6.2 Statement 21: Information pertaining to Hajj should be publicised in print, audio, physical and audio-visual mediums to create public awareness of changes within the Hajj industry

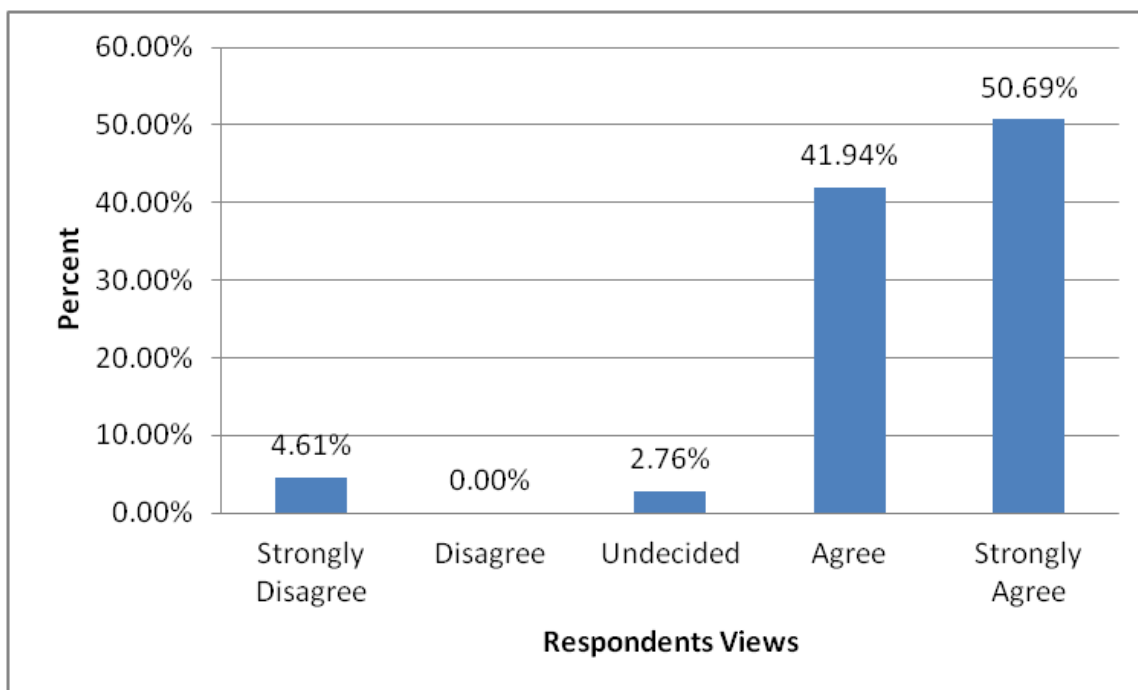


Figure 5.24 Distribution of responses regarding the use of radios, newspapers and other media for public awareness of the South African Hajj Industry (n=319; 100%)

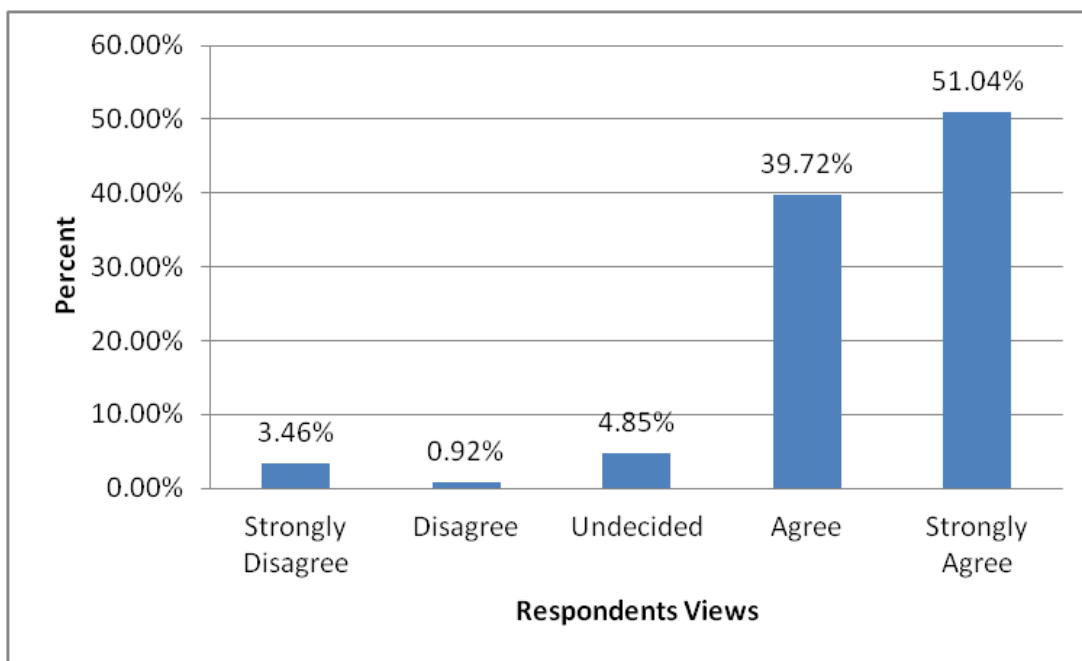
The results show an overwhelming positive response to this question, with 50.69% of respondents strongly agreeing with this point and 41.94% agreed, totalling 92.63%. A total of 4.61% of respondents strongly disagreed and 0% disagreed with this statement. The undecided respondents comprised 2.76%.

With the South African Hajj industry undergoing changes in recent years, the statement tested whether the community wanted to be kept updated when these changes occur or to find out about these changes when they approach their Hajj agent. The positive response can be ascertained as a clear message that the community has a strong interest in changes within the Hajj industry and want to be kept abreast of any changes

in a timely fashion. Many prospective pilgrims rely on local community radio stations community newspapers to keep updated. In Cape Town, there are two Muslim community radio stations, namely the Voice of the Cape and Radio 786; in Gauteng, there is Channel Islam radio; and in KwaZulu-Natal, there is Al-Ansar community radio station. Currently, local community radio stations form a vital role in spreading information regarding the Hajj industry and the results of Hendricks (2007:51) indicate that 22.0% of his sample population became aware of SAHUC by way of radio stations.

Once again, the UNWTO offers a heuristic guideline to facilitate service delivery through one of their six tourism quality standards, namely transparency (Eraqi, 2006:477-478). Radios and newspapers have the distinct advantage of disseminating large volumes of information to the masses. Radio stations are particularly helpful as pilgrims can call in to enquire about specific issues regarding their Hajj agents or the Hajj process generally while a representative of the various stake holders is in the radio studio broadcasting the programme.

