

Exploring performance measurements: The case of Soweto Beauty Salons

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Abstract

Beauty salons are not just places where individuals seek personal grooming and self-care, but are hubs of creativity, self-expression, and relaxation. As such, their performance is determined not only by financial metrics but also by the ability to meet customer expectations, provide excellent service, and remain adaptable to evolving trends and customer preferences. This study delves into the intricacies of performance evaluation within the beauty salon sector to identify the key performance measurements that are instrumental in assessing and enhancing salon performance, as well as the strategies and best practices employed by successful beauty salon operators. Thus, it aims to contribute valuable insights to beauty salon owners, managers, and industry stakeholders. The study concluded that, in South Africa, to optimise their operational performance, beauty salons must have tailored performance measurements. A mixed methods approach was used to collect the data. The adoption of technology, such as digital platforms and systems, is highlighted as a key strategy, including the implementation of customer feedback systems, strengthening online presence and social media engagement, and utilizing technological solutions for appointment scheduling and management.

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1. Introduction

1.1. Background

The beauty salon industry in South Africa has experienced a remarkable evolution, marked by significant growth and transformation. This metamorphosis is attributed to a confluence of factors, including evolving consumer preferences, urbanisation trends, and an increasing societal emphasis on personal grooming and wellness. As beauty salons navigate this dynamic environment, the need for effective performance measurement and management becomes paramount to ensure sustained success. This literature review delves into the existing research and knowledge relevant to performance measurements within the South African beauty salon industry. By synthesising the empirical evidence, this literature review aims to integrate the diverse aspects covered in the preceding chapter, setting the stage for a comprehensive understanding of performance measurement dynamics in the context of South African beauty salons. Furthermore, this study seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities that beauty salons face in measuring and managing their performance effectively.

1.2. Problem Statement

The beauty salon industry in South Africa is a thriving and dynamic sector that plays a significant role in enhancing personal grooming, wellness, and self-confidence. As this industry continues to expand and evolve in response to changing consumer preferences, technological advancements, and market dynamics, the effective utilisation of performance measurements becomes crucial for ensuring the sustained success and competitiveness of beauty salons in South Africa (Kumar et al., 2020).

The South African beauty salon industry operates within a unique regional and cultural context, with diverse customer demographics and aesthetic preferences. Therefore, understanding how these factors influence the selection and utilisation of performance metrics is essential. The integration of technology, including digital booking systems, marketing tools, and customer engagement platforms, is transforming how beauty salons operate (Kamble et al., 2020). It is crucial to explore how South African beauty salons are adopting and leveraging technology for performance improvement. However, a notable research gap exists in the understanding of how performance measurements are currently employed within the South African beauty salon context.

Therefore, while performance measurement practices within the beauty salon industry have been recognised as essential for operational improvement, comprehensive research exploring how performance measurements are utilised, adapted, and optimised to enhance beauty salon performance, specifically within the unique regional and cultural context of South Africa, is lacking.

1.3. Research Objectives

- 1.3.1. To identify the key performance metrics currently utilised by beauty salons in South Africa for assessing and monitoring their operational performance.
- 1.3.2. To investigate the integration of technological advancements and their influence on performance measurement practices in South African beauty salons.
- 1.3.3. To provide recommendations for beauty salon practitioners in South Africa to optimise their operational performance using tailored performance measurements.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Service quality theory

The Service Quality (SERVQUAL) framework, developed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry, has been a pivotal tool for understanding and evaluating service quality across various industries (Goutam, 2020). In the context of beauty salons, the application of the SERVQUAL model provides a structured approach to measure and enhance service quality. This discussion delves into the key components of the SERVQUAL framework and explores how performance measurements can be effectively utilised to elevate service quality in beauty salons.

2.1.1 Tangibles

Tangibles refer to the physical appearance of facilities, equipment, personnel, and communication materials (Goutam, 2020). In beauty salons, tangibles may encompass the salon's aesthetic, cleanliness, equipment condition, and appearance. Performance measurements here can include regular audits, customer feedback on physical attributes, and assessments of the overall visual appeal of the salon (Granić & Marangunić, 2019). By tracking and evaluating these tangible elements, salon owners can identify areas for improvement, invest strategically in aesthetics, and ensure a positive first impression for clients.

2.1.2 Reliability

The reliability of the SERVQUAL model pertains to the ability of the salon to provide accurate and consistent services (Ferrer-Estévez & Chalmeta, 2023). Performance measurements in this dimension involve tracking service consistency, appointment punctuality, and the reliability of product recommendations. By utilizing customer feedback and service records, salons can measure reliability metrics to ensure that clients consistently receive high-quality services, fostering trust and loyalty.

