

## **Customer's satisfaction and brand awareness**

Case: Bulsho Cooperative, Finland

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<b>Title</b> Customers satisfaction and brand awareness A case study of Bulsho cooperative	<b>Number of pages and appendices</b> <b>49+6</b>
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<p>The aim of the research is to find out ways to create an awareness of Bulsho cooperative, its brand image and brand identity in order to strengthen the brand and develop a competitive advantage over other similar brands. To satisfy customers' needs by providing quality goods and services, know how customers behave, make the decision to purchase goods or services, what factors influence those decisions and how do these factors change their purchasing patterns.</p> <p>Improve sales services and broadening customer base Determine what role do the factors influencing consumer's behavior play in the sales of goods? Improve the brand value and image awareness</p> <p>The theoretical framework is based on literature about analysis of the target market, role of the consumer, Consumer behavior, Factors influencing consumers, Decision making process, Need Recognition, Brand awareness and customer satisfaction, Factors influencing branding, Brand identity, image and positioning, Customer satisfaction and brand loyalty and Internal and external customer satisfaction</p> <p>The empirical study was conducted in the form of a printed questionnaire, which was given to customers of Bulsho in Helsinki. 192 responses were returned and an interview with the marketing manager of Bulsho cooperative to draw comparisons between the opinion of the customers and those of the employer. The research methods were both qualitative and quantitative.</p> <p>The result indicates that the management needs to step up its publicity to increase the brand awareness and strengthen the brand identity and image to be competitive. Customers were satisfied with the variety of goods and service but not with the flow of information, support services and general customers' services while receiving the goods and services Bulsho provides.</p> <p>To conclude Bulsho cooperative should increase its publicity via advertisement campaign to strengthen its brand awareness, image and identity amongst customers using all available means of communication, It should develop good flow of information and communication to and from customers and improve service quality and support services</p>	
<p><b>Key words</b> Brand awareness, identity and image, Customers' satisfaction, loyalty, decision making process, consumers' behaviour.</p>	

## Contents

1	Introduction .....	1
1.1	Introduction to Bulsho Cooperative: Mission Vision and Strategy .....	1
1.2	Research problem and research questions.....	4
1.3	Aims and objectives and significance of the thesis .....	5
1.4	Structure of the thesis .....	6
2	Consumer behavior, Brand awareness and customer satisfaction .....	8
2.1	Factor influencing consumer behavior.....	8
2.1.1	Cultural factors .....	9
2.1.2	Socio religious factors .....	10
2.1.3	Psychological and personal factors .....	11
2.2	Customer decision-making process.....	13
2.3	Definition of a Brand -What is a Brand .....	16
2.3.1	Internal branding .....	17
2.3.2	Brand value and attributes.....	17
2.3.3	Brand awareness and advantages.....	19
2.3.4	Factors influencing branding.....	19
2.3.5	Brand identity, image and positioning .....	21
2.3.6	Service quality and brand loyalty .....	22
2.3.7	Internal and external customer satisfaction .....	23
3	Research approach and methods .....	27
3.1	Data collection process and instrument.....	28
3.2	Data collection and analysis process.....	29
4	Key results and discussion.....	30
4.1	Description of respondents background factors.....	30
a.	Services and products .....	33
b.	Level of Customer satisfaction.....	36

c. Interview results.....	39
4.4 Result from Open Questions.....	43
5 Conclusion and recommendations .....	46
5.1 Summary of the findings .....	46
5.2 Suggestions and recommendations.....	51
5.3 Reliability and validity .....	51
6 References.....	53
Appendices .....	54
Appendix 1: An interview with the Marketing Manager .....	54
Appendix 2 – Survey questionnaire to customers .....	56
Appendix 3 Descriptive Statistics.....	60

# 1 Introduction

This thesis is to conduct a research on the customer's satisfaction, brand awareness, behavior and decision making to find out how to attract more customers to Bulsho retail store. This was conducted to immigrants and other prospective customers who know Bulsho or have heard about the cooperative, the reason for the research is to find out ways by which Bulsho attractive more customers can, create a solid brand name for the cooperative and satisfy customers with the goods and services that they provide to them.

The is a high level of competition in the market place, too many goods and services available with different challenges most especially for new businesses, therefore it is very important that a company knows what they are willing to offer to the market, where to perform this function, what segment of customers they want to target, when to carry out this function and how they are going to achieve their goal, these can only be done successfully if the business have a good knowledge of the market which means a research of the market needs to be done. In order to know the right customers, to serve them right, to satisfy their needs and wants, to build up a respectable brand name and image Bulsho needs to understand the demands of immigrants in Helsinki and to supply their needs thereby become a competitive player in the market.

## 1.1 Introduction to Bulsho Cooperative: Mission Vision and Strategy

Bulsho Cooperative is a retail store located in Helsinki at Meri Rastila 100 meters from the metro station in the main shopping center in Rastila area. Bulsho is a cooperative owned by Somali community organization registered in Finland whose name is a social empowerment organization known as (SEMO RY). The store was founded in 2001 and has three different departments: a fashion apartment selling dresses for men and women, shoes, jewelries and cosmetics; a provision apartment selling groceries and food stuff from Africa and multicultural café selling soft drinks, tea, coffee, cappuccino, snacks, sandwich,

live sports, games such as cards and domino with a call shop for making international calls to Africa, money transfer agency and selling flight tickets. The Bulsho cooperative was set up to provide quality products at cheaper price than its competitors, in order to satisfy customers' needs and wants.

The idea behind having such a business is to import good quality products from Africa, China and India with cheaper price and then sell them to customers within reasonable price so as to keep the price and the quality of the product in balance. There are many different factors, which inspired the cooperative of setting up a shop.

First, Helsinki hosts small numbers of prestige shops and some shops with relatively lower prices. However, apart from this, there are no shops to sell good quality products with cheaper prices and that has encouraged us to start up own business.

Second, such shops have already existed in the Finnish market and have been operating successfully for years. This means that Bulsho is not facing any legal barrier during the establishment of the cooperative. As well, the long-term operation of the same shops in the Finnish market reveals that there is still demand for companies that have the privilege of low prices. Therefore, the low price strategy that we have will be very effective and will be in accordance with the demand of the time.

The vision of cooperative is to become one of the leading cooperatives in Finland within the next five years by providing products of high quality at cheaper prices. The company aims to have branches in all over Finland particularly anywhere where these particular companies are in great demand. The cooperative aspires in exceeding the expectations of its customers and associates. The main aim is to be the benchmark for excellence in every aspect of its business. Thus the cooperative and associated businesses are dedicated to delivering exceptional service and value.

The promise is to create an environment of mutual trust and respect in order to promote personal and professional growth; to foster teamwork and associate involvement; and to demand the highest ethical standard from us. The commitment to the stated mission makes Bulsho cooperative a nice place where people want to work and do business.

The value is to offer an excellent choice of quality products, which suit all backgrounds and budgets, and an extremely high level of customer service. The aim is to quickly

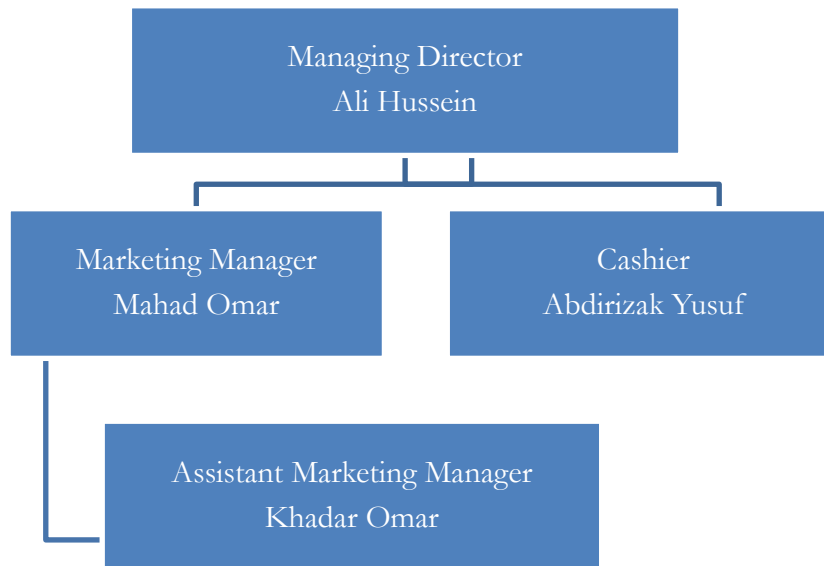
establish itself as an excellent cooperative for choice, quality and value so that all its customers can feel confident about purchasing of all products according to their need.

Bulsho target market is Helsinki and its surrounding, that is Vantaa, Espoo, Kauniainen and the other cities which are 50km close to Helsinki (about 1, 5 million inhabitants). Bulsho targets immigrants from Africa who live in this area and has a population of approximately four thousand people. The majority of the immigrant population is made up of women, which is about 60%; Bulsho has to pay more attention to this segment of customers as they are the key target group because of the fact that women play an important role as the household head when it comes to buying food and other household products for the family. This is a respectable position in the African culture, no matter who is the breadwinner; the woman ends up to be the purchaser of basic household necessities including cloths, books and needs for the whole family.

The male segment of the population will be a target to the coffee shop and phone booth, where they can watch live sports, play game, buy travelling tickets and make international calls to Africa, this target group is vital for the cooperative because men are the bread winners of African families which means their present to Bulsho will mean the present of their families, therefore if Bulsho can satisfy the male group, then it can bring the female group along.

Bulsho business form is of a cooperative with aims of selling diverse low budget imported goods and cheap services. The owners and partners contribute each with own financial capital and work.

As the company “Bulsho cooperative” is a General Partnership company, all the partners have different responsibilities and titles (see figure 2). Nevertheless, all the partners in this company are striving to put all the possible efforts together to obtain the objective of the company. As well the partners are well committed to assist each other in all aspects of the business. The Managing Director of Bulsho cooperative is leading the business and he has the right to hire people, make contracts, terminate contracts, order goods and arrange meetings.



**Figure 1: Organizational structure of Bulsho cooperative**

However, before the Managing Director takes a decision, all the partners must agree beforehand. Marketing Manager is responsible for adverts, articles, sales promotion and public relations.

Additionally, the Marketing Manager is liable for the evaluating of the marketing plan of Bulsho cooperative and in cases where changes were necessary to be done then the Marketing Manager is fully responsible to react immediate and accordingly. Finance Assistant is accountable for taking loan from the bank, payment of the interest rate, tax, insurance, and all other bills and minor finance relevant issues. The cashier is fully accountable for the registration of all the purchased products, reporting the daily turnover to the Finance Assistant, keeping the cash and the bank slips save, major calculation mistakes and making the list of goods which are needed.

## 1.2 Research problem and research questions

The objective of this thesis is to find out which ways to satisfy Bulsho cooperative customers and how to improve awareness of its brand image with a large immigrant population in Helsinki and a suitable location where there are lots of immigrants and an easy transportation means; 100m from the metro in Rastila, what factors influence



consumer behavior and decision making which can increase the sales of the product and services? There are central questions that must be answered in order to determine the reason behind these low customers turn out and weak brand awareness and identity

1. How to improve sales services and broadening customer base?
2. Which factors have profound influences on consumer's behavior toward Bulsho product and services?
3. Which strategies may be used to improve the brand value and image awareness of the cooperative?

### **1.3 Aims and objectives and significance of the thesis**

The aims of the research is to find out the ways to create a brand awareness of Bulsho cooperative, its brand image and brand identity in order to strengthen the brand and develop a competitive advantage over other similar brands. To satisfy customers' needs by providing quality goods and services, to know how customers behave, make the decision to purchase goods or services, what factors influence those decisions and how do these factors change their purchasing patterns.

The objective is to analyze the results and findings so that the management of Bulsho can better understand and know which decision making processes management needs to take in order to make the brand stronger and consistent in the minds of customers when they make their buying decisions. The process will help strengthen the brand at the same time satisfy the needs of the customers. These results will help the company to implement strategies that will improve the brand awareness of Bulsho cooperative, customer services and enhance sales thereby increasing the profit margins, which is the sole reason for the creation of the business.

The research will give Bulsho cooperative a clearer picture of customer notion, ideas and understanding of Bulsho shop, behavioral patterns and therefore, enable the company structures, which will attract and influence customers and prospective customers to the retail store.

The empirical findings will shade light on how customers perceive Bulsho cooperative with regards to its brand image and identity, how satisfied they are with the goods and services they receive from the shop, which factors influencing consumers, the decision making process, thereby functioning as a mirror to the company to see whether it has put in place strategies and structures to improve and attract consumer's presence at the store. This will help the cooperative to understand the reasons behind low sales margins, why customers behave the way they do and how they perceive the image of Bulsho cooperative. The findings of this research will help the cooperative improve its brand image and identity, sales and communication between the cooperative and its customers therefore give customers the satisfaction they need.