**5.6.3 Statement 22: Detailed brochures and itineraries, which describe Hajj packages, should be more accessible**



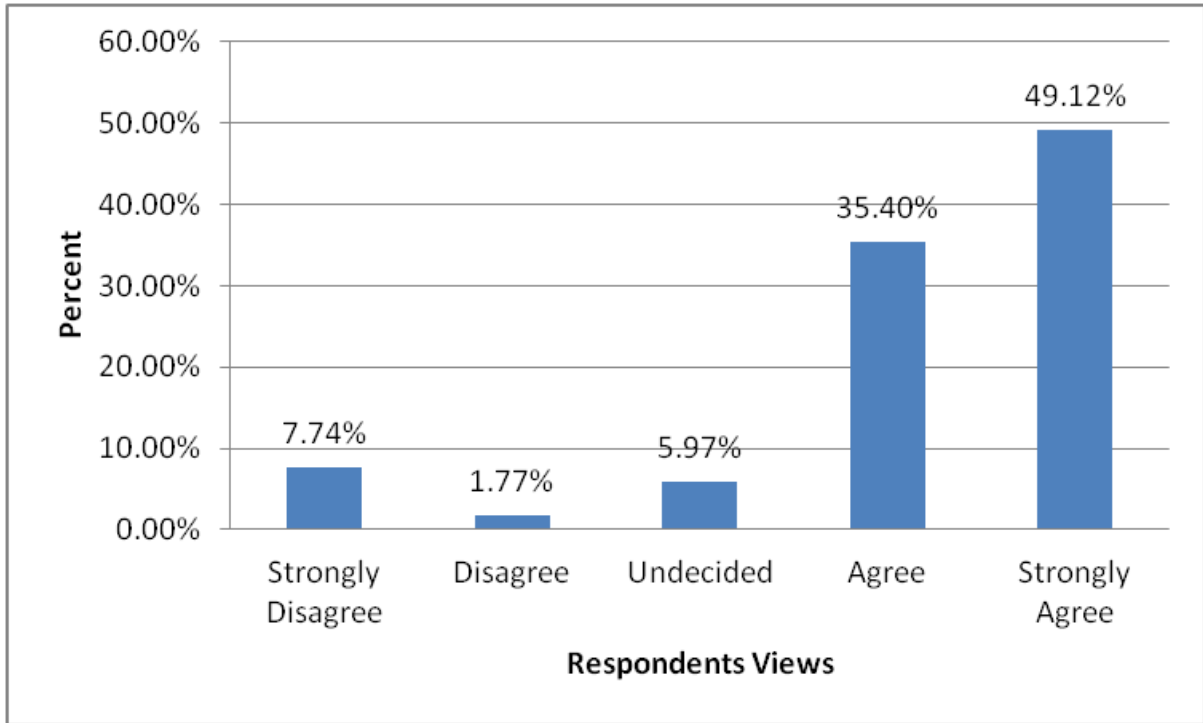
**Figure 5.25 Distribution of responses regarding the need for detailed brochures and itineraries (n=318; 100%)**

A large number of 51.04% of respondents strongly agreed with this statement, while another 39.72% agreed. The number of respondents who strongly disagreed comprised 3.46%, while 0.92% disagreed with this statement. The total disagreed percentage of the respondents comprised 4.38%. The undecided respondents comprised 4.85%.

The results indicate that prospective pilgrims would prefer clarity regarding their journey in the form of detailed and transparent itineraries and pricing structures for the South African Hajj industry. In the past pilgrims would leave all their travel arrangements in the hands of the Hajj agent while they focussed on attending Hajj classes and preparing themselves spiritually. Presently people are aware of internet bookings and other methods, which enable consumers to find affordable products and to tailor their travel arrangements to their needs.

The dimension of 'reliability' outlined by Parasuraman *et al.*, (1988) is suitable here to expound on the need for brochures with detailed itineraries. These brochures will ideally spell out the duties of the Hajj agent and will allow the pilgrim to become a more discerning consumer. Additionally, the pilgrim will have legal recourse if the Hajj agent does not fulfil said duties outlined in the brochure and itinerary.

**5.6.4 Statement 23: I would like SAHUC to supply booklets that contain Hajj information regarding the journey, health aspects, dietary concerns in Saudi Arabia, do's and don'ts in the Kingdom, and so on for prospective pilgrims**



**Figure 5.26 Distribution of responses regarding the need for information booklets with additional information regarding their stay in KSA (n=320; 100%)**

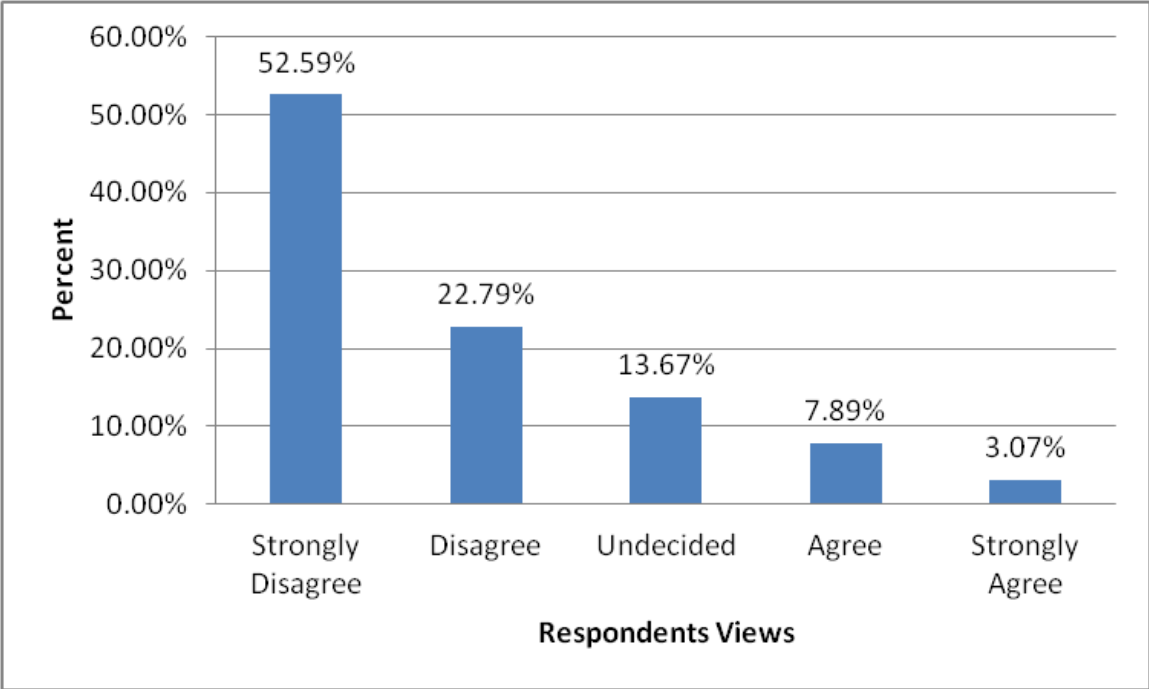
The results indicate that a total of 84.52% of respondents agreed, 49.12% of respondents strongly agreed while 35.40% of the sample population agreed with the statement. The number of respondents who strongly disagreed comprised 7.74%, while 1.77% disagreed with this statement. The total disagreed percentage of the sample population comprised 9.51%. The undecided sample population comprised 5.97%. It is clear that a vast majority would prefer information regarding their travels in the form of detailed booklets. These booklets, which could act as guidelines for first time pilgrims and first time travellers simultaneously.

The response above can be seen as an extension of the need for brochures and itineraries mentioned previously. This broadens the understanding of the needs of the customer. In this case, due to the large percentage of pilgrims wanting specific



information to be made available (such as dietary concerns, dos and don'ts in KSA) it is clear that pilgrims wish to acclimatise to KSA during their six-week pilgrimage. This will also reduce frustrations and misunderstandings on behalf of the pilgrim. Information booklets may also be helpful in reducing the number of frequently asked questions to SAHUC and Hajj agents.