2.1.3 Responsiveness

Responsiveness focuses on the willingness of salon staff to help and provide prompt service (Goutam, 2020). Performance measurements may include tracking response times to inquiries, customer complaints, and the effectiveness of problem resolution (Granić & Marangunić, 2019). By analysing these metrics, beauty salons can identify bottlenecks in responsiveness, implement training programmes, and streamline communication channels to enhance overall customer satisfaction.

2.1.4 Assurance

Assurance relates to the knowledge and courtesy of salon employees and their ability to convey trust and confidence (Granić & Marangunić, 2019). Performance measurements in this aspect may involve assessing staff training programmes, customer satisfaction surveys on staff interactions, and the level of expertise demonstrated by employees (Ferrer-Estévez & Chalmeta, 2023). Regular evaluations can help salons ensure that their staff possess the necessary skills and professionalism to instill confidence in clients.

2.1.5 Empathy

Empathy refers to the degree to which salon staff provide caring and individualized attention to customers (Goutam, 2020). Performance measurements of empathy could involve customer feedback on staff friendliness, personalized services, and the effectiveness of client consultations (Ferrer-Estévez & Chalmeta, 2023). By measuring and improving empathy, beauty salons can create a more welcoming and customer-centric environment.

By drawing on the SERVQUAL framework and integrating performance measurements, beauty salons can systematically assess and enhance service quality. Regular monitoring of tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy empowers salon owners to make informed decisions, address areas for improvement, and ultimately elevate the overall customer experience. This approach aligns with contemporary service quality theories and contributes to the continuous improvement of beauty salon services in a competitive industry.

2.1.1. Technology acceptance model (TAM)

The technology acceptance model (TAM) is a well-established framework that provides insights into the adoption and acceptance of new technologies within organisational settings (Granić & Marangunić, 2019). In the context of beauty salons, the TAM framework has become a valuable tool for exploring how technological advancements and digital tools are integrated into salon operations, influencing both staff and customer experiences (Ferrer-Estévez & Chalmeta, 2023). This discussion elaborates on the key components of the TAM and how they relate to performance measurements in beauty salons. In general, the TAM serves as a valuable framework for understanding how technological advancements are embraced within beauty salons. The integration of digital tools not only influences the perceived ease of use and usefulness for staff and customers but also directly impacts operational efficiency and customer experience. By incorporating performance measurements aligned with TAM, beauty salons can optimise their technological infrastructure, ensuring that it aligns seamlessly with the needs and expectations of both internal stakeholders and clientele. This approach contributes to the overall success and competitiveness of beauty salons in digitally driven landscapes.

2.1.2. Game theory

Granić and Marangunić (2019) believe that game theory is a pragmatic idea that integrates cooperation and conflict and is an applied mathematical technique. It is assumed that agents with unlimited cognitive and computational power and complete information can optimize their own interests. Strategic scenarios with multiple interdependent actors are described as games. Game theory begins by making theoretical assumptions, like all other forms of rational choice theory. The activities of multiple players (individuals, groups or organizations) can be analyzed within the game. A set of players, a set of positions, a set of actions assigned to select node positions, including chance moves, a decision function that maps choices to intermediate or final outcomes, the type of information available at the node, and cost-based benefits according to Goutam (2020). Any individual or composite actor considered capable of making thoughtful decisions among various courses of action can be considered a player; strategies are the potential courses of action (or sequences of moves) a player can choose. Through the game theory we can then A simple and relevant example is where regulators and beauty salon businesses are asked to play a fictional two-player game.

2.2. Towards a comprehensive system of performance measurements

2.2.1. Integrating clientele participation and performance measurement

Performance and customer engagement need to be evaluated together. This suggests that including individuals and their opinions in the evaluation process is a viable approach to a complete performance measurement system (Pace, 2023).

2.2.2. Provision of specific measurements

There are many ways to assess performance, as the techniques used vary depending on the goals of the organization and its different consumers. Productivity, quality, timeliness, effectiveness, and cost-effectiveness of agency or program operations must all be measured (Mekonnen, 2022). Effective performance indicators help us understand an organization's performance.

2.2.3. Establish multidimensional units of measurements

Performance indicators include both multidimensional and single-dimensional metrics, such as staff satisfaction, customer happiness, and the number of hours spent waiting for services, in addition to the usual numbers of employees, money, hours, mistakes, and reports. For example, according to the Performance-Based Management Special Interest Group in the USA (PBMSIG, 2021), performance indicators are a useful instrument that may tell us important things about programmes, services, and goods. Performance indicators are categorised into six groups: productivity, safety, timeliness, quality, effectiveness, and efficiency (PBMSIG, 2021).