#### **1.4 Structure of the thesis**

This thesis is structured in 5 interlinked chapters

Chapter 1: Introduces the thesis and the commissioner. It outlines the research problem at hand and the research questions, which guide this research.

Chapter 2, which is theoretical in nature, puts emphasis on relevant theories in customer decision-making, customer satisfaction; brand and Image creation.

Chapter 3 describes how qualitative and quantitative approaches were used to collect data and describes some of the problems and solutions related to data collection and analysis.

Chapter 4 Outlines the key results and presents a discussion of the results. In the same chapter, a comparison and data triangulation is made to ensure reliability and validity of interpretation and results. Chapter 5 provides a good summary conclusions and recommendations to the commissioner in order to improve service quality and image of Bulsho Cooperative.

In a nutshell, the structure of this thesis is illustrated in the figure 2 on the next page.

### **Theoretical framework**

Analysis of the target market

Role of the consumer

Consumer behavior

Factors influencing consumers

Decision making process

Need Recognition

Brand awareness and customer satisfaction

Factors influencing branding

Brand identity, image and positioning

Customer satisfaction and brand loyalty

Internal and external customer satisfaction

### **Aim of the research**

The aim of the research is find out ways to create an awareness of Bulsho cooperative, its brand image and brand identity in order to strengthen the brand and develop a competitive advantage over other similar brands. To satisfy customers' needs by providing quality goods and services, to know how customers behave, make the decision to purchase goods or services, what factors influence those decisions and how do these factors change their purchasing

### **Research problem**

Find out ways to satisfy Bulsho cooperative customers and how to improve awareness of their brand?

### **Sub questions**

How to improve sales services and broadening Customer base

Which factors influence consumers' behavior?

How to improve the brand value and image awareness of the

### **Data collection**

Questionnaires survey to customers

Interviews with the Marketing manager of Bulsho Cooperative in Finland

### **Data analysis & results**

Questionnaires from 192 respondents were examined and the result indicates that the management needs to step up its publicity to increase the brand awareness and strengthen the brand identity and image to be competitive. Customers were satisfied with the variety of goods and service but not with the flow of information, support services and general customers' services while offing the goods and services they provide.

### **Methodology**

Quantitative & Qualitative

### **Recommendation & conclusion**

Bulsho should increase its publicity via advertisement campaign to strengthen its brand using all available means, develop good flow of information and communication with customers and improve service quality and support services.

### **Final Thesis**

30th of November 2012

**Figure 2: Thesis map**

## **2 Consumer behavior, Brand awareness and customer satisfaction**

Consumers always buy goods and services individually, however decisions always involve several people, the following is the common decision making process:

- The initiator, the person who starts the decision making process and gathers information
- The influencer, the person who influences people to buy or purchase goods and services, they often collect information also
- The decider, who has the financial authority to make the final decision on the purchase,
- The user who actually utilizes the product (Jobba 2004, 67.)

The role of the consumer can be taken by any buyer or person depending on the product, it qualities and can also change the role. Gender plays an important role in the decision making as men and women have different preferences. (Jobba 2004, 68.)

Many of the East African customers who shop at Bulsho store are women because the culture and tradition says that the women is in charge of the household and the childcare so they make the decision on daily basis on what meal or basic necessities the family has to live on.

The husband may be the source of family income but women make the purchasing decision and they buy what they want at home. Therefore, women should be core focus group while Bulsho is formulating its marketing strategies and marketing mix for various customer segments

### **2.1 Factor influencing consumer behavior**

Consumer behavior is the process; thoughts, feelings and actions related to consumption process, this behavior is the dynamic interaction of the individual thoughts, feelings,

actions and behavior in the environment by which the human being conducts exchange aspect of their lives. The environment refers to the external factors that influence the human being, these factors such as cultural and social forces in the society and in personal lives as well as physical and situational forces relates to the actual shopping experiences. The behavior is a dynamic interaction and communication between consumers and the marketers doing exchanges. (Peter& Olson 2008, 5.)

There are four main factors influencing consumer behavior each of these factors can influence a consumer action in different ways, a combination of these factors affect the decision making process differently, these factors are cultural, social and religious, personal and psychological.

### **2.1.1 Cultural factors**

Culture is an important combination of character, behavior and a self-identification of human being, these characteristics help an individual to create his or her own buying behavior, and however, isolating culture as a variable that can be studied and readily implanted is very difficult, taking into consideration that the buying behaviors of human beings consist of three phases which are the individual, societal and situational. Culture affects all these phases but the extent of the effect depends on the individual person and the circumstance. (Usunier 2000, 3.)

Culture consists of beliefs, values and customs that serve to direct consumer behavior differently amongst the members of a particular group or society Values and beliefs are guides to behavior in such that they form and affect attitude on how to behave on certain situations, on the other hand customs are modes of behavior that constitute an acceptable way to behavior in a particular culture. Cultural identification functions in different ways, the identification of national culture which is the desire to be at home and exoticism is the desire for one to escape from one's own home, these two ways are intertwined which can be classified into different geographical and socio-demographic groups as well as in terms of attitude, preferences and life styles within those groups. These beliefs shared by

different groups can help individuals to decide what can be done, how to feel, what is, what to do and how to go about. (Schiffman & Kanuk 2000, 394.)

### **2.1.2 Socio religious factors**

Social factors are very influential in the decision making process of the consumer, this can affect the decision making process in a positive or negative way. There are formal social groups for example members of same club like Bulsho cooperative from Somalia and informal social groups like friends and colleagues, which may influence people in different rules and norms that are expected from them. It may also consist of one person or few people such as spouses or someone you have never met but idealizes them, the influences of this reference or social group can be very strong in a way that a customer can change the behavior to meet the standards pushed by the reference group. (Barnes et al. 2009, 171.)

Gender roles have a significant effect on consumer behavior it defines what is appropriate for each gender in the form of behavior, attitude and appearance. And they are deeply integrated into the society and the people's mind, Male customers who visit Bulsho store are interested in the café department where they meet other male friends to watch live sports or play games. And the female customers are interested in fashion and provision department of Bulsho, these different lifestyles help to determine consumer pattern of living which affects their purchasing behavior, if the company has an idea of the life style of its customers or a certain segments they can develop their marketing strategies to target these group of customers because consumer always chooses goods and services associated with their lifestyles. By understanding the lifestyle of the customers it is easy to market them with the right products for example the phone booth services for international calls to Africa for immigrants from Africa. Age also plays an important role in the decision making process of a consumer for example children come and buy candy, soft drinks while adults specifically women buy fashion products, cosmetics, households keepings and food stuff. (Barnes ET al.2009, 164-172.)

Religion is a symbol which acts to establish a powerful, pervasive and long-lasting modes and motivation. It is achieved by formulating conception of a general order of existence and further, by clothing this conception with such an aural of factuality that the mood and motivation seems uniquely realistic. (Cohen 2005, 293.)

Religion affects attitude and behaviors both directly and indirectly through religious code of conducts and value formation from birth. Religion as a culture can influence consumer's behavior by motivating them via their various interactive and related social and cultural variables. As purchasing behavior is been influenced by cognitive actions, effect and behavior, the importance of this element must be taking into consideration in explaining the differences in religious belief system. (Lind ridge 2005, 148.)

There are five aspect of religion that affects an individual: Individual's behavior toward the religious codes of conduct, individual's affective and cognitive responses toward the religious codes of conduct, the role of the individual gives to the religious group, and more specifically to the community, in his life; and individual's attitude towards the particular religious code of conduct in conjunction to the religion as a whole.

### **2.1.3 Psychological and personal factors**

Information processing is a process where a stimulus such as marketing information is received, interpreted, stored in the memory and later retrieved thus linking marketing and other external influences with the consumer's decision-making process. (Jobber 2004, 79)

Selective attention describes a situation where the consumers restrict marketing information for example advertisement of consumer's household products which the buyer doesn't need at the moment to save time for the information they need, therefore marketing communication and the store lay out information that is of interest to the consumer. It is very important to communicate as clearly as possible in order to avoid selective distortion in which the consumer misunderstands the message if it is not in accord with their beliefs and attitudes.

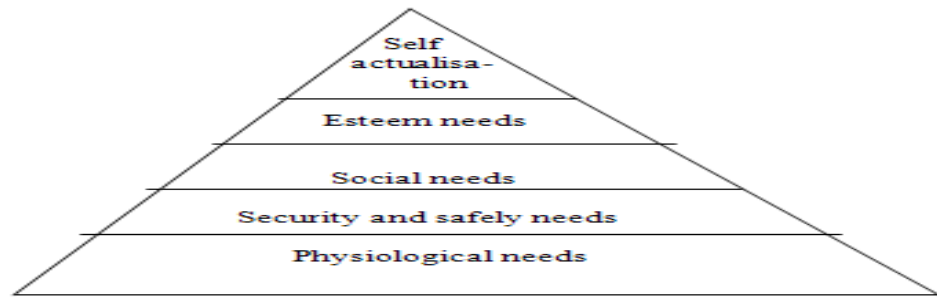
These are important needs for sustaining the human life. Food, water, warm shelter, sleep, medicine and education are the basic physiological needs, which fall in the primary list of need satisfaction. Maslow was of the opinion that until these needs was satisfied to a degree to maintain life; no other motivating factors can work. (Forsyth 2002, 19.)

Ascending order is the need for security and safety; these are the needs to be free of physical danger and of the fear of losing a job, property, food or shelter. It also includes protection against any emotional harm. Social needs come next in order, since people are social beings, they need to belong and be accepted by others. People try to satisfy their need for affection, acceptance and friendship.

High esteem needs follow in ascending order, once people begin to satisfy their need to belong; they tend to want to be held in esteem both by themselves and by others. This kind of need produces such satisfaction as power, prestige status and self-confidence. It includes both internal esteem factors like self-respect, autonomy and achievements and external esteem factors such as states, recognition and attention. (Forsyth 2002, 20.)

Finally the need for self-actualization, Maslow regards this as the highest need in his hierarchy. It is the drive to become what one is capable of becoming; it includes growth, achieving one's potential and self-fulfillment. It is to maximize one's potential and to accomplish. Sometimes beliefs and attitude plays an important role in the decision-making process as they strongly affect the evaluation process of the alternatives. Beliefs are thoughts about the product or some of its qualities whereas attitude is overall favorable or unfavorable feeling against the purchase (Jobber 2004, 83-84). Attitudes are affected by three components: affect (emotional response to the product), cognition (the beliefs and knowledge of the product), the behavior (consumer's intention to purchase or use the product) Barnes et al. 2009, 162-163.)





**Figure3. Maslow's hierarchy needs pyramid diagram (Forsyth 2002, 21)**

As each of these needs substantially satisfied, the next need becomes dominant. From the standpoint of motivation, the theory would say that although no need is ever fully gratified, a substantially satisfied need no longer motivates. So if you want to motivate someone, you need to understand what level of the hierarchy that person is on and focus on satisfying those needs or needs above that level. (Forsyth 2002, 20.)

## **2.2 Customer decision-making process**

It is a process by which a consumer makes a decision on what to buy, what quantity to buy, at what price with respect to the factors affecting consumer's attitude during the procedure. The various stages in the decision-making process are;

### **Need Recognition**

This is a process whereby a prospective buyer or consumer becomes conscious of his or her needs. These needs become functional, emotional or psychological. A need recognition or problem awareness arises when a consumer realizes that he or she is missing something for example a consumer realizes that he is missing his favorites application on his iPhone like Facebook application or a spicy ingredients to prepare a traditional Somali dish. (Jobber 2004, 68-69.)

There are two types of stimuli that affects the decision-making process of a consumer, these are the internal or external stimuli, internal is when the needs comes from the person himself in the form of physical or psychological discomfort or the external which come from outside sources such as marketing information.

Mittal and Sheth describe four situations for problem recognition; familiar, novel, vivid, and latent. Familiar and novel describe how familiar the problem is, is the problem arising repeated or new. Vivid and latent, on the other hand, mean the depth and clarity of the need, vivid requires rapid fulfillment, and latent need still requires time and further consideration to ripen (Mittal and Sheth 2004, 282.)

Sometimes the need inhibitors affect the consumer. These are issues that stop the person from continuing with the purchase process for one reason or another. As most of the plants require constant care and specific condition, some of the consumers may not buy certain plants because they presume they do not have skills to do so, Because of that it is important to provide more information in form of service personnel and in written information to stop the need inhibitor from going off. (Jobber 2004, 70.)