**5.6.5 Statement 24: Well-wishers should be prevented from attending at airports**



**Figure 5.27 Distribution of responses regarding whether pilgrims agree that well-wishers should be prevented from attending airports (n=317; 100%)**

A total of 52.59% of respondents strongly disagreed with the above statement while 22.79% disagreed. Three quarter (75.38%) of the respondents disagreed with this statement. The agreed percentage of the sample population comprised 7.89% while 3.07% of respondents strongly agreed. The total agreed percentage of respondents comprised 10.96%. It seemed that a considerable percentage of the sample population (13.67%) considered this factor and remained undecided. The results show that a majority of the respondents felt that they wanted to say their final goodbyes at the airport and did not believe that they congest the airport or hamper space for other travellers. This statement proved to be one of the most sensitive questions in the entire questionnaire. The consternation invoked by the statement may stem from it being an

age-old tradition, which stems back nearly a century. In the past Muslims in Cape Town would bid final goodbyes at seaports, such as the Cape Town harbour to pilgrims partaking in the nine-month journey.

This statement is based on the fact that airports become congested with extended family and friends and other well-wishers bidding farewell to departing pilgrims. In the Western Cape Province, it is customary to slip a donation in the pilgrim's hand for the journey ahead and to ask to be remembered in prayer when the pilgrim stands in front of the Holy Kaba in Mecca. This tradition is well known in Cape Town and usually manifests itself in the overcrowded airport during Hajj departures.

The negative affect which emerge due to well-wishers and extended family bidding pilgrims farewell while at the same time congesting space for other travellers can also be linked to the Servuction System which occurs in the Service Delivery System (Bennett & Strydom 2001, Figure 2.4). The SERVUCTION system shows that the service delivery system consists of five main components: Customer A, customer B, inanimate environment, contact personnel and invisible organisation and system. Figure 2.4 reveals the effects that two of the components, particularly Customer B have on the primary customer or Customer A. In this situation, Customer A represents the other (non-Hajj) travellers who happen to use the airport during Hajj season. Customer B represents the pilgrims utilising the airport during Hajj season. In this context, Customer B can be seen as seriously impacting on Customer A. Evidence of negative service experience caused by well-intentioned family and friends at the airport are congestion, maximum use of free walking and sitting space and restrict movement.

The researcher discovered that 10.96% of respondents agreed that well-wishers should be prevented from attending the airport. The undecided respondents increased to 13.67%, not knowing if they are willing to part with the tradition or not. The researcher believes that preventing all well-wishers from bidding farewell at the airports, will be a bit drastic and, therefore, the researcher encourages immediate family only to accompany pilgrims to the airport.

## 5.7 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, pilgrims are seen as consumers of the Hajj product who rated various services, service providers and the Hajj authority of South Africa by means of a questionnaire. The results show that the pilgrims are largely satisfied with the service providers. Interestingly, there are distinct changes in the needs of the pilgrims, which the researcher attributes to the changing demographic profile of the pilgrims (i.e. from older to younger). The results also show that South African pilgrims find the quota system unacceptable, however regarding the one proposed hypothetical solution, majority of the pilgrims agreed but a significant amount were undecided or disagreed.

In sum, the researcher has attempted to discuss and debate different aspects of the South African Hajj by drawing on the SERVQUAL model, Servuction system and Schmall's decision making model. Also pertinent to this analysis was the tourism quality standards set out by the UNWTO, which showed the links between the Hajj as a spiritual journey and the tourism industry as a whole.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

#### **6.0 Introduction**

This is the concluding chapter, which provides a summary of previous chapters, recommendations on areas where pilgrims experienced difficulties as well as insights into the Hajj industry as a whole. Recommendations were given to role players constituting the Hajj system of South Africa, which explained how Hajj agents, airlines, pilgrims, the regulator and the South African government work together to form a holistic tourism product. The objective of putting forward recommendations is to be cognisant of the spirituality of this travel whilst simultaneously undertaking a pragmatic perspective on the economic value and service level experienced by the pilgrims.

#### **6.1 Summary of Chapters**

In the first chapter, core problems within the South African Hajj industry were highlighted. The direction of the research was indicated by outlining the objectives, while the research questions were also stated. Common terms and concepts, which are used in tourism and Hajj, were clarified and a description of the research population was specified.

The second chapter provide part one of the literature review and provides an account of tourism as a service, the progression of improving tourism through quality approaches and outlining the history of service delivery. The link between service delivery, tourism and globalisation was also established. The pilgrims' methodology of embarking on pilgrimage was reviewed and linked to tourism theory regarding Schmol's decision-making model for consumer buying behaviour in tourism. The SERVQUAL model and service delivery or SERVUCTION System was also expounded here. The pilgrims' decision-making process was compared to Schmol's decision-making model in tourism.

Chapter three provides the second half of the literature review and gives an account of the roles of stakeholders in the South African Hajj industry, namely the Hajj Ministry of the KSA the South African DFA, SAHUC and Hajj agents.

The fourth chapter provided details regarding the methodology that was used for researching the current Hajj industry in South Africa. Sampling criteria for the pilgrims, operators and agents, as well as the regulator, was specified. The questionnaire's structure was elaborated on further and final results of the survey were identified. The method of data analysis was explained, while limitations of the research were also listed.

The fifth chapter elucidated the data analysis collected during the fieldwork period. This chapter provides interpretive insights into the responses from questionnaires and relates them to interviews with key informants.

This is the concluding chapter wherein recommendations are made regarding the service delivery framework in South Africa. Several recommendations are as a result of interviews with Hajj authorities in 2007 as well as the solutions suggested by South African Hajj agents, the DFA, SAHUC and pilgrims questionnaires responses. This chapter also addresses important insights gained through this study and offers possible subsequent areas for further research.

## **6.2 Research objectives revisited**

This section addresses the objectives posed by the researcher at the outset of the research:

*a) Evaluate service delivery of the Hajj agents with respect to the 2006 to 2007 pilgrimage undertaken by pilgrims.*

This research was undertaken through the collection of data from pilgrims during 2007 and triangulated with data from key informants ranging from returning pilgrims, SAHUC and Hajj agents. The questionnaire reflected fairly positive for service delivery questions

especially referring to the Hajj agents. For the most part Hajj agents for Hajj season of 2006 to 2007 delivered accommodations which they promised and honoured the services, which they promised in their brochure. It was also ascertained that Hajj agents were becoming more service-driven due to pilgrims becoming more selective when choosing a service provider. Particularly, the reputation of Hajj agents was found to be very important with specific mention being made regarding reliability, customer service and value for money and trustworthiness.

*b) To identify constraints affecting the Hajj agents of South Africa.*

The constraints affecting the Hajj agents was manifested largely through the limited amount of pilgrims to be serviced compared to previous years. This limit meant less revenue to be made for Hajj agents. Another constraint was the change from Hajj agencies receiving a set number of pilgrims from the regulator to pilgrims choosing which Hajj agency they wish to contract with. Further constraints on Hajj agents became evident through concessionary visas for pilgrims which were allotted without warning and which created unrealistic time frames for the Hajj agents to make the necessary visa, flights and accommodation bookings.

*c) Quantitatively measure the responses of pilgrims regarding their personal view of service delivery.*

This was successful when using the LIKERT scale model as it allowed the researcher the opportunity to garner large amounts of data and triangulate it with relevant literature outlined in the methodology chapter. In particular, the researcher found the Schmoll decision-making model and the decision-making process extracted from Strydom *et al.* (2000) model for Consumer Buying Behaviour. The SERVQUAL model and SERVUCTION system were also loosely drawn upon for the findings from the pilgrims.