### **The quest for information**

The search for information is a very crucial part of the decision-making; this can be in four different dimensions, the internal, external, marketer and non-marketer. The internal search consists of consumer's past experience and knowledge of products if the consumer doesn't find any solution then they start searching for external sources for example reference group, marketing communication and third party reports. (Jobber 2004, 70-71.)

Non-marketer sources are close to internal sources but also incorporate groups and third party reports whereas marketer sources describe information by companies for example advertisement sales person. After a consumer has an idea of the possible product or solution in the form awareness or knowledge, he or she then starts the evaluation process, which after then will the consumer reduces the focus to specific products of preference with regard to the price, color and other features related to the product. (Jobber 2004, 71.)

### **Evaluation of alternatives**

This is a process whereby the customer has gathered enough information about the product or services; he/she then begins to consider the alternative or substitute available in the market. This can be done by either choosing the compensatory model which is to consider all of the attributes, benefits and weakness of the product and evaluate their

significant for example the consumers decide a trade-off, meaning he/she is prepared to give in on one attributes if the other is significantly better or non-compensatory model which is subdivided into two groups depending on how the customer evaluates the information. In conjunctive model the consumer sets minimum cut-off criteria and if these are not met the option is dropped from consideration. The disjunctive model on the other makes the consumer decide trade-offs, meaning that he is prepared to give in on one attribute if the other is significantly better. Contrary to compensatory models the non-compensatory models are less burdensome to use and thus they are used for relatively quick and easy decision. Sometimes customers use non-compensatory method to narrow down the selection and then move to compensatory to make the final decision. If the service personnel can understand which method the customer is using they can provide the customer with more suitable options and thus increase the level of service and revenue. (Mittal & Sheth 2004, 295-297.)

#### Purchase decision

After gathering all the necessary information about a product the next step is to make a decision on whether to purchase the product. There are three sub steps in this stage, first choosing the preferred product as previously described in the evaluation of alternative stage, then the customer decides to purchase the product that is, purchase intent and finally the implementation stage to conclude the purchase which consists of the terms of transaction payment and receiving the product. Sometimes the consumer makes the purchase intent, but never actually concludes it, or takes the implementation step and sometimes substituting product is chosen based on new information in-store, preferred product is out of stock, buyer cannot afford the product or no suitable financing terms are found. Companies can lower these risks by keeping a stock of the products and providing variety of payment methods. Constant lacks in product range can result in the consumer changing the supplier altogether. (Mittal & Sheth 2004, 300.)

#### **Competitor analysis**

Bulsho cooperative has six competitors in Helsinki region and all the competitors are located in Hakaniemi within close range of each other while Bulsho cooperative is located at Rastila, the advantage the other six African shops have against Bulsho is that they are

located in a commercial area close to the heart of the city center, however Bulsho is located in Rastila which is closer to the immigrants as most immigrants from African do live around Rastila and the neighboring centers. A unique advantage of Bulsho is that it has traditional food stuffs from African which cannot be found in any of the other shop and most of its products are from Africa though they buy some fashion products from China and India, however the other competitors mostly bring all of their products from china and the Asian market.

The fact that Bulsho's competitors buy most of their goods from Asia has giving them a competitive advantage over Bulsho with their pricing of goods which is cheaper than that of the cooperative. Their shop are also open to other immigrants from Asia and even Europeans who are used to Asian and African dishes, Bulsho doesn't have this opportunities of a variety of different customers. The vast range of customers puts Bulsho competitors in a better position to reduce the price of their products and to enjoy a good turnover and profit margin.

Bulsho also enjoys a diversify range of goods and services which its competitor do not have, however, the distance, lack of brand awareness and of promotion has undermine the existence of the shop, thereby putting the shop in a more difficult position to compete with others.

### **2.3 Definition of a Brand -What is a Brand**

A brand is an emotional and physiological relationship a firm has with a customer, strong brands elicits thoughts, emotion and sometimes-physiological responses from a customer. A brand is a source of a promise to its customers. It promises relevant differentiated benefits. It does so not only to place itself into the purchase consideration set, but even more importantly, to be the brand chosen from that purchase consideration set. This is also sometimes referred to as the brand's unique value proposition. Whether it is called a unique value proposition or a promise of relevant differentiated benefits, it is very important that the promise or proposition be delivered consistently at each point of customer contact, time after time. (Lynn B Upshaw 1995, 1.)

### **2.3.1 Internal branding**

Internal branding is the process that guides a company to implement the brand promise to reality, this process involve planning and action at all organizational level in the company, it is a process that start with awareness of the brand and ends at changing employees behavior, it engages employees with the brand value, internal branding is describe as the inside-out approach by communicating to employees the brand value, aligning employees with the brand promise, then employees will deliver consistent message to customers and the message is projected to the market, this inside-out approach result in a stronger brand and better brand-customer relationship. (Bjerke & In 2007, 31.) Bulsho has to communicate the brand to its employees first, let the employees know what the brand value and image the company wants to present to the public, what strategies need to be put in place to achieve these goals, who is in charge to communicate this message to the employees from top to bottom and how to engage employees to better communicate this ideas, brand to the customers.

### **2.3.2 Brand value and attributes**

A brand is a collection of perceptions, which creates an interaction in the mind of a consumer; the brand value is not the logo or an advertising campaign or goods and services a company offers to customers. This is why it is called the total brand because it is the result of the consumer's total experience. Good brands are assets to the company; they create wealth for their companies, communities and countries. The value of a brand deliver changes in behavior, securing a future stream of profits for the company and creates business value. Many customers experience the value of a strong brand in their daily consumption of goods and services. (Kapferer 2008, 9.)

There are four ways in which a strong brand can create value to customers: a strong brand gives peace of mind to customers because the consumers trust the owner to produces the right goods with the quality they desire, this trust is basis for their own experience with the product and also the stories they have heard about the brand, this help to give the buyer a

peace of mind knowing that they are buying what they ask for or want and the owner has to uphold this trust. A strong brand save time and transform the consumption experiences, consumers are busy nowadays and so they rely on the product they trust and know better which makes it easy to decide on what to buy and move on and also helps to tap into the imaginary fantasy of the product thus making it more rewarding. A strong brand helps to express our attitude, value and place in the society as such it is natural for us to seek meaning and significant in our behavior including the goods and services we utilize, a good example is an American expressing the value and important of an iPhone been made in the United States (Kapferer 2008, 18-22.)

This is the function of designing and executing marketing activities to measure and manage the brand equity of a company. This can be done in four different ways. By identifying and establishing brand positioning which is to distinguish all the attributes that makes the brand different from that of competitors and then emphasizing on the particular attributes so that it occurs a distinct and value place in the mind of target consumers. Positioning also covers convincing the customers of the importance of the brand with respect to that of others.

By planning and executing brand marketing campaigns to build a strong brand that consumers are aware of and have a strong favorable and unique association with, this will include, choosing the brand elements, integrating the brand into the marketing activities and exploiting secondary associations such as company, country of origin, channel of distribution and other brands.

By measuring and interpreting brand performance through auditing the brand positioning, brand audit is an inclusive assessment of a brand involving activities to evaluate the health of a brand to reveal it sources of equity and suggestion for the improvement of the equity from both the consumer and firms' point of view.

By growing and sustaining brand equity through design and execution of marketing campaign to gain a strong leadership position in the market for the brand. Preserving and increasing on the brand equity can be challenge. (Keller et al. 2008, 35-37.)

### **2.3.3 Brand awareness and advantages**

Brand awareness is the probability that consumers recognize the existence and availability of a company's product or services, creating this awareness by a company are one of the key steps to promote the company's goods and services. Brand awareness consists of both brand recognition and brand recall performance. Brand recognition is the capability of a customer recognizing a brand as one, which he or she has already been exposed to, for example, East African recognizing Bulsho as a shop they go to all the time. While brand recall is the ability of a customers to retrieve the brand when they think of the product category for example an African women thinking of buying raw food for the family and they think of " fufu" from Bulsho cooperative.

Product promoting via brand awareness is one of the easiest and most effective ways to promote commodity related products due to the fact that they have relatively fewer differentiations, which makes it more competitive if you have a strong and recognize brand. Consumers turn to make decision quickly about a product if the know or recognize the brand. The more customers can recognize, retain and remember a firms brand the likely fact that they will shop and that firm is greater than shopping elsewhere. This is an advantage against competitors as customers overlook at the price and other quality when the trust and know a brand, it became a part of the customers life style to shop where they are used to and have confident in the brand. (Keller 2004, 50-53.)

### **2.3.4 Factors influencing branding**

When choosing between competing brands a thorough evaluation, particularly for brands new to the market takes place often with an agreed list of attributes. This reflects the views of all the customers who are willing to taste or try the new brand, however a more covert assessment also takes place base on the social behavior or class of the individual customer who thinks if the product fits to his/her class or if the product is where they can associate themselves with and have a psychological though about the brand if they will be appreciated and respected if seen with the new brand (Leslie, Malcolm, Elaine 2011, 182).

Bulsho customers and prospective customer can align themselves with the shop, they are happy to see that they have a shop that can supply their needs, which they rarely find in Finland. West African immigrants have a strong cultural tie with their tradition, which makes Bulsho a unique place for them. They want to be represented by Bulsho and are proud of buying goods and services from Bulsho however, the problem consumers have is about the pricing and publicity they receive from the shop.

The prices are high and the management does little or nothing to lure customers, Bulsho competitors have lower prices than them and do publicize their business. The shop needs to carry out both internal and external branding in order to create the right image, brand and identity which will influence the employees to interpret and translate the brand better to customers and thereby, creating a better notion of the brand to customers and lure them to buy from the shop. Internal branding is the adoption of employees to understand and reflect the message and brand of a company. Employees always represent the brand not only the customers-facing staff but also it applies to everyone from CEO to delivery truck driver. This is because the employees will stand in a better chance to explain and better able to offer the desired brand to customers; Internal-branding goals include:

Strengthening the brand visual identity by establishing branding communication standard, the brand should move to the market place in a more constant and cohesive fashion. Connecting employees to each other as a brand family, being humans, we all like tribal instincts, everyone like to hang together in a particular group, where they belong; therefore internal branding can build a tight team even in tough market situations.

Installing brand value in keys processes so that the employees can understand the brand essence, it will be more likely to infuse the same attributes in their work product and processes. Delivering brand promises through employees who are consider as customers contact, as they engage the brand promise, they will channel it to customers through customers' services and other contact points. Adding momentum to sales channels, the more the sales teams know about the brand and believe in the brand, the easy it is for them to do their job without consistent communication supporting the brand.

External branding signifies how the company wants their brand to be perceived externally, which most companies prefer their brands to be perceived as professional, knowledgeable



and responsive to the needs and ones of the customers. Every new customer can be perceived as a new opportunity and also as a new challenge to the company to put his or her brand in to practices. External branding is research directed to find out how customers perceive the brand and how they feel about the brand. (Gelder 2003.)

### **2.3.5 Brand identity, image and positioning**

The identity and image of an organization is what helps the organization to know it truly exist, with a history and place of its own different from others. In other words having an identity means being true to yourself, with having personal goals that are different from others. There are two main factors in brand identity. Goods and services which consumers identify with their values and those that is in the age of marketing similarities. When a brand innovates it creates new standards which other brand have to catch up to stay relevant which leads to many similar products and copies which a producer needs to know what their brand stands for, in other words diversification call for knowing one's own brand identity.

Brand positioning is the desire of a customer to prefer to buy from Bulsho than other competitors, this can only happens if Bulsho position its products so that they meet the needs and wants of its customers. Brand position is the benefits customers can get from one brand that they can't get from the others of which it is value to them, for example the prices of the goods and services, Bulsho has high prices which is of little benefit to customers as compare to the other shop, therefore the management has to finds ways to reduce price in other to compete with the others in the same line of business. Bulsho has the advantage and benefit of a variety of products and basic necessities like the traditional Muslim cloths, which cannot be found in any other competitors shop and a coffee shop to relax and watch, live sport which adds as a leisure chain to the business. The shop has the simple services and basic needs, the varieties of product, which puts it in a better position to attract more customers; however the pricing strategy needs to be re-strategized to put the shop in a better position to customers.

### 2.3.6 Service quality and brand loyalty

In trying to serve customers as it is been done by Bulsho cooperative, customer satisfaction is the key to any successful business. If customers are not satisfied with the services provided to them, they can simply switch service providers and the company will lose its business. Customer service and physical products are offered together, the quality of service might become a significant factor in determining how satisfied the customers are. Service quality is in other words an important feature when concluding customer satisfaction. (Zeithaml et al. 2006.)

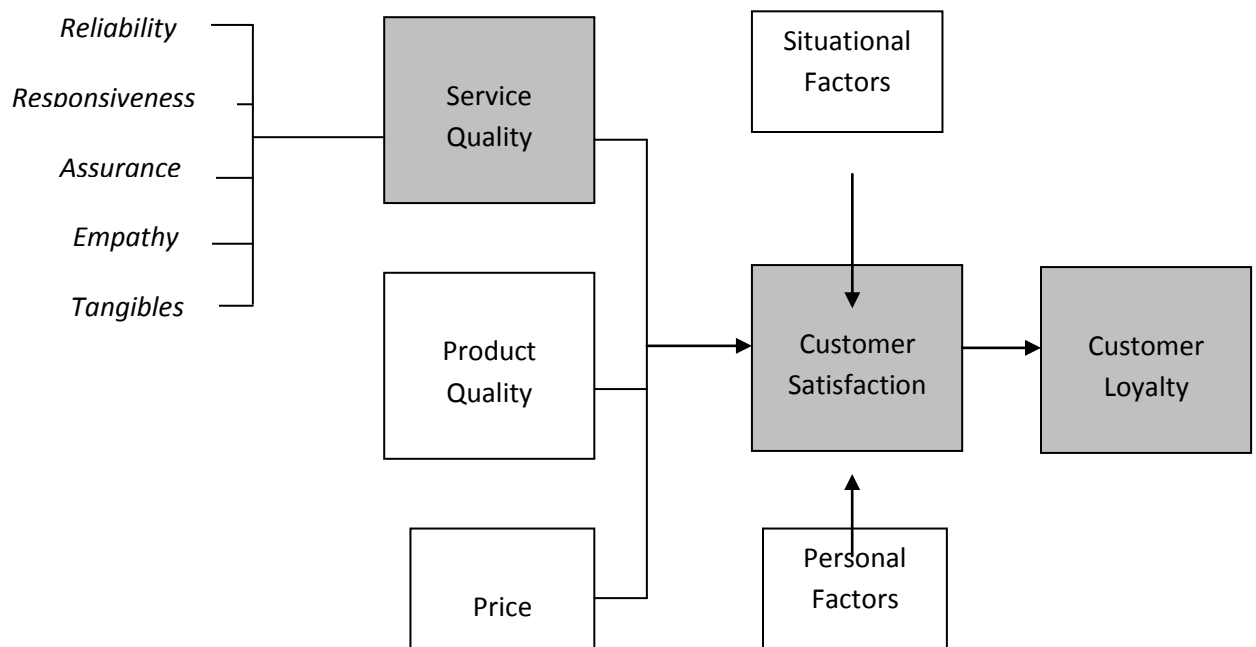
There are five service quality dimensions:

Reliability is the company's ability to perform the service dependably, accurately, and consistently keeping given promises on delivery, service provision, problem resolution and pricing. Keeping promises about service outcomes and core service attributes is the most significant factor in the eyes of the customers. Reliability is performing the service right the first time, as promised. (Zeithaml et al. 2006)

Responsiveness is the willingness to help customers and to provide prompt service. This form the customer's view, it means how attentive to customer requests, questions, complaints and problems the company personnel is. The level of responsiveness is judged based on the time these issues are dealt with. If the customers feel they have to wait a long time, the perception of responsiveness is weakened. This dimension of service also includes flexibility and ability to customize to a particular customer's needs.

Assurance is the knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to inspire trust and confidence. This is important to high-risk services such as banking, medical or insurance. The employees need to have a certain level of knowledge and skill to treat customers with respect and make them feel that they can trust their business to the company. Empathy is providing caring, individualized attention to customers. Proving individual and personal attention to specific customers portrays empathy and lets the customers know their needs are understood. Companies that provide this personal service are able to have a competitive edge against other companies that do not treat the

customers as individuals. Tangibles refer to the appearance of physical facilities, Equipment, Personnel, and communication materials. Tangibles physically represent the service quality that customers evaluate. This dimension is especially important when it comes to new customers. Tangibles might be used to enhance the company image, provide continuity and signal quality to the customers but often tangibles have to be paired with another service dimension. For example, if no attention is paid to the appearance of tangibles such as the physical facilities, the responsiveness factor will have little effect on the customer's perceptions. (Zeithaml et al. 2006.)



**Figure 4: Customer Perceptions of Quality and Customer Satisfaction (Zeithaml, Bitner & Gremler 2006, 107)**

### 2.3.7 Internal and external customer satisfaction

Satisfaction is an attitude-like judgement following a purchase or a series of consumer product interactions. Customer decides whether he or she is satisfied after purchasing an item or after experiencing some kind of a service encounter with a representative of a company. Customer satisfaction comes from the quality of service delivery that is

expected by the customers during the act of purchase and while being served. (Lovelock and Wirtz 2004, 44.)

Customer satisfaction of a product is often measured with specific attributes that describe the product features. Comparing experiences to earlier expectations is also common. Similar elements of assessing the features of physical goods have been taken into models that describe how service is experienced. Due to this development, there has been debates in literature, whether there is a difference between service quality and customer satisfaction and if so, is the quality experienced first and satisfaction follows or vice versa. Logical analysis proves that this debate is irrelevant. Service quality is evidently experienced first, followed by either feeling of satisfaction or dissatisfaction. (Grönroos 2000.)

Customer have certain standards and expectations in mind prior to consumption, they observe the service performance, compare it to their standards and finally, form a satisfaction judgement when comparing with earlier expectations. These judgements can be labelled either negative confirmation when the service is lower than expected or positive confirmation when the service exceeds expectations or simply confirmation when the service is just as expected. (Lovelock & Wirtz 2004.)

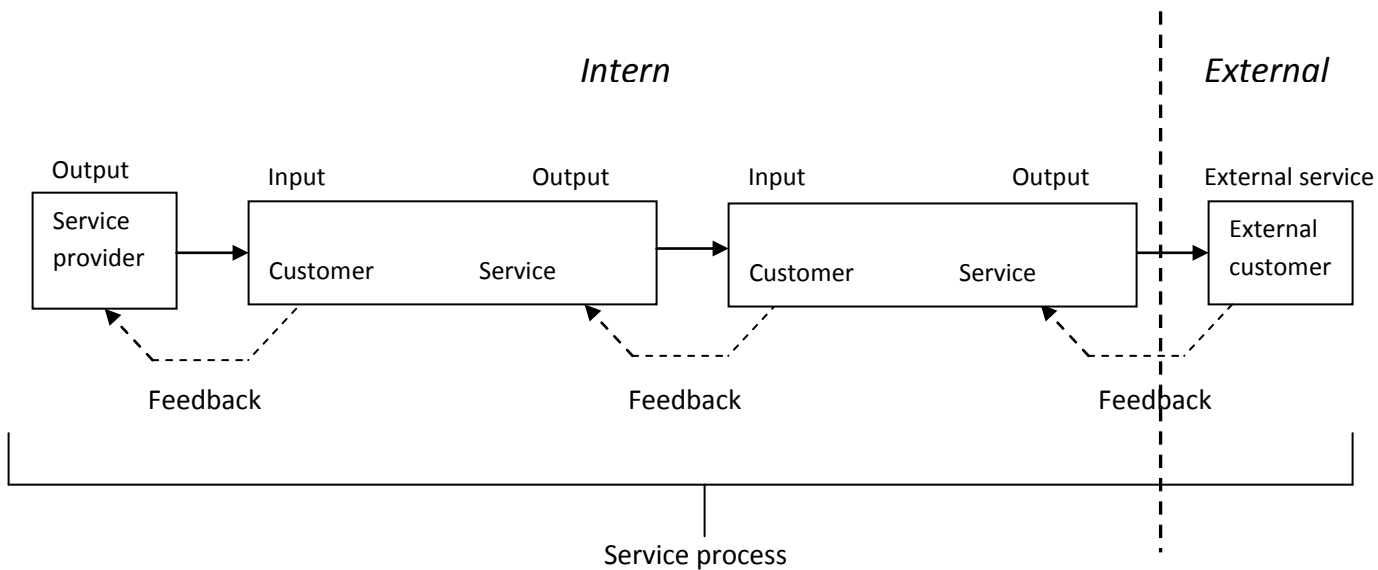
The term quality and satisfaction are sometimes referred to as identical. However, it is believed that perceived service quality is only one component of customer satisfaction. Satisfaction and quality have things in common but certain underlying causes are different. Satisfaction is a broader concept whereas service quality has specified aspects of service. Hence, perceived service quality is an element of customer satisfaction. (Zeithaml et al. 2006.)

Service quality is a reflection of the customer's perception of reliability, assurance, responsiveness, empathy and tangibles. Whereas customer satisfaction is more general term and influenced by perceptions of service quality, product quality, price, situational and personal factors. For example, the service quality of a hotel is affected by attributes such as what kinds of meeting facilities are available and are the equipment in working order, how attentive the staffs are, and how well-maintained the facilities are.

Customer satisfaction of a hotel on the other hand, is a wider concept. It is affected by perceptions of service quality but in addition to that, perceptions of product quality, price of one night's stay, personal factors such as the customer's emotional state or situational factors such as how much traffic there was when driving to the hotel. (Zeithaml et al. 2006.)

Each organization has both external and internal customers. External customers rely on the company's employees to meet and exceed their needs and expectations, while internal customers are employees that rely on each other for products, services and support in order to meet or exceed their needs and expectations. There are differences and similarities in external and internal customers and it is important to understand them. (Naumann & Giel 1995, 363.)

Traditionally customers have been considered to be people or organisations outside of the company. These external customers have to be served so that their needs are fulfilled and they are satisfied with the service given to them by the company. Relationships like this exist also within the organisation. The customer service personnel and functions of a company need support from other employees within the company in order to serve external customers. Products cannot be delivered in a customer friendly manner if the company's storage does not provide a driver from the truck or the right products at the right time in good condition. (Grönroos 2000.) Each service organisation is full of internal service functions that support each other and the customer service personnel and functions that interact with external customers. Usually there are more internal service functions than functions serving the external customers. (Grönroos 2000.)



**Figure 5: Internal service functions and internal customers (Grönroos 2000, 308)**

There can be one or a whole range of internal service functions (as presented in figure 5 above). The internal service functions are shown inside the larger boxes in figure 5. These functions are internal customers to other internal service providers; they are also service providers to other internal customers. The final output of the service process is the external service received and perceived by the external customers. The internal service provider-internal customer relationships have to be managed in a customer oriented manner so that the ultimate external customers receive good service. (Grönroos 2000.)

If internal service is not of good quality, external service will suffer as a repercussion. It is often hard for people working within the internal service functions to realise the significance of their input on the service process. They do not have a chance to see the external customers and easily feel that they are only serving their co-workers and it does not affect the external input in any way. (Grönroos 2000.)

The term “internal customer” brings the customer relationship inside the organisation. This term brings a new dimension to the functions performed internally. It can help deal with the attitude problems of employees working within the internal service functions. Once the company personnel realises the importance of internal customers, their attitudes are more easily changed. They also know that “a satisfied customer” does not only refer to customers outside the organisation and that the internal customers need to be served as well as those external are expected to be served. (Grönroos 2000.)

Whilst an employee is working, he or she is serving a co-worker, in other words, an internal customer. No one can do their job alone; each person needs the work input of their colleagues to be able to do their job. Hence, the input of each employee affects the next person's output. The better the company's personnel serve each other in daily work, the better service the external customer will get. (Jokinen, Heinäluoma & Heikkonen 2000.)

The former head of Scandinavian Airlines, Mr. Jan Carlzon brought a new service-oriented leadership model into the company in 1980's and managed to turn about 10 billion loss into about 70 billion in profit in just a few years. He realised the importance of internal service and his strategy for the entire personnel of the company was "Your job is to always serve somebody." (Jokinen et al. 2000, 223.)

Measuring customer satisfaction is extremely important in the service industry. Studies what the customers want, allows companies to improve their service delivery processes. The customer's characteristics, the products of the company, the competitive intensity and the customer's attitudes constantly change and evolve; the measurement program also needs to change. However, the process of designing, implementing and utilising the program does not need to change. (Naumann & Giel 1995.)

### **3 Research approach and methods**

This research uses both quantitative and qualitative methods. The qualitative question is an interview conducted with the Marketing manager of Bulsho cooperative, the questions cover general scope of the cooperative, about their goals, decision making process, the history of the company, the challenges and ways to satisfy the customers and strengthen their brand name. (For the questions discussed in interview see appendix 1)

On the other hand, the quantitative research method involved a well-structured questionnaire to customers who comes and buy in the shop and to other African

immigrants that could be found in the Rastila and Itäkeskus area who might know the shop or the area, this questions allow them to express their opinions about Bulsho cooperation, how they think the shop should improve on its goods and services, to know if they are aware of the cooperative and the structure of the questionnaire will be elaborated in the research instrument below and can question can be found in appendix 2.