### **6.2.1 Research Questions Revisited**

What follows are responses to research questions posed in the introductory chapter:

a) *What are the service delivery complaints experienced by the pilgrims?*

By far the few commercial airlines that fly to the KSA were a genuine problem experienced by the pilgrims. With a staggering 83.83% of responses pointing to the dissatisfaction experienced by the pilgrims. Added to this, flight delays upon return to RSA are habitually an issue for returning pilgrims. During the Hajj season of 2006 to 2007, female pilgrims also experience inadequate service delivery when their Mahrams or chaperones are not accredited timeously by the Hajj regulator.

b) *What are the constraints facing the Hajj agents?*

Interviews with the Hajj agents yielded an abundance of information regarding the challenges they faced. Findings show that some agents felt let down by SAHUC for not taking serious enough action against unscrupulous Hajj agents. Others felt that the industry was overregulated, while other agents felt that they should be called upon as consultants before any new policies were implemented. Finally, while SAHUC has given pilgrims the freedom to choose their own Hajj agent, the agents are then placed in a precarious position wherein they face huge losses when dealing with securing accommodation, flights and other services for pilgrims who may or may not decide to contract with them.

c) *What are the constraints, which emerged from the quota system, specifically regarding that which is administered by the Hajj Ministry of Saudi Arabia and implemented by SAHUC?*

Pilgrims are placed on a waiting list by SAHUC and each year more and more South African pilgrims are placed on the waiting list. The findings show that this practice has resulted in anger and frustration levelled at SAHUC. For the most part, KSA Hajj Ministry remains a largely invisible system, resulting in SAHUC taking most of the blame for problems occurring in South Africa. Added to this, 86.47% of pilgrims felt the need for travel-related information to prepare for their Hajj.

## **6.3 Recommendations**

Having assessed the data collected and findings in previous chapters, the researcher now puts forth recommendations for the various stakeholders concerned, namely: Hajj agents, SAHUC and Pilgrims. The recommendations are thematically categorised, providing a multi-faceted view of the Hajj industry challenges and possible solutions, both locally and globally.

### **6.3.1 Recommendation One: Brochures**

g) Notwithstanding the large percentage (86.21%) of respondents that appeared positive regarding the detailing of their Hajj brochure, results also showed that a majority of respondents (86.47%) felt there was a need for travel related information to be included in Hajj classes. For the most part, these pilgrims accepted their Hajj packages in good faith; however standardized brochures with travel-related information will aid transparency when choosing a Hajj agent. This transparency is crucial for tourism service providers as it is one the UNWTO's six tourism quality standards which was created in 2003 (WTO1985a, WTO 1980, WTO 1985b, WTO 1985a, WTO 1988, WTO 1991, WTO 1993, WTO 1995, cited in Augustyn, 1998:145). When a tourism service provider, in this case the Hajj agent, builds transparency into its ethos of customer service then "reliability" which is one of the five dimensions which customers consider when evaluating services (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1988 cited in Urdang & Howey, 2001: 536) becomes manifested.

The dimension of reliability comes into effect when pilgrims assesses the Hajj agent's package on a brochure and purchases it. Once the contract is entered into by both parties the Hajj agent now has deliver on promises made in the brochure and agreed upon. Therefore it is in the benefit of the pilgrim that Hajj agents to clearly advertise the Hajj package details. It is recommended that brochures provide information regarding: airlines, flights, time and dates, costs, services included and excluded, type of accommodation and duration of accommodation and location in relation to the holy sites.



A day-to-day itinerary should also be issued to the pilgrims once they have contracted with the Hajj agent. This itinerary will outline the activities during the six week pilgrimage. Importantly, the several days before the Hajj peak period begins, pilgrims have free time to spend their days in supplication to God or any other activity. These days could be highlighted in the itinerary as time for leisure or spirituality. The idea here is to incorporate regularised tourism norms regarding travel information and travel arrangements into the spiritual travel experience of the Hajj.

It is recommended that pilgrims bring copies of their Hajj contracts with them to the KSA. This action will give the pilgrim solid evidence to prove to authorities in the Kingdom that the Hajj agent has not honoured the agreement and the Hajj Ministry will take action against such guilty Hajj agents (DFA official A, 2008).

Furthermore, it is also recommended that travel related information should be added as a component in Hajj classes. The information which would be especially helpful for first time travellers and pilgrims may be:

- a) Information about passports, for example, what its purpose is, what it looks like, and actions to be taken when it's lost or stolen.
- b) Airport orientation, for example, which counters deal with specific queries such as lost baggage, flight information, time considerations at an airport, and objects or substances that are not allowed through checkpoints.
- c) Key players that affect any traveller's journey such as the Department of Home Affairs for passport applications, travel agents or tour operators that arrange and coordinate travel plans, district surgeons or travel clinics for vaccinations, foreign exchange outlets.
- d) The role of an embassy in a foreign country.
- e) Driving in a foreign country, for example, paper work requirements and where to go.

### **6.3.2 Recommendation Two: Field workers**

There appears to be a perception amongst a percentage of 31.59% of pilgrims that SAHUC did not assist them in administrative preparations for Hajj or while they were in the KSA. SAHUC and Hajj agents should remember that field workers that they employ are ultimately the face of their company, as they deal directly with clients and are seen by the pilgrim as a direct reflection of the company. This concept is further endorsed by Augustyn, 1998 who is of the opinion that tourists' perception and judgement on service quality starts from the time they leave their home to embark on the journey to the time they return home (Medlik and Middleton, 1979 cited in Augustyn, 1998:151).

The findings of study by Ekinci, Prokopaki and Cobanoglu (2003:61-62) show that the intangible aspects of the services given by hotels were very important to British tourists. Some of these intangible aspects were: employees never being too busy to respond to requests; employees being prompt in delivering services and employees being sincere in solving guests' problems (Ekinci, Prokopaki & Cobanoglu, 2003:61-62). These intangible aspects of service will be to the benefit of SAHUC and Hajj agents as well and it is recommended that they send their staff on the following courses to foster a service driven culture in their organisation.

- a) A Customer Care and Service Course, which would include problem solving skills and dealing with irate clients.
- b) A First Aid Level One course, which would be useful in a case of an emergency.
- c) Possibly a beginner's course in the Arabic language.

In future, Hajj agents will only grow in profits if their returning clients are satisfied or impressed with their customer service and service delivery and promote their business amongst friends and family who plan to perform their Hajj soon. In light of these factors, it is recommended that Hajj agents screen their field workers for the following qualities:

- a) Experience as a fieldworker accompanying pilgrims during Hajj.

- b) A person who displays a “people’s person” character and not one who becomes easily irritated with people.
- c) A person who will be able to work under pressure and not allow clients to feel the frustration or stress of the situation.
- d) A person who can speak in a clear and diplomatic manner, be assertive, as well as take charge in a case of an emergency.

### **6.3.3 Recommendation Three: Medical Personnel and unity in SA Hajj industry**

As the findings showed that 40.2% of respondents who contracted with a Hajj agent had a medical person or team as part of their service staff, it is apparent that pilgrims find this staff to be an important factor in their decision-making process. Of those that received treatment from SAHUC 89.62% were satisfied with the service; however it is unclear from the responses whether Saudi hospitals were used and therefore not enough is known regarding how widespread the need is for hospitalization whilst on pilgrimage. It is recommended that all Hajj agents should endeavour to provide the service of a medical doctor to the pilgrims in their care. The Saudi hospital should be used in the event of an emergency or as a referral from a doctor of the Hajj agent or SAHUC medical camp for specialised treatment.