### **3.1 Data collection process and instrument**

This survey has been done to find out ways to satisfy Bulsho cooperative customers and to strengthen the brand image of the shop by creating awareness about Bulsho shop in Helsinki at the Rastila area. A well-structured questionnaire was handed to customers of Bulsho cooperative (see appendix 2), to find out their opinions on the topic as it is easy and better to gather information from different people on different topics than a qualitative interview to specific employer (see appendix 1), it was also safe time and avoid deviation of answers from customers on particular topics. Questionnaire have additional advantage than interview because it allows customers to answer question freely as their identities are not revealed which put them in a better position to share their opinions and say the truth. Customers are part of the stakeholders in this business therefore their opinion and interest need to be represented and taking into account in order for Bulsho shop to make progress.

The questionnaire is structured accordance with the theoretical framework created for that purpose, these are questions about the background and family size of the customers, their knowledge about Bulsho cooperative, how long they have known the shop, how frequent they shop at Bulsho and in which section of the shop, the level of satisfaction of the services provided by Bulsho shop, their awareness about the shop, what attracts them to the shop, what form of advertisement they will prefer to see from Bulsho and finally open questions about ways to improve the shop, their ideas and suggestion they can give the management to fulfilled all their demands. The information gathered from this questionnaire will answer the research problem of customer's satisfaction and awareness of Bulsho cooperative. (For the entire survey questions see appendix 2)



### 3.2 Data collection and analysis process

The questionnaire were delivered to customers when they came to Bulsho cooperative to shop, watch live sport, relax and paid for others services, some of them where taking to Itäkeskus and other gathering of African immigrants in Mulls and services centres where they answered the questions. The questionnaire were dispatched to the counters of the various departments of Bulsho shop and carried by representative to other gathering on the third week of March 2012 and by the same week, the researcher got back one hundred and ninety two (192) responses which was adequate for the research. It was a direct instant response by customers with the help of representative to fill the forms with the answers of the respondents if help was need.

Every immigrant found was involved in this study as respondent, the questionnaire was written in English to make it easier for everybody to get involved. However, it was translated to Arabic when necessary for respondents to understand and answer the question better. The primary data were collected from the interviews conducted with the Marketing manager and from the questionnaires received from respondents who were customers of Bulsho cooperative. The secondary data were collected from text books and from Bulsho cooperative archives, all this documents were important to help in the analyses of this thesis. Response from the management was compared with that of the archives of Bulsho cooperative, to find out if the was any missing information from the respondent, if he offered different opinions in certain topics, if he had the same sense of the companies strategies and policy to achieve company's goals and also were they had similar response to the major questions. The findings from the interview was then compared to the response of the customers from the questionnaire to evaluate if the customers had a different view of Bulsho shop, about the goods and services, how they can interpret the brand of the shop and their understanding of the image of Bulsho when it crosses their minds. What were their suggestions and recommendations to improve those differences? The responses from African women mostly from East Africa were overwhelming with two third of the respondents been woman and the rest of them men.

## 4 Key results and discussion

### 4.1 Description of respondents background factors

A majority of the respondents of this questionnaire were women, approximately 70% were female and 30% male, two third of the customers were more than 25years of age accounting for about 65% of the total respondents while the smallest portion of respondent were age 15-22years of both boys and girls who were up to 25% of the respondents. All of the respondents are very interested about Bulsho cooperative even though some of them have heard about the shop from the representatives who gave them the questionnaires.

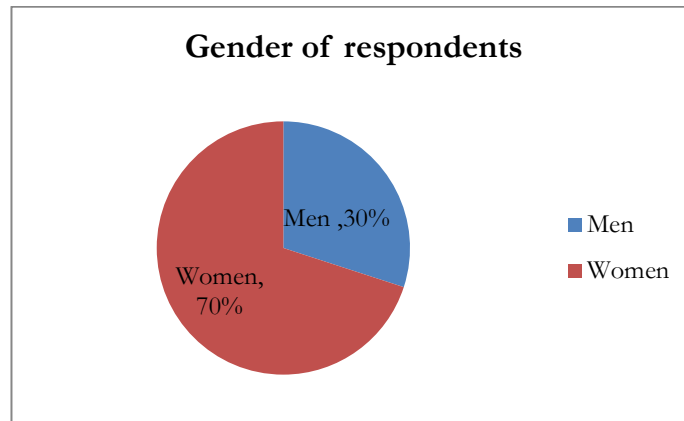
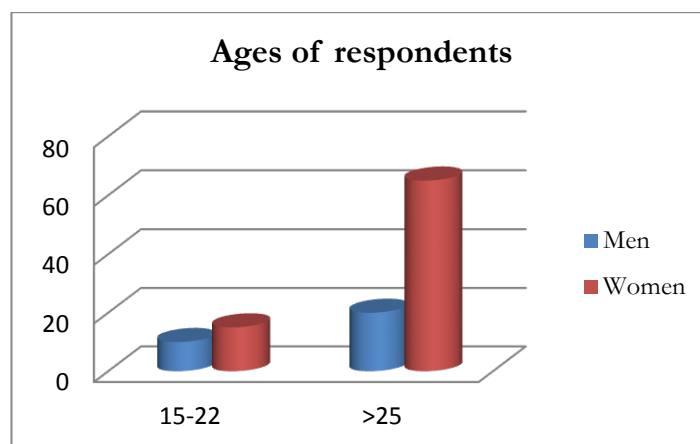


Chart 1: Gender of Respondents

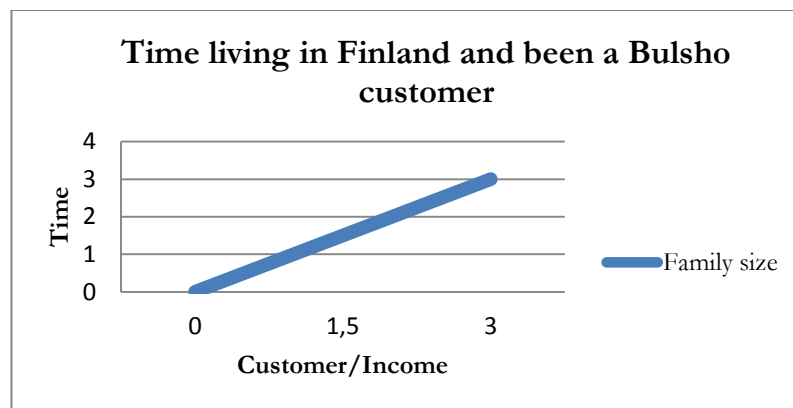


## Chart 2: Age of Respondents

A remarkable number of the respondents 80% of them said they live in a family of 3-5 in a household, 5% said they are single, another 5% said they live with their partner and the remaining 10% lived in a family household of 6-10 people in an apartment. It was encouraging to know that 90% of all the respondents have either heard about Bulsho cooperative or have been the once at the shop which was remarkable, however they were not excited about the name and the shop been very important in their day to day life which was worth noticing, this is a place where Bulsho management has to take into account to find out if it is about their products or services which didn't excited the customers.

### **How long have you been living in Finland and been a customer at Bulsho**

These questions were in direct proportion to one another, they simultaneously increased to the time been in Finland and been a customer at Bulsho that is the longer a person has lived in Finland the longer they have been a customer in Bulsho. Another important point here also seen in the survey was the income and financial position of the family, the higher their income the more regular they were customers to the product and services provider.



Graph 1: Time living in Finland and been a Bulsho customer

## Visit to Bulsho and other shops

The question showed a clear different in income gap and the family size of the African community in Finland, it was noted that 90% of the men who responded to this survey visited Bulsho cooperative 6-7 times a week as they went there to meet friends, relax, watch live sport, play games, make international phone calls to Africa and pray with fellow worshipers, on the other hand women who are the majority responders and the most important customers of Bulsho gave a different response, 50% of the women that is 68 respondents visited the shop 1-2 a week, with regards to shopping elsewhere 80% of the women when to shopping 3-5 times in a week to food shops like Lidl, S-market and K-market, they also went to clothing shops like H&M, Sepällä and others, reasons been that Bulsho cooperative is expensive, lack varieties, has little or no promotion of goods and services and poor customer services.

One other thing to notice is that families with high income made more visits to Bulsho weekly than those with low income and also 70% of the customers are from East Africa while 95% are Muslims, this shows how less diversified are Bulsho customers. The cooperative has to try to diversity its customers group by creating awareness of the cooperative and introducing goods and services that reaches to all immigrants from Africa who is their target market.

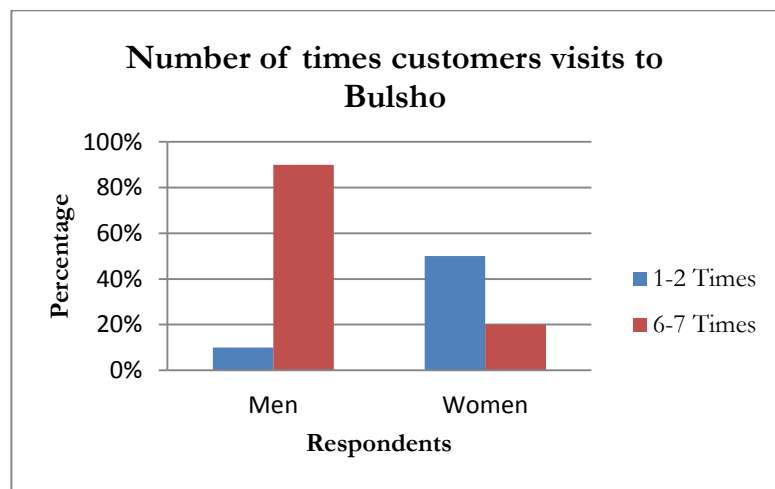


Chart 3: Number of times customers visited Bulsho in a week

**a. Services and products**

**Personnel reliability and experience in selling food stuffs**

Approximately 80% of the correspondents said that the personnel's at Bulsho are reliable and trustworthy while at the same time is experience in selling foodstuffs. This is rooted in the cultural and religious aspect of the people from African who are the target group of Bulsho, they know that no one else can sale their traditional food better that their own people, they don't rely on Bulsho's competitors when it comes to food stuff because they rarely get the right foods stuff elsewhere except at Bulsho and they trust the personnel's there because they understand the significant and important of these food stuffs most especially when it is to celebrate important traditional days of the calendar like the fasting period of the Muslims. They know that other competitors don't understand and care about the meaning of these days and their significant

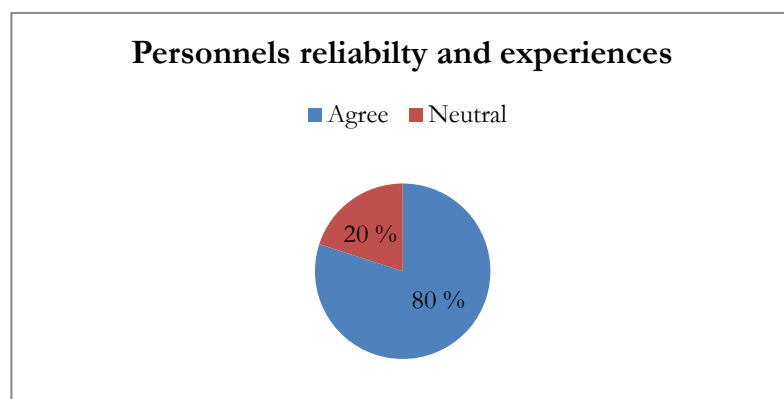


Chart 4: Personnel reliability and experience

**Has good reputation for fair business practices and high quality product and services**

This was a tricky question as culturally Africans cannot be direct in saying the truth when they feel it hurts, therefore most of the respondents close to 90% agreed that Bulsho has a good reputation, even if some of them have been to the shop just some few times. There is this culture of respect in Africa that has hinder us to have a clear respond on this question of good business practices, however the management has to understand that some of the respondents don't want Bulsho to lose it customers and reputation and also some who answered the questions at the shop didn't want the management to lose face on them.