The benefit of each Hajj agent arriving with their own medical staff is that it would ease the load on the SAHUC medical camp and may help SAHUC spend lesser funds on adhoc medical care. The addition of a medical practitioner will create a positive impression of Hajj agents assessing and responding to the needs of pilgrims. Additionally, if cost is an issue for the Hajj agent, the company may consider sending a staff member on a Level One First Aid course before the Hajj season. The designated service staff member would then be able to check for pilgrims’ vital signs and stabilise the pilgrim (if necessary) until they reach the SAHUC medical team or Saudi Arabian medical team arrive.

Another recommendation would be for all Hajj agents in South Africa to meet and form one unit, which would impact positively on the buying power of the South African Hajj contingent. The vision is for Hajj tour operators and Hajj travel agents to work for their own profits, as present, but when purchasing air tickets and accommodations, it should be done with one voice under one umbrella group. These actions will increase buying power and result in more worthwhile discounts, which, in turn, reduce the Hajj package price. The benefits may include:

- a) Cheaper airfare owing to bulk buying.
- b) Cheaper accommodation in Mecca and Medina owing to bulk buying.
- c) All South African pilgrims travelling in the same time period, possibly all departing and arriving within one week of each other.
- d) An overall reduction and saving on the Hajj package price.
- e) Entire South African pilgrimage contingent in one location.
- f) Combined effort of operators, agents, the regulator and pilgrims will add to a unified South African Hajj experience and add positively to the spirituality aspect of the Hajj.

#### **6.3.4 Recommendation Four: Hajj administration process**

It is recommended that SAHUC revise the Hajj administration process with an intention of lessening the risk amongst Hajj agents, but not removing the new right of pilgrims to select their own agents. One wants the industry to revolve around the consumer and still create a market place where small tour operators and travel agents have an opportunity to grow if they perform and benefit the industry. This will ensure that the South African Hajj industry will become service-driven. In this way, only the most service-oriented and competitive Hajj agents will remain to service the South African Hajj industry.

When respondents were asked regarding negotiating a quota for a set five year period, 64.39% of respondents agreed that a set quota would be welcomed. It is recommended that if the possibility exists, that SAHUC motivates for a set quota for the next five years

at the next quota negotiations. A set quota for a five year period will bring medium term stability to the South African Hajj industry through aiding the regulator and Hajj agents to plan and prepare adequately for each year's Hajj season. Costs for SAHUC and the Hajj agents flying to and from KSA will be saved and these fees could impact on possibly cheaper Hajj packages for pilgrims and enable SAHUC to utilise those travel funds in more needed areas of the organisation which will ultimately impact positively on the pilgrims as SAHUC exists for the benefit of the pilgrims. If the request for a five year set quota may be granted, the Hajj agents still remain uncertain as to how many pilgrims will contract with them per Hajj season but they at least know the total amount of pilgrims allotted to South Africa per annum which may aid them to plan their target market share and possibly plan partnerships with other Hajj agents in order to remain in the South African Hajj industry.

### **6.3.5 Recommendation Five: Quota systems**

Regarding the quota system, the respondents posited disparate responses. For this reason it is recommended that SAHUC should lesson risks for Hajj agents by obtaining quotas as early as possible from the Hajj Ministry in the KSA. Once the number of prospective pilgrims who have been approved has been established, pilgrims should be given accreditation letters, which allow them to contract with a Hajj agent of their choice. It is surmised that at this time there would then be approximately three or four months left before the Hajj season commences, which may provide a workable timeframe for Hajj agents to secure their contracts. Pilgrims could also then be issued a 'cut off' period to select Hajj agents, so that Hajj agents can conduct their visits to KSA within a reasonable time instead of under pressurised circumstances. Pilgrims should also realise that lingering their selection process could affect the cost of their package, as the Hajj agents now have to depart later to the Kingdom in order to secure contracts, while the Hajj agents competes with buyers from all over the world. In such situations, normally, only expensive accommodation establishments remain in the market.

### **6.3.6 Recommendation Six: Airlines**

A recommendation for airlines would be to act cautiously regarding the sale of block bookings as it has the possibility to create a monopoly for well-established Hajj agents. The Hajj agent could buy up majority of the seats on the airplane early for a cheap price and during the Hajj departure period, drive up the prices to smaller desperate Hajj agents. These actions ultimately affect the pilgrims resulting in Hajj packages becoming more expensive. One solution would be for SAHUC to approach government through the DFA in order to lobby the idea of South Africa's national carrier (South African Airlines) to service those travel segments during the period of Hajj. In this manner airfare prices are kept reasonable, which should ultimately decrease the cost of Hajj packages.

In some cases a problem of costing arises with chartered flights as it is more expensive than commercial flights. From the airline perspective a full flight may well go to Mecca, however the problem remains that the airplane would be rendered empty en route back to South Africa. The chartered flight is certainly a convenient option, as it is like an air taxi, which will drop off and collect clients as requested. It is recommended that the airlines that service the South African Hajj industry investigate the possibility of more frequent flight schedules during the Hajj season. Another solution is for SAHUC to engage the airlines for more flight schedules, as well as try their best to possibly obtain a discount.

Regarding stranded pilgrims at airports in the KSA, it is recommended that SAHUC enforce the prohibition of the use of business visas by South African Hajj agents. These visas allow Hajj agents to depart the KSA before their Hajj group has departed. The visa that should be used is called the "Ashrafiya visa", which prevents Hajj agents from departing from the Kingdom until their last pilgrim has left the KSA, hence ensuring that pilgrims are not left stranded in the KSA (DFA Official A, 2008).

The two main reasons for stranded South African pilgrims in the KSA are:

- a) Arrival details of pilgrims which were not submitted timeously by the Hajj agents to the Muassasa's Head office (National Tawafa Establishments in Mecca).
- b) Departure details are not submitted by Hajj agents, which made departure arrangements of pilgrims rather challenging for the authorities (DFA official A, 2008).

It is recommended that Hajj agents focus on these service delivery failures as priorities. The Hajj agent should allocate a dedicate person or team to arranging and confirming flight bookings, specifically focusing on the procedures as stipulated by the KSA authorities and meeting their deadlines.

Concerning the annual problems with congestion at the airport due to the influx of well-wishers, South Africa may do well to follow in Malaysia's footsteps by centralising farewell in a designated location. In Malaysia all the pilgrims of a particular region amalgamate in a massive convention centre with their luggage, family and friends. Here Hajj groups are arranged, luggage is placed on correct busses and family and friends bid farewell to the pilgrims. Once the pilgrims board the coach, it is a direct drive to the airport as traffic police escort the coaches. Once at the airport, the last check-in and boarding takes place and the aircraft departs for Saudi Arabia.

If one applies this concept in South Africa, Durban and Cape Town can be used as examples. Both cities have International Convention Centres that can house thousands of people. These convention centres can be used as central points for these cities where all pilgrims from different districts can amalgamate, and different Hajj agencies can have their locations and assemble their groups and arrange them according to flight schedules. Luggage can be placed on coaches and farewell greetings can be completed. Traffic police can be called in to clear a route to the airport as the coaches' drive in convoy. Once at the airport, the final check-in and boarding procedure takes place to depart to Jeddah in Saudi Arabia.