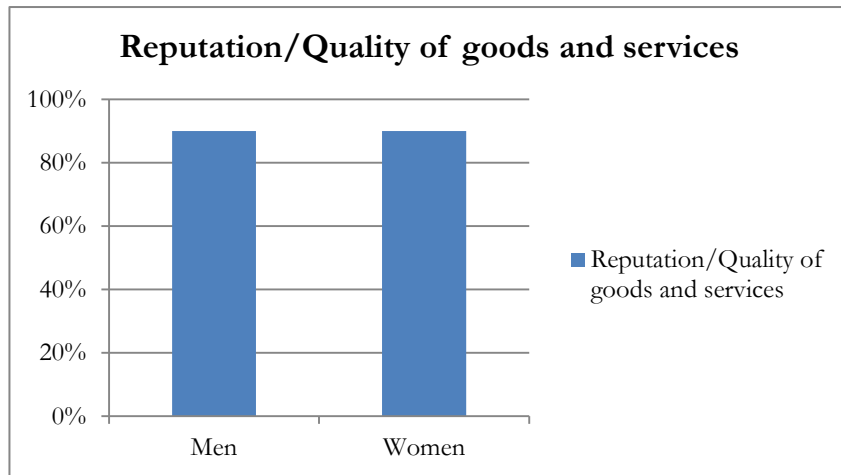


Chart 5: Reputation/quality of goods and services

Generally Bulsho has a good reputation on fair business practices as they listen to compliance, give help to customer when shopping, treat customers fairly and sometimes follow up with services to customers if they are major customers to help them achieve the goals of the services they have required from Bulsho, in the open questions it is been said that these services are render only to male customers, that is the complaint of female customers. This level of interaction and support from the cooperative has led to enormous respect and salutation from traditional leader and major immigrants associations in Helsinki who help to promote and publicise Bulsho cooperative as one of their own in a foreign land.

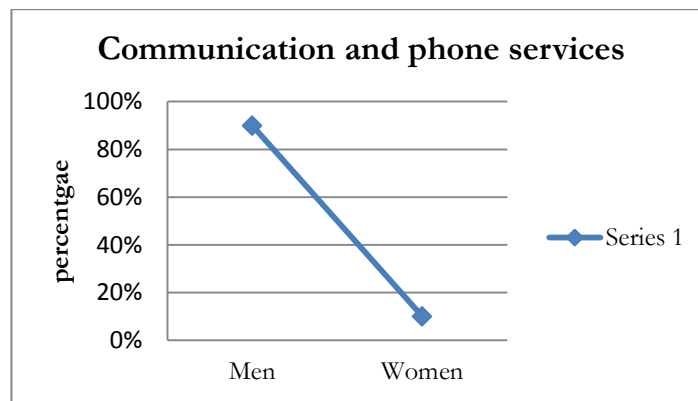
All the respondents agreed that Bulsho has high quality products with respect to the standard of quality their competitors have, Bulsho has standard goods from Africa which immigrants know very well and appreciate the shop for that, however the women were neutral about their services, the follow up services and vital information about the product are lacking, for example when to expect new stock if the customers need more of the same product, all this level of inconsistency worries customers who think Bulsho competitors are better up in offering understandable service than Bulsho.

On the contrary men are very satisfied with the services they receive from Bulsho, this can be due to the fact that the services they receive from the shop are mostly for relaxation customers, for example playing domino game, watching sport, playing cards and drinking coffee, these services are interactive and relax, which makes them to think different from women who came to the shop just to buy products and go back home.

### **Communication and phone services**

This is the most lucrative part of the Bulsho cooperative business center; the phone services are only for international call to Africa, this service is available throughout the day till mid night, majority user of this service are men only 10% of women make international call using this service. The 90% of men who call on this phone box are satisfied with the services, Bulsho offers moderate prices in this department and the benefits are directly seen after the customer has used it.

Bulsho shop needs to transfer this satisfaction they have seen on the phone service department to the other departments of the cooperative. Through word of mouth most immigrants from West Africa know that there is a phone service at Bulsho and they frequently utilize this services most especially adult that are not technologically savvy, this is the main bridge between them and their families in Africa. Bulsho should copy the success of the phone services and adopt it to the other services it offers.



Graph 2: Communication and phone services

**b. Level of Customer satisfaction**

**Availability of groceries, fashion and Snack bar/Tea of my choice**

This is the strengthen of Bulsho cooperative 100% respondents were very satisfied with the varieties they found at Bulsho, the fact that they have all the necessary items their customers are looking for and in good quality than their competitors. There are certain traditional wear, food stuff that can only be found from Bulsho in Finland, this is where they surpass their competitor, however their pricing strategy is affecting their business in the sense that no matter the variety and quality of their goods, people still find it difficult to shop in Bulsho, their prices are high as compare to other shops.

They also lack communication and sales skills because sometimes it takes a good sale person to convince a client to buy expense but high quality products. Another reason is lack of publicity and advertisement, the shop does little to create awareness of it quality products. Bulsho is like a club where there are regulars who go the everyday, for example, male immigrants who spent time at the coffee shop and the others are those who shop at the fashion and food stuff departments they don't come regularly due to the prices and lack of communication.



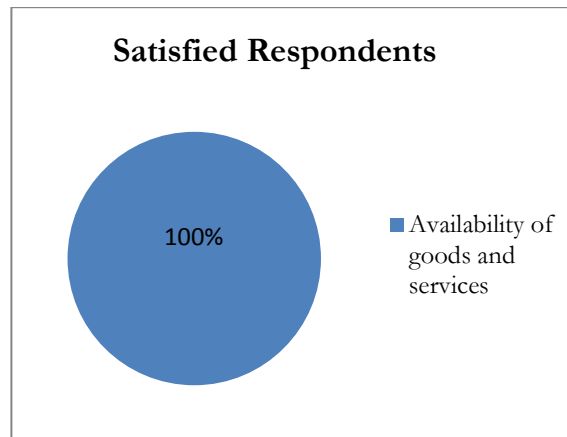
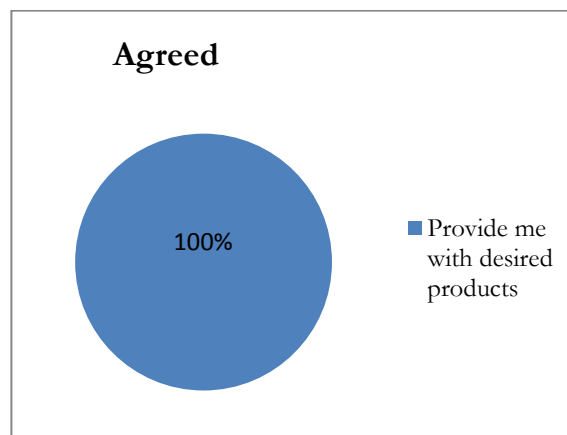


Chart 6: Availability of groceries, fashion and Snack bar/Tea of my choice

**Provides me with desired products**

There is overwhelming agreement on this question that Bulsho is a unique place and the only shop in Finland that provides customers with desirable products, products that cannot be found elsewhere, special product which have great important to the customers like the traditional dresses for Muslims men and women, like the traditional food for special celebration and also an open space where men can pray at the coffee shop if they are the at their time of prayer. This special offer and services makes Bulsho different from competitors and special to customers, however, the management needs to use this unique opportunity and turn it into a means to bring more customers to the shop and also satisfy their needs.



## Chart 7: Provides me with desired products

### **There is always someone to answer my questions, friendly and helpful staff**

The respondents in this questions were 50% neutral, 30% disagreed only 20% agreed, this shows how lacking the shop is with respect to customers services and satisfaction, the qualities of a good sales personnel is to serve the customers to their satisfaction and be the whenever the customers need your attention, but that is missing at Bulsho. What we recognise here was that the 20% that agreed on this statement where all men who spent their time in the coffee shop rather than in the fashion and food store.

From the open-ended question it was clear that the environment at Bulsho is friendly only to male customers and there is very little help render to customers, as it was mention before, sometimes you rarely find a personnel at the shop, the management of employees at Bulsho is badly handle as staffs are not well trained and lack the marketing skills to operate in such a shop. The management should do more to hire trained workers who can better sale the image and reputation of the shop in order to retain its customers. This is a point the management should have had better understanding from the previous research been done by the shop on customers satisfaction as said by the marketing manager in the interview.

Employees are key to transmitting the shops message to customers, for Bulsho to became known by prospective customers, to have a position in the market, to have its own brand identity and image, to compete with other it must have a great working staff that can carry the shop message to the customers via its services without so then the shop will find it difficult to compete. If customers are satisfied with the service they get from Bulsho they will definitely come back for more but on the contrary if they receive poor service or are not satisfied then they will turn to the other competitors to satisfy their needs which is something the management in Bulsho need to take into consideration.

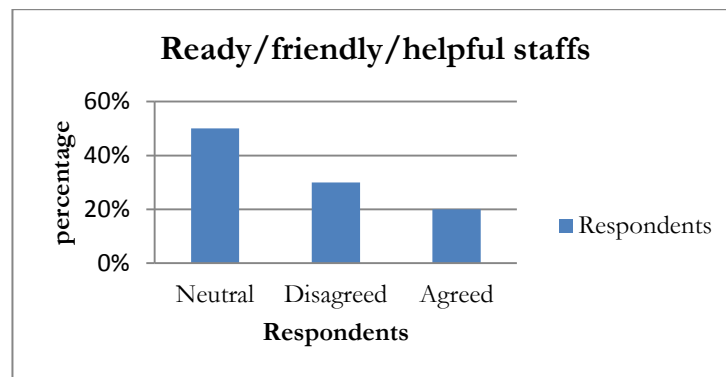


Chart 8: Readiness/friendly and helpful staffs

**c. Interview results**

**Offers favorable competitive prices and customers support services**

This is the place where the management of Bulsho needs to pay more attention in order to be competitive and at the same time satisfy its customers which are the main objective of the business, two third of the respondents say the prices at Bulsho in all departments are high most especially on food stuffs and tradition dresses and jewelries, if you compare this statement with that of the marketing manager in his interview, he think Bulsho has a fair and affordable price on its products. Bulsho prices are higher than that of the other competitors which has led to its customers preferring to shop elsewhere than in Bulsho. They have original products however customers pay little attention on the quality due to the fact that they have little money to spare in respect of the price differentiation. If the shop wants to be competitive and to increase its sale, make the shop well known to customers and prospective customers they have to adjust their prices so that it fits to the income and purchasing power of the local immigrants who are their target customers.

Again a majority of the respondents said the customer support services were poorly administered, they compliant in the open-ended question section that, there are days and moments when the is no one to serve customers in the shops, sometimes customers are poorly served due to the fact that the shop has more services and few workers. The

support services are not there in terms of follow up services, no one is there to give help when needed, there are little information on new comers and other happening concerning the shop, customers are mostly unaware of what is happening with the services Bulsho provide except when they actual go to the shop to find out.

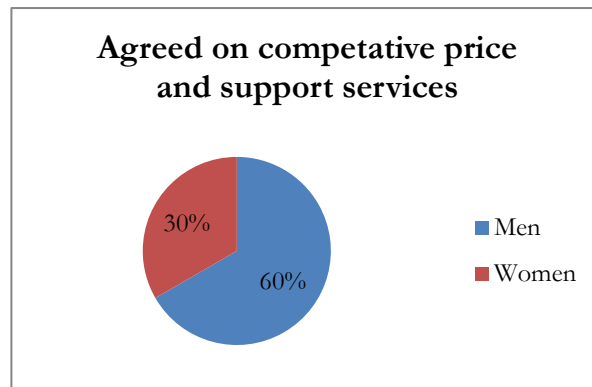


Chart 9: Offers competitive prices and customers support services

### **It is easy to get at the nearest Bulsho shop**

Everyone agreed that the shop is located in a good area and accessible to all. Bulsho has only one shop in Helsinki, though they have plans to open more shops, which is one of the reasons they are carrying out this survey in order to know what is wrong, how customers feels, what the management needs to do to be competitive, how they can attract prospective customer and how best they can improve their brand, make it stronger and to satisfy customers. All this ideas are in the strategy plan of the management going forward however they want to get it right before expanding. Bulsho shop is located in Rastila center, just 100metre from the metro stop and very accessible to all modes of transportation.