### **6.3.7 Recommendation Seven: Hajj industry awareness**

Noting the 92.63% - who agreed with the need for more information regarding the Hajj industry from SAHUC, it is recommended that SAHUC should focus on developing a way of explaining a general overview of how the Hajj system works. It is recommended that prospective pilgrims should be aware of the way the Hajj system works regarding the regulator, the service industry and rules within the Kingdom. It is also recommended that pilgrims scrutinise their package, as well as their prospective Hajj agent in order to encounter minimal problems while on the journey and pilgrimage. Several prospective pilgrims follow events in the Hajj industry and around the globe religiously because it impacts them directly. Examples could relate to:

- a) Airlines.
- b) Fuel prices.
- c) Arrival and departure of regulator delegations to and from the Kingdom.
- d) Tensions within the South African Hajj industry.
- e) Construction and developments in and around the holy sites in Saudi Arabia.
- f) Exchange rates.
- g) Natural disasters.

It is also recommended that the community should be informed of changes within the Hajj industry as and when they occur. Forms of media that can be used for this purpose includes the following:

- a) Community radio stations.
- b) Community newspapers.
- c) Mosques.
- d) Television.
- e) SAHUC website.
- f) Social media.



In addition, the researcher recommends that the regulator produce mini booklets, which can be a handy tool, which aids pilgrims while they are on their own in Saudi Arabia. Should the mini booklets be postponed due to financial constraints then an alternative would be to post the mini booklet on SAHUC's website and pilgrims could download and print at their own cost. This recommendation foregrounds the importance of information to prospective pilgrims and the awareness of how the Hajj system works. If pilgrims are well informed, they have an idea of what they can expect and can, therefore, prepare themselves better regarding various aspects of the journey.

The above recommendation is a reality in Malaysia and Singapore and this may be one of the reasons why their pilgrim contingents are perceived as orderly, unified and aware of ritual procedures and the surroundings by several countries across the world. Such booklets should be issued to accredited pilgrims in a bundle pack, which comprises stickers for luggage showing a South African flag or a SAHUC logo, armbands that indicate that they are South African pilgrims and possibly a booklet with basic Arabic words and sentences that are frequently used by pilgrims. Augustyn, 1998 argues that tourists' perception on quality starts from the time they leave their home to embark on the journey to the time they return, and with recent increases in Hajj levies, the idea of a bundle pack for accredited pilgrims would be something tangible for monies that are paid to the regulator. This would further be a way for SAHUC to display how organised it is from the first moments of contact with pilgrims.

#### **6.4 Important insights gleaned from this research**

Pilgrims want to see SAHUC exercise more authority, specifically in cases where Hajj agents falter too often or is guilty of malpractice. Corrective action such as suspension, blacklisting or settlement pay-out for the penalties are warranted. Hendricks (2007:98) agrees that SAHUC should act out its powers more decisively when exercising its mandate. There are several concerns, which could probably fall under the list of issues, which SAHUC has to attend to so that the public may change their perceptions about the regulator.

The researcher believes that in order for the South African Hajj industry to reach higher standards of service and to be an ethical industry where a primary goal is the spiritual journey of the pilgrimage and where the right of the pilgrims is a priority, changes should be made by everyone involved across the industry. Some of these changes may be policy, while others may be perceptions and attitudes by all who are involved, which range from pilgrims, the service industry, the regulator, government in the form of the Department of Foreign Affairs, and the Saudi Arabian government, which all play a role in the South African Hajj industry. These changes may appear as outlined below.

a) The price of seasonal airfare relating to the Hajj season should be investigated and extreme price hikes, which exploit the situation, should be controlled.

b) Pilgrims should become proactive regarding their Hajj instead of depending entirely on regulators and Hajj agents. Besides the Hajj classes that they attend, a deeper understanding of what occurs in the Hajj industry is required before accusations of fraud, incompetence, and other accusations can be made. There should be a shift in pilgrims' attitudes towards the service industry and regulator; instead of expecting everything to be done for them, they should also play a role in order to make the process a success.

c) Hajj agents should realise that owing to the corrupt and free operating days of the 1960's until 1994, several pilgrims of the 21<sup>st</sup> century still have a negative perception about Hajj agents today. In some extreme cases, Hajj agents would leave their pilgrims stranded in Mecca, while they are in Mauritius with the group's money. Memories such as these still linger in several pilgrims' minds and cause prospective pilgrims to be cautious and on the offensive when dealing with Hajj agents. The only way out now for Hajj agents would be to be as transparent as possible, to fulfil promises that they make to pilgrims, even if it costs more than expected, and to communicate clearly and constantly with their groups throughout the duration of the journey.

d) The regulator made good progress on the Hajj season of 2007 to 2008 in comparison to 2006 to 2007 and the new management handled the 2007 Hajj season in a manner that regained confidence from a good percentage of the community. The

researcher agrees with Hendricks (2007:103) recommendations that SAHUC should appoint a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) who can lead the organisation and address any inefficiencies of the South African Hajj system. He also recommended that SAHUC should appoint permanent staff that operate throughout the year instead of volunteers, as well as investigate possibilities to invest funds in low risk investments, which would assist the organisation's financial constraints.

#### **6.4.1 Assessment of current South African Pilgrimage Experience**

The South African pilgrim comes from a comfortable Hajj background in comparison to other countries. South Africa never had a quota system since citizens first began to perform Hajj, which gave rise to several citizens performing Hajj two or three times in their lifetime in the past. In Islam, pilgrimage is an once-in-a-lifetime event for those who can afford it, but if one can afford to perform it more, it then is considered a blessing. This would be considered a luxury for a person who originates from Indonesia or Malaysia as they have huge waiting lists reaching up to 20 years. South Africa's quota was only enforced in 2005 whereas countries such as India, Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore and several more had to adhere to the quotas decades ago.

South Africans were always known in the KSA as one of the countries that arrive the earliest for the Hajj season, giving them a longer time period in the Kingdom compared to other countries. SAHUC official C, (2007) confirms that in 2007 South African pilgrims was once again the first country to arrive in Mecca for Hajj. In 2004 people were still performing Hajj over an eight week period. In 2007 several South African pilgrims performed Hajj in six weeks and some, who had limited time, owing to certain circumstances, lessened their time period by choice. In essence, it is the five main days of the Hajj month, which constitute the Hajj season and, therefore, one may be in the Kingdom for those specific days and it would still be recognised as a pilgrimage. Currently, countries such as the United Kingdom and the United States of America have an average Hajj period of three to four weeks in comparison with South Africa's average six week Hajj period.

One may say that because South Africans had a comfortable and smooth sailing Hajj past, new adjustments and regulations that were made, can be interpreted as severe changes, which would shock the community and cause tension. If the quota system is going to be permanent, then Hajj will not be as South Africans have known it in the past, the impetus would be on better cooperation between pilgrims and SAHUC and in turn SAHUC and the Hajj agents should place greater priority on winning back the public's confidence.

## **6.5 Implications of the research**

This research suggest that if SAHUC can be successful in convincing the KSA that South Africa is a secular country with a Muslim minority, then they may lift the quota system and treat South Africa like other Muslim minority countries. For the host country of the Hajj pilgrimage, a country that has a small Muslim population could be interpreted as not having such a drastic effect on the annual global Hajj population. For example currently, South Africa is allowed 2500 pilgrims per year; even if South Africa sends its desired 7500 pilgrims per year, it does not have the same effect of countries such as Indonesia that sends 250 000 pilgrims per year for Hajj.

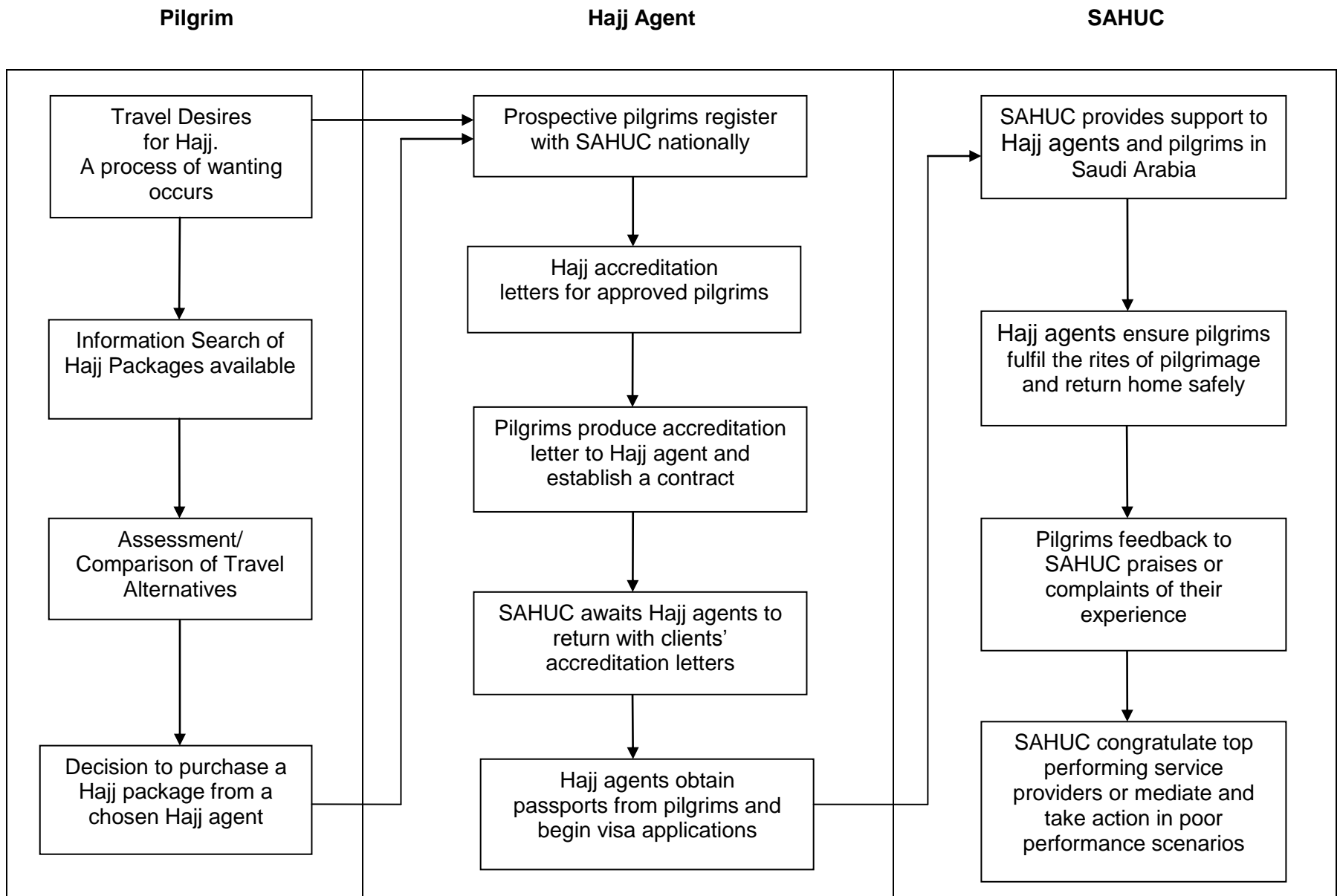
In 2007 the delegation representing SAHUC, which signed Hajj protocols for that year, made the above argument, however they saw a quota increase to 5000 pilgrims for that year instead of the removal of the quota system in its entirety. At this point, the researcher posits that it is necessary for a new framework for pilgrims to be introduced based on the findings uncovered in this research. What follows is a graphic illustration of said service delivery framework and a detailed deconstruction of the components of this service delivery framework.

### **6.5.1 Recommended Service Delivery Framework for South African Pilgrims**

The service delivery framework in Figure 6.1 involves all role players in the Hajj industry and is centred on the pilgrim. The framework highlights the steps taken by pilgrims

before embarking on the pilgrimage and displays the processes involved by the regulator to ensure fairness in selection of potential candidates for Hajj and order throughout the Hajj season. The service providers namely the Hajj tour operators and Hajj travel agents are also featured as the link between consumer and the regulator. There are many behind-the-scene tasks which have been discussed in previous sections of the study and are not featured in the service delivery framework. This is due to the focus being on a Hajj framework for South African pilgrims, which will map out the stages and processes pilgrims undergo until their return to South Africa.

The first section illustrates aspects of Schmoll's decision-making model in Figure 2.5 and aspects of Strydom *et al.* (2000:92) decision-making process in Figure 2.6 and links it with the service delivery framework for South African pilgrims travelling to Saudi Arabia. It shows how the decision making process has been applied to the Hajj scenario for pilgrims on a religious travel. The person makes an intention to perform Hajj and thereafter enquire about the travel ahead and the service providers in the industry. Options are weighed up to postpone the Hajj for a later time or for a substitute travel and thereafter the person decides to go ahead with the journey and purchases a package with a Hajj agent.



**Figure 6.1 Service Delivery Framework for South African Pilgrims Travelling to Saudi Arabia**

The second section displays some of the process, which takes place after the potential pilgrims have made their decision. It should be pointed out that registration with the regulator for pilgrimage could happen before a decision is reached regarding which service provider to contract with. This is indicated by the two arrows to the fifth block of Figure 6.1. The second section also illustrates that all the stakeholders are dependent on each other's contribution. The pilgrims need to register for Hajj and have an accreditation letter before the Hajj agents can service them. Hajj agents need to have 50 or more accreditation letters before the regulator will approve their visas and the regulator need the Hajj agents to undertake the task of providing various services to the pilgrims for the entire journey.

The third section of the service delivery framework for South African pilgrims travelling to Saudi Arabia displays more of the functions the regulator has to provide. These tasks occur during the Hajj while in Saudi Arabia and post Hajj while in South Africa. SAHUC has to play the role of being supportive to the Hajj agents as well as protecting the rights of South African pilgrims while in Saudi Arabia and adhering to Saudi Arabian policies. The third section also highlights the primary role of Hajj agents, which is to ensure their pilgrims perform their Hajj and return them safely to South Africa.

The end of the third section involves customer feedback and shows the channel of communication pilgrims may follow. Customer feedback links with the sixth step in Figure 2.4 of Strydom *et al.* (2000:91) decision making process known as post purchase evaluation. At this stage, the travellers have experienced the tourism offering and will rate it based on value for money, service standards, overall quality and other variables. For example, if it was a family pilgrimage with a Hajj agent and the evaluation is positive, it may result in a return visit in five years' time when the family will be eligible to perform Hajj again. If the evaluation was negative, because of the religious affiliation to Hajj, the family will perform Hajj again, when they are eligible to do so but they will not use the same Hajj agent.

It is vital that consumer's feedback to hotels, resorts, airlines and other service providers they make use of because it ensures improved service in the future. Relating to the Hajj industry, if pilgrims feedback good or bad experiences to the regulator then there is an awareness of the situation and actions could be taken to prevent disturbing situations in the future. The area of feedback also creates an opportunity for the regulator to applaud or reward top performers with accolades or incentives in the future. Such actions will foster a service and quality driven South African Hajj industry.