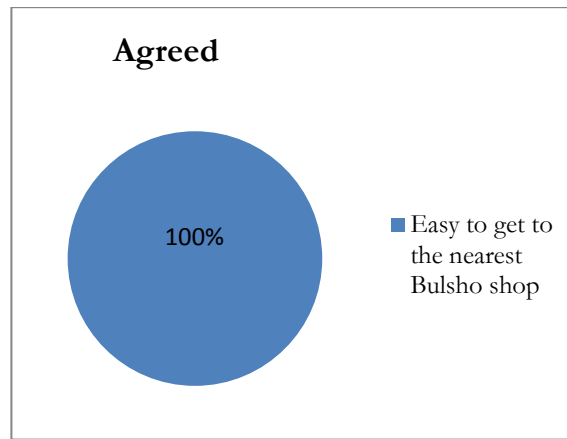
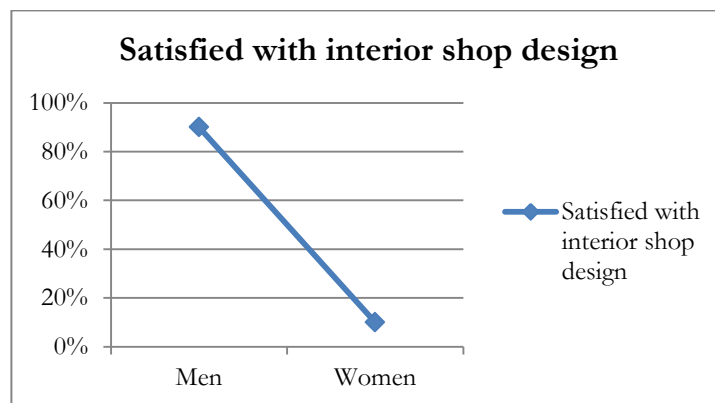


Chart 10: It is easy to get at the nearest Bulsho shop

### Physical premises - interior design and space for relaxation and waiting spot

All male respondents are very satisfied with the interior design and space for relaxation as they have a nice coffee shop and prayer room where that can relax, however on the other hand women were okay with the shop for food and not very satisfied with the fashion area due to lack of space, they think the matter wasn't about the space but it was the poor arrangement of the products and poor show case by the management. Some want to see it redesign to represent the true colours and symbols of the African traditional shop, however it is not possible to decorate the interior due to the fact the housing company does not allow for massive redecoration, instead they prefer repainting and not re-designing. On this front Bulsho has limited power to satisfy its customers, however show casing of the product and re-arrangement to suit customers may just help capture some sense of African fashion present in the shop.



### Graph 3: Physical premises - interior design and space for relaxation

#### **Managerial practices**

There was a unanimous agreement on this question that the shop lacks a good managerial strategy, with the proper business skills needed to operate the cooperative, 80% of the respondents were not satisfied with the job of the management, they said the management needs to do some form of training or learning course in order to manage the shop well, they said they can see that things are not being run well but cannot tell what the problem is. They also understand that the management needs to run the cooperative like that of its competitors, of which they think it is not the case.

Respondents accept the fact that Bulsho is in its early stages and it's a work in progress, with time they are going to learn how to operate the shop better and that is why they are putting effort to understand the business and their customers, they can see that via this recent research the shop is doing, so as to find out ways to improve their image, strengthen their brand identity and awareness and finally satisfy their customers' needs and services.

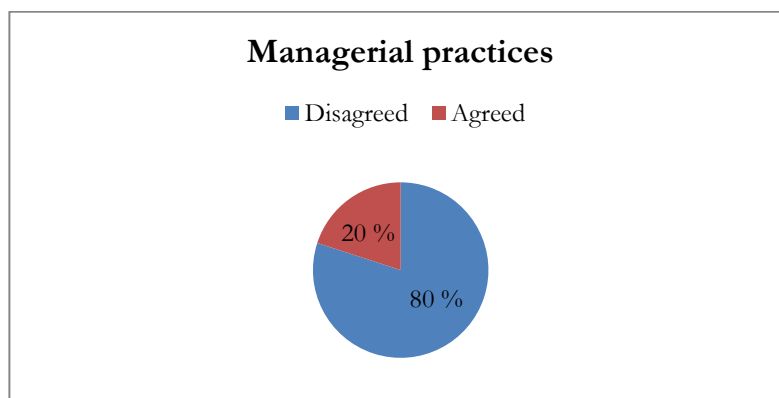


Chart 11: Managerial practices

#### **Appearance, knowledge and professionalism of personnel**

All respondents are very satisfied with the appearance and dressing code of the personnel at Bulsho because they either dress with a suit or they wear the traditional Muslim wear, about their knowledge and professionalism, two third of the respondent are not satisfied, because customers want to see Bulsho grow and develop into a household name in Finland however they think the management lack the skills and training to do the job.

The respondents said the management at Bulsho lack the motivation and experience in trading especially doing business in a foreign place, they acknowledge the fact that they can see a clear different between the services they get from other shop and Bulsho, however they understand that Bulsho is a new shop, they are still learning and will be better with time, on the contrary the interview with the marketing manager, he stipulated his experience and background in international business his brings to the management team, which is not seen by the customers

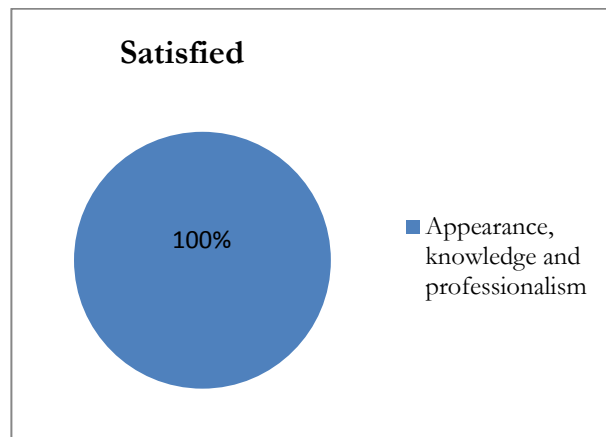


Chart 12: Appearance, knowledge and professionalism of personnel

#### 4.4 Result from Open Questions

We had three open-ended questions which allow the respondents to give their own opinions, ideas and suggestion to the management of Bulsho cooperative so that they can

intend use this ideas in order to develop the system which will satisfy the customers and give the cooperative a stronger brand identity and image. These questions are;

**What do you wish Bulsho cooperative could add to its line of goods and services?**

Respondents think Bulsho has all the necessary or basic things, which a shop like Bulsho should have, however they still want to see more varieties of foodstuffs and clothing, so that customers can have a different range of choices than is present at the shop now. Once again the customers care more about the pricing and marketing strategies than with the varieties of goods and service the shop offers. They would like to have a follow up support service for certain product, which can be repair or needs maintenance from time to time.

**How could Bulsho increase its market visibility?**

Respondents think Bulsho could be visible via all other means of publicity; they want the shop to carry out an aggressive campaign using all mean of advertisement from the internet (social media), promotion, radio, TV, billboards, word of mouth, newspaper and any other mean available to the African immigrant community in Finland for example a letter to their monthly association meeting held by different countries' representatives in Finland. They want the shop to advertise also through associations, which control and cater for immigrant's issues such as Monthly in Finland. They understand that if Bulsho doesn't try this means of publicity it will be difficult for them to compete and they note that most of these methods of publicities are free or not expensive.

However, such a campaign will entail time and money of which Bulsho do have the time to carry them out but lack the resources both personnel and financial to perform in a large scale that will create an impact. Bearing in mind that Bulsho is a young business that is still trying to position itself in the market, though advertisement can help do that, however as a small shop they need more of a product, service, pricing and other marketing strategies that involve management skills than spending more money on promotion. The



cooperative will need to break even and start earning profit in some few years' time, which is the main reason why the shop is operating.

### **Any other suggestions to improve product and service quality?**

The majority of respondents suggested that Bulsho should improve its communication system with customers, which is the flow of information to and from the shop to the customers. Customers want to know when new products arrive, they want to know when there is price reduction, they want to know when this is a special offer, they want to know where and how to complain or give feedback to management, they want to know where to ask questions when necessary and more, however they find it difficult to do so.

All respondents want Bulsho cooperative to reduce their prices on fashion products and food stuffs, they say Bulsho prices are too high with respect to that of other competitors. This is the key reason why they don't visit the shop regularly, they would like to be loyal customers of Bulsho cooperative, but they are low income earners who would prefer to search for goods with low price irrespective of the quality, they only visit Bulsho when they are looking for special products and services they can't find elsewhere and which is very important to their culture and religion.

Other suggested that the management should undergo some training or any managerial course in order to help them manage the shop in an efficient way just like they see other similar shops are doing, as they receive advertisement, information and other publicity messages from Bulsho's competitors but not from Bulsho.

## 5 Conclusion and recommendations

### 5.1 Summary of the findings

This research was conducted in Helsinki, Finland. This thesis is part of the curriculum of an undergraduate program in international business at Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences Porvoo. The reason for the research is to find out ways to satisfy Bulsho cooperative customers and how to improve awareness of their brand image with a large immigrant population in Helsinki. There are central questions that must be answered in order to determine the reason behind these low customers turn out and weak brand awareness and identity. How to improve sales services and broadening customer base, what role do the factors influencing consumer's behavior play in the sales of goods and how to improve the brand value and image awareness of the cooperative?

To determine the answers to this question a well-structured questionnaire comprises of thirty four questions, the first eleven question were general questions about the background information of the respondents, the second ten questions were about the personnel, goods and services, prices, competition, quality, reputation, business practices and support services of which respondent need to disagree or agree in a scale of one to five, the third questions were about the availabilities of goods and services, interior design and relaxation, communication, appearances, knowledge and professionalism of employees, complaint handling and managerial practices, on these questions in a scale of one to five respondents were ask if they were satisfied or not satisfied with the management handling of the business and of the goods and services provided to the customers. The final question was three open-ended questions on what can the shop add in its line of business, how Bulsho can increase market visibility and suggestions to improve product and service quality and an interview with the marketing manager of Bulsho who answered question relating to marketing their goods and services, communicating with customers, how the business operate internally and what steps the management is taking to improve the brand of the cooperative and at the same time satisfy its customers.

The research had a good number of respondents in total of 192 persons, 70% of which were women and 30% men, two third of this number were people of age twenty five years and above with 80% of them are living in a family house with the size of three to five people. All of the respondents were happy and delighted to hear about Bulsho even those who heard about the cooperative from the questionnaire distributors, a total of 90% were interested to talk about the shop, which was a good encouragement to the management.

Immigrants who have lived longer in Finland knew Bulsho better and men visited the shop more than women even though women were Bulsho largest customers group and were two third of the respondents in this survey. Eighty percentages of the respondents agreed with the fact that Bushlo personnel's are reliable and trust worthy but lack the experience to compete in the Finnish market, they though the workers needed more training or studies to better understand how to operate such a business. The biggest problem that Bulsho cooperative has to address is it pricing strategy, 90% of respondents said the prices of goods and services are the major reason why they don't visit the shop regularly. Men who visited the snack bar and coffee shop disagreed with the fact that the prices were high; however they are only 20% of the shop customers, though they are the most regular of all.

This is the point where the management has to create a balance between the main or core part of the business which is the food and fashion section, where majority of the customers think the prices are high and a coffee and relaxation section where the regular customers who are just 20% thinks pricing is okay. This high pricing is a vital part of the competitiveness of the cooperative because the shop cannot get enough customers to make a profit if customers think prices are too high. Respondents also didn't agree with the support services and services in general at the shop, the services were poorly administered, which should be a crying concern to the management.

The good news from the survey is that respondents are very happy with the variety of goods and service that the shop offers, the products are desirable and unique from the perspective of immigrants who rarely see such products in Europe, this is an appeal that the shops offer of which it can turn it into a profitable strategy to the cooperative if it is

correctly implemented. This variety of goods and services should have accompany with a friendly atmosphere, someone ready to help customers if need be, however most women said there are little or no help at the shop while men said they get help when needed, that notwithstanding Bulsho has a good reputation, high quality products and fair business practice standard as agreed by most of the respondents.

The respondents all agree that the shop is accessible to customers, the shop is one hundred meters from the Rastila metro station, bus stop, a transit to the ABC gas station and close to the area where majority of the immigrants live, however Bulsho competitors are in Hakaniemi which is at the heart of the shopping Centre and close to the city Centre where majority of the population in Finland go for shopping and other important daily activities like work, travel and more.

An overwhelming majority of the respondents were satisfied with the availability of groceries, fashion products, snack bar varieties and the communication services the shop offered. The phone booth services had a stand out performance from all however, the others had the basic things customers needed or were looking for from a shop of this kind. The shop is up to standard requirements of the immigrant population with a relaxation spot, bearing in mind that it is difficult to find such shops in Europe that can offer customers with traditional clothing and food stuffs, however they were not satisfied with the interior design of the shop as they all wanted it to reflect the cultural and traditional design of the African people, they want a place that makes them feel welcoming and belonging too, not like the regular western shop they visit often, but the management said it was not possible to redecorate the shop due to the contract from the leasing company.

More than eighty percentage of the respondents were neutral on this question about responsiveness, politeness, knowledge and professionalism of the employees at Bulsho, this was due to the fact that African culture requires that one should respect their elders, professional, people in high offices, people that help to provide services to others, therefore the respondents turn to these feelings of their when answering this question. They didn't want to sound disrespectful or rude to the management at Bulsho which was something to be expected by the researcher, we have to bear in mind that they were

satisfied with the employees outfit and dressing code, the workers always dress on suit or the traditional Muslim wear which was suitable to all the respondents.