## **6.6 Areas for Further Research**

After conducting the research on the development of a service delivery framework for South African pilgrims travelling to Saudi Arabia, the researcher recommends the following two areas for further research:

- a) To develop a research culture concerned with service and quality within the South African Hajj industry.
- b) Identify methods in which SAHUC receives more authority from government in order to take firm action against fraudulent Hajj agents.

## **6.7 Conclusion**

Although the Hajj is fundamentally important as a religious Muslim rite, it also offers an intriguing space in which to study religious ceremonies as a viable religious tourism research area. The need for a structured and detailed service delivery framework for South African pilgrims travelling to Saudi Arabia is made evident through this research. Globally recognised tourism standards should be applied to this religious travel. It is clear that the changing demographics of pilgrims indicate a need for additional travel related information, which goes beyond religious guidelines that have been practiced in the past. It is hoped that this research will benefit the Hajj agents, the regulator administering the Hajj process and most significantly the aspiring pilgrims who embark on this holy journey in the future.



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**APPENDIX: A**  
**Questionnaire**

**QUESTION 1: STATEMENTS RELATING TO THE HAJJ AGENTS.**

Please read the following statements and indicate your preference according to the legend below:

**LEGEND**

<b>STRONGLY DISAGREE</b>	<b>DISAGREE</b>	<b>UNDECIDED</b>	<b>AGREE</b>	<b>STRONGLY AGREE</b>
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(PLEASE INDICATE WITH AN (X) IN THE APPROPRIATE COLUMN PER ITEM)

STATEMENTS		Degree of preference				
		SD	D	U	A	SA
1.1	The accommodations grading was on par to what was promised by the Hajj agent.					
1.2	Meals that form part of the package were provided as promised by the Hajj agent.					
1.3	The Hajj agent that I contracted with provided adequate assistance throughout the pilgrimage.					
1.4	Hajj package brochures, which were provided by the Hajj agent, were clear and accurate.					
1.5	I had access to the Hajj agent's spiritual leader during the entire trip.					
1.6	Service personnel from the Hajj agent were courteous and helpful while attending to us during our pilgrimage.					
1.7	For future Hajj travel, I would choose this Hajj agent again.					
1.8	A qualified medical person or team was assigned to the group by the Hajj agent.	Yes		No		

**QUESTION 2: STATEMENTS RELATING TO THE AIRLINES OPERATING IN THE HAJJ INDUSTRY.**

Please read the following statements and indicate your preference according to the legend below:

**LEGEND**

<b>STRONGLY DISAGREE</b>	<b>DISAGREE</b>	<b>UNDECIDED</b>	<b>AGREE</b>	<b>STRONGLY AGREE</b>
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(PLEASE INDICATE WITH AN (X) IN THE APPROPRIATE COLUMN PER ITEM)

STATEMENTS		Degree of preference				
		SD	D	U	A	SA
2.1	I would prefer to use chartered flights for pilgrimage in the future					
2.2	Commercial airlines that fly to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia should be more available during Hajj season					

**QUESTION 3: STATEMENTS RELATING TO THE HAJJ REGULATORY BODY IN SOUTH AFRICA. (THE SOUTH AFRICAN HAJJ AND UMRAH COUNCIL)**

Please read the following statements and indicate your preference according to the legend below:

**LEGEND**

<b>STRONGLY DISAGREE</b>	<b>DISAGREE</b>	<b>UNDECIDED</b>	<b>AGREE</b>	<b>STRONGLY AGREE</b>
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(PLEASE INDICATE WITH AN (X) IN THE APPROPRIATE COLUMN PER ITEM)

3.1	The SAHUC medical team treated me during my pilgrimage.	Yes	No

STATEMENTS		Degree of preference				
		SD	D	U	A	SA
3.2	If Yes, the service regarding your medical treatment was efficient and of an exceptionally good standard					
3.3	More SAHUC officials are needed in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia during Hajj season					
3.4	SAHUC assisted me with administrative preparations for Hajj and during my stay in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia					
3.5	I am satisfied with the manner in which SAHUC handled the Hajj situation / crises of 2006-2007 regarding the quota system					

**QUESTION 4: STATEMENTS RELATING TO THE HAJJ MINISTRY OF THE KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA.**

Please read the following statements and indicate your preference according to the legend below:

**LEGEND**

<b>STRONGLY DISAGREE</b>	<b>DISAGREE</b>	<b>UNDECIDED</b>	<b>AGREE</b>	<b>STRONGLY AGREE</b>
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(PLEASE INDICATE WITH AN (X) IN THE APPROPRIATE COLUMN PER ITEM)

STATEMENTS		Degree of preference				
		SD	D	U	A	SA
4.1	I am dissatisfied that South Africa is on the quota system.					
4.2	The quota system should be set, for a five-year period.					
4.3	I am satisfied with the new law, which stipulates pelting times for each country during the stoning ritual of the Hajj					
4.4	Transfers during the pilgrimage were efficient					



**QUESTION 5: STATEMENTS RELATING TO IMPROVING HAJJ PREPARATION FOR THE PILGRIMS’.**

Please read the following statements and indicate your preference according to the legend below:

**LEGEND**

<b>STRONGLY DISAGREE</b>	<b>DISAGREE</b>	<b>UNDECIDED</b>	<b>AGREE</b>	<b>STRONGLY AGREE</b>
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(PLEASE INDICATE WITH AN (X) IN THE APPROPRIATE COLUMN PER ITEM

STATEMENTS		Degree of preference				
		SD	D	U	A	SA
5.1	I would like to see travel related information as a component included in Hajj classes.					
5.2	Information pertaining to Hajj should be publicised in print, audio, physical and audio-visual mediums to create public awareness of changes within the Hajj industry					
5.3	Detailed brochures and itineraries, which describe Hajj packages, should be more accessible.					
5.4	I would like SAHUC to supply booklets with Hajj information regarding the travel ahead, health aspects, dietary concerns in Saudi Arabia, do’s and don’ts in the Kingdom etc. for prospective pilgrims.					
5.5	Well-wishers should be prevented from attending at airports.					

**Section B: Question 6: Please Provide Some Details About Yourself:**

<b>6.1 Gender</b>	
6.1.1	Male
6.2.2	Female

<b>6.2 Language group</b>	
6.2.1	English
6.2.2	Afrikaans
6.2.3	Isi Xhosa
6.2.4	Other (please specify).....

<b>6.3 Age group</b>		
6.3.1	Under 21	
6.3.2	21 – 30	
6.3.3	31 – 40	
6.3.4	41 – 50	
6.3.5	51 – 60	
6.3.6	More than 60	

<b>6.4 Highest education level completed</b>		
6.4.1	No formal education	
6.4.2	Partial primary	
6.4.3	Primary completed	
6.4.4	Partial Secondary	
6.4.5	Secondary completed	
6.4.6	Certificate / diploma	
6.4.7	First degree	
6.4.8	Postgraduate degree	
6.4.9	Other (Specify).....	

<b>6.5 Which province do you live in?</b>		
6.5.1	Eastern Cape	
6.5.2	Western Cape	
6.5.3	Gauteng	
6.5.4	KwaZulu Natal	
6.5.5	Other (Specify).....	

<b>6.6 Was this your first pilgrimage</b>		
6.6.1	Yes	
6.6.2	No	