Respondents were divided by gender when it came to the question of complaint handling, women were not satisfied because of the fact that their complaints were not looked into and they didn't get or see any sign to show that the shop has listen to their complaints whereas, the men were very satisfied that their complaints were effectively carried out, this is a cultural issues as African men believe that woman have little or nothing to add or say when it comes to issue out of the home or their kitchen and children. The respondents were satisfied with the managerial practices, although they all would like to see the manager do some form of training or learning to be able to compete with the other shops in Helsinki because they feel Bulsho lack some visible practices they see elsewhere.

In customers' opinions, ideas and suggestions, they didn't ask for anything specific to be added to the chain of goods and services that Bulsho presently offers, they all thing Bulsho has adequate varieties but needs to increase its market visibilities, it is very important to participate in local trade fair and marketing events in order to make their brand to be known to people and to build a brand image of their cooperative, this will help open the shop to the different segments of customers and prospective customer in the market. Though Bulsho is lacking in many regards, it is the only shop in Helsinki that provides tradition products needed by the East African immigrants which gives the shop an advantage to any local competitor.

Finally the respondents want to see an improvement in services and support services from Bulsho cooperative, the management acknowledge the fact that their support services as poor and they are still learning in this area, however they think they provide quality services elsewhere like in the snack bar, you have to note that men are very satisfied with the services they receive from Bulsho as they spend most of their time at the bar and coffee shop, on the other hand women are not satisfied with services they get from the fashion and food section of the shop, they think they need more helping hand, information and response to complaint from the management.

The interview with the manager of Bulsho had similar results with that of the respondents however there are critical points worth noting from the interview. Though the manager has a background in business it is very clear from majority of the respondents that he has not transferred that theoretical knowledge to managerial practice because they think he and his staffs still need an additional form of training to learn more on managing the shop. This is reflected on issues like information flow between the shop and customers on services such as advertisement and other forms of publicity, new arrivals, complaints, internal decoration, brand awareness and identity.

The both methods of research in this thesis came to a similar conclusion that Bulsho is a work in progress which means it's a learning process for the management as the shop is still new, the varieties in the shop is a plus for the business as customers can find most of what they need in a unique African shop like this with a food, fashion, snack bar and phones service departments all in one shop. Bulsho sales high quality products, which the customers know but are not willing to pay the prices, allocated for the goods and services due to the fact that competitors offer substitutes products with low prices.

There is another issue of preferential treatment which the majority of the respondents who are women mention with regards to the services Bulsho provides to men, they think the shop concentrate more on men's services while they are the core of the target customers of Bulsho. This is rooted in the cultural and religious beliefs of the African people which say women are not equal to men however in a place like Finland this is different as everybody is equal which makes the women feel they are being discriminated by the shop which can be a drag to the business as a whole.

Through previous researches and this, the management will have a clear understanding of what the customers wants and needs are, the strengths of its competitors, the market environments, what they need to do to satisfy their customers, how they can build their brand identity, image and create awareness of the shop and finally to see clearly what has been lacking in terms of managing the shop by the manager who can identify the differences and similarities in his style of management and how the respondents view it.

Bulsho as a business overall stands in a good position moving forward and can easily gain a good market position and win over more customers from competitors, however the shop needs to do move in terms of providing quality services, listening to customer and acting, increase their publicity via the different forms of advertisement, training their staffs to serve customers in a better way, develop a top to bottom flow of information and vice-versa. The shop has what it takes to strengthen its brand name and image, to make consumers be aware of the brand with its high quality goods and services, vast chain of different products, unique location, where there are lots of immigrants who are the target customers of Bulsho. The management needs to re-strategize its marketing and pricing strategies in order to stay into business in a long run, under this very global and competitive market environment.

## **5.2 Suggestions and recommendations**

This is the first research that has been carried out on this topic of brand awareness at Bulsho cooperative, there has been some other researches been done at the shop on customers satisfaction. Lots of information was gathered from the respondents with respect to their opinions on what the cooperative should do to strengthening its brand, broadening its appeal on its brand identity and image, develop a strategy to satisfy its customers by improving on the service qualities. Though the cooperative has been conducting researches, there is still room for more because the cooperative is new and needs more information in order for them to better understand the market. The cooperative needs to continue researching on this topics and others so as to be aware of the factors which influences the market in any giving time and place, this continuity will help gather more information and therefore position the cooperative in a good and sound position to judge and strategize when planning.

## **5.3 Reliability and validity**

Reliability is the extent to which a measurable procedure yields the same result, whenever the same research is carried out. It means the same result can be acquired each time the

research is been repeated. The secondary materials used in this research were carefully chosen from known researches that have been conducted in the same field of study in order to have a reliable guide to produce a similar outcome in the empirical result. The result of this study is an overview of customer's satisfaction and brand awareness of Bulsho cooperative, therefore this study cannot be implement in any other situation or assumed to fit any other cooperation of similar chain of business in Finland. (Jerome Kirk et al 1986, 19) Validity is the extent to which the research or study gives the right answer, it is the best available approximation to the truth or falsity of a given inference, proportion or conclusion. The theoretical and empirical materials should be connected and on the same line. The research questionnaire was design to suit the research problem which is basis for customers satisfaction and brand awareness of Bulsho cooperative in consideration to line of business, the decision making process of the customers, the level of advertisement and general awareness of the shop in Finland. The questionnaire were written in plain, clear and simple English to help the respondents to understand the question very well in order not to have any misunderstanding in interpreting the questions that could lead to fault or unreliable answers, (Jerome Kirk et al 1986, 19)



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### **Other sources**

Busho cooperative research on customer satisfaction, 20/01/2011.

### **Appendices**

#### **Appendix 1: An interview with the Marketing Manager**

Date: 1/3/2012

An interview with the Marketing Manager

Name: Mahad Omar

Position: Marketing Manager

Email: mahadomar@hotmail.com

1. Thank you for the interview, could you please present yourself and the cooperative?

I am Mahad Omar Marketing manager since the beginning in 2001 I have a business background in international business and during the last stages of my studies I and two other colleagues decided to set up Bulsho cooperative

2. When did the operations of Bulsho cooperative started? And what was the reason behind the said timing? It started in 2001 and the reason for setting it up was that we have identified an unfulfilled need in the immigrant communities across Helsinki. There were basic food stuffs and clothing which our people needed but it was difficult to find in

Helsinki so we thought it was a good idea to start a shop that could fill in this gap that was missing in the immigrant community in Helsinki, mostly immigrants from Africa.

3. Could you please describe the structure of your organization? Who is in charge of what, when and how? Our organization consists of CEO/Managing director, marketing manager and assistant marketing manager and a cashier, each of them is in charge of their related functions as defined in their titles

4. Could you please describe how the organization is run? What are the main tasks been done daily? As mentioned before we are the four top managers with workers under us, we have sales representatives, cleaners, logistic personnel and a transport man, the business is run by the managers who do different tasks at different time when need be.

5. Who are your main customers? Our main customers are Immigrants particularly African immigrants; however everybody is invited to visit the shop

6. What tools you have in place to satisfy your customers? We have high quality goods and service, professional employees and reasonable pricing as our tool for customer satisfaction

7. What are the problems that arise when dealing with customers?

Some of the customers want to buy the products or services through credit and if our staffs say no they take it personal, some of them complain about the prices and the services they receive from the shop, while other thing the shop give preferences to male customers more than female and think they don't get good enough information about arrivals from us.

8. How has Finnish and foreign employees been working together? If it's about Finnish officials thing are okay, we work in accordance with the Finnish workplace practices but for employees we don't have any Finnish employee in our shop

9. Have you ever conducted a survey or research about your cooperative? Yes, we conducted a feasibility study before we set up our business and we also conduct occasional marketing and customer satisfaction research

10. What means of communication do you use to get to your customers? We use local radio warsan, few flyers, social media and word of mouth

11. How do you gain the awareness of prospective customers? We gain awareness from them via the various channels of communication, however we are trying to increase our publicity level by increasing in the different means of advertisement, though some of them are expensive, you know we are a young business trying to be known but some of this means are not affordable by us.

12. How are customers aware about you brand? They are aware of it because we offer different services in one point and we are based in a strategic location, we offer high quality goods and services which is difficult to find from our competitors in Helsinki

13. How do you get feedback and complaints from customers? We get feedback through feedback form, from customers in person, we have special meeting with our loyal and regular customers and we also observe the general feeling of the customers during the buying process.

14. Are there other issues you would like to address which we have not discussed so far? Yes, Bulsho cooperative is a unique shop in Finland, we supplier products on demand from Africa to customers and companies that are interest in specific products, which are rare in the European markets.

### Appendix 2 – Survey questionnaire to customers

IMAGE AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION RESEARCH ABOUT BULSHO COOPERATIVE		
1. Background information – the information will be treated confidential and will be treated statistically		
1	Age	<input type="checkbox"/> 12-17 <input type="checkbox"/> 18 -29 <input type="checkbox"/> 30 - 45 <input type="checkbox"/> 46 and above
2	Gender	<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female

3	Continent of origin at birth	<input type="checkbox"/> African <input type="checkbox"/> From other continent    Specify -----
4	Family size	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 - 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 -10 <input type="checkbox"/> 10 and more
5	Occupation	-----
6	Where do you live?	<input type="checkbox"/> Helsinki <input type="checkbox"/> Vantaa <input type="checkbox"/> Espoo <input type="checkbox"/> Others    Specify
7	Do you know Bulsho Cooperative?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
8	From where have you heard about Bulsho?	<input type="checkbox"/> Friends <input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper <input type="checkbox"/> Internet <input type="checkbox"/> Other    ----- ----
9	Are you the person who goes shopping in the family	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
10	How often do you visit Bulsho?	<input type="checkbox"/> Seldom <input type="checkbox"/> 1-3 times /week <input type="checkbox"/> 4 - 6 times/week <input type="checkbox"/> Once in a month
11	How often do you visit similar shops?	<input type="checkbox"/> Seldom <input type="checkbox"/> 1-3 times /week <input type="checkbox"/> 4 - 6 times/week <input type="checkbox"/> Once in a month

INDICATE WHETHER YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS

Where 1= Disagree Completely 3 = Neutral and 5 = Agree completely

		1	2	3	4	5
1	Bulsho and its personnel is reliable					
2	Has experience in selling food stuff and other commodities					
3	Offers favorable and competitive prices					
4	Offers favourable customer support-services					
5	Provides me with desired products					

6	There is always someone to answer my questions					
7	Has friendly, helpful staff					
8	Has good reputation for high quality product and services					
9	Has good reputation for fair business practices					
10	It is easy to get at the nearest Bulsho					
<b>INDICATE YOUR LEVEL OF SATISFACTION (1 = Very Bad; 2 poor; 3= average; 4= Good and 5 = Excellent)</b>						
		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
1	Physical premises - interior design and space for relaxation and waiting spot					
2	Availability of groceries of my choice					
3	Availability of fashion products of my choice					
4	Availability of a good Snack bar/Tea					
5	Communication and phone services					
6	Appearance of personnel and professionalism					
7	Knowledge and professional level of personnel					
8	Politeness kindness and responsiveness of personnel					

9	Complaint handling methods					
10	Managerial practices					

<b>OPEN QUESTIONS</b>	
<p>What do you wish Bulsho cooperative could add to its line of goods and services?</p>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>How could Bulsho increase its market visibility?</p>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>Any other suggestions to improve product and service quality?</p>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

**Thank you for your answers**

### Appendix 3 Descriptive Statistics

<b>Questions to respondents</b>	<b>Men</b>	<b>Women</b>
Bulsho and its personnel is reliable	80%	80%
Has experience in selling food stuff and other commodities	90%	40%
Offers favorable and competitive prices	60%	30%
Offers favourable customer support- services	80%	20%
Provides me with desired products	100%	100%
There is always someone to answer my questions	90%	90%
Has friendly, helpful staff	60%	20%
Has good reputation for high quality product and services	100%	90%
Has good reputation for fair business practices	70%	50%
It is easy to get at the nearest Bulsho	100%	100%
Physical premises - interior design and space for relaxation and waiting spot	90%	10%
Availability of groceries of my choice	100%	100%
Availability of fashion products of my choice	40%	80%
Availability of a good Snack bar/Tea	100%	100%
Communication and phone services	100%	30%
Appearance of personnel and professionalism	90%	40%
Knowledge and professional level of personnel	70%	30%
Politeness kindness and responsiveness of personnel	90%	80%
Complaint handling methods	100%	20%
Managerial practices	80%	50%