2.2.4. Establish measurement principles

Akinbowale (2023) provides a number of basic guidelines for developing a successful measurement system, including “robust performance indicators, regular improvement, clarity of purpose, focus, alignment, and balance.” The development of performance appraisal systems designed to enhance accountability and improve performance benefits greatly from these six basic concepts.

2.2.5. Integration of measurement and management strategies

There is a need to integrate performance indicators with other management techniques. All areas, including time, quality, and non-financial and financial data, should be equally

included in performance indicators. To properly monitor an organization's performance, they need to adapt to changing conditions. In order to build a better system, it is necessary to examine performance indicators. To be “easy to use...statistically valid, cost-effective to collect, clear, attributable, timely, and relevant to goals,” organizations should “establish robust performance indicators” (Pace, 2023).

2.3 Conceptual Framework: Performance Measurements to Improve Beauty Salon Performance

This conceptual framework provides a comprehensive approach for beauty salons to enhance their performance through strategic performance measurements. By adopting a holistic perspective and implementing relevant metrics, beauty salon owners can achieve sustainable success and elevate the overall salon experience for both clients and employees.

2.3.1 Conceptual Framework

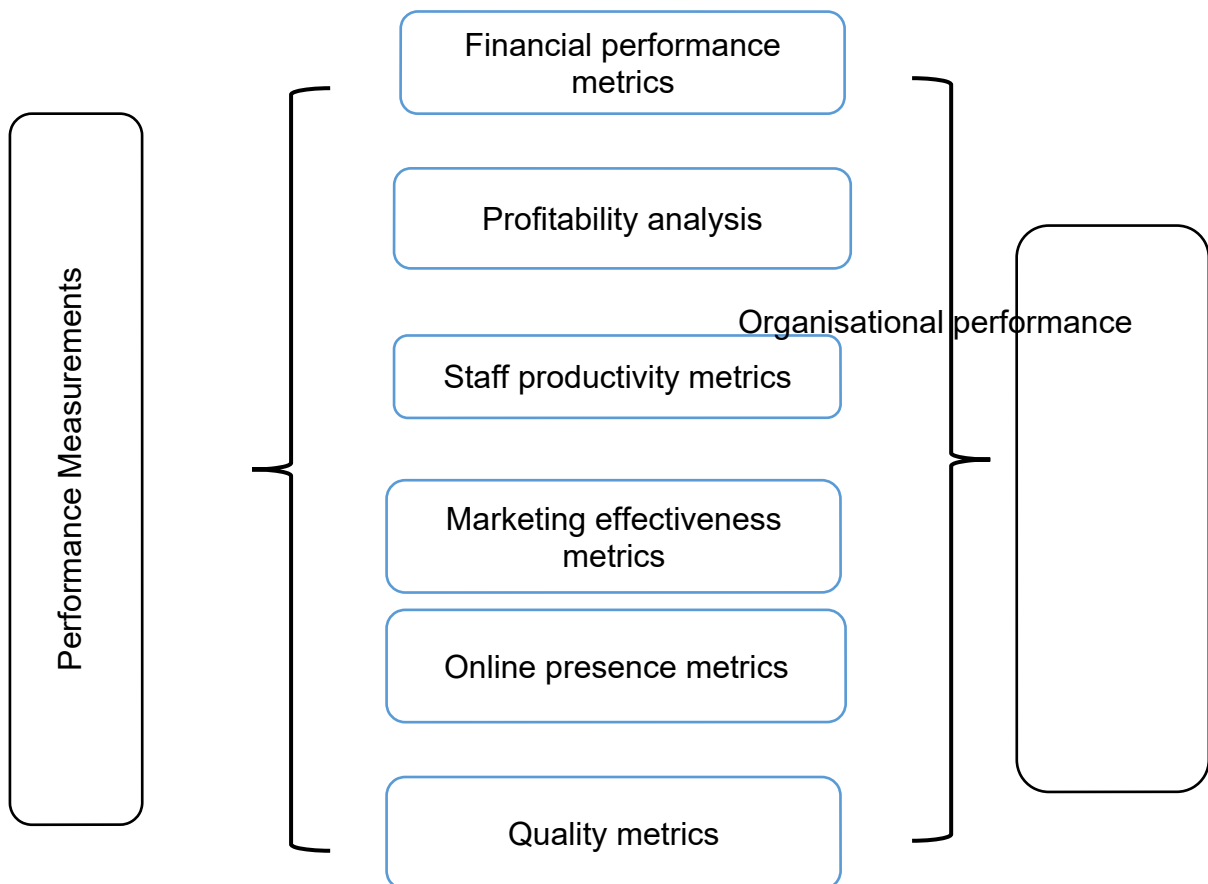


Figure1: Conceptual framework

Source: Author's own

Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework developed for the study.

3. Research Methodology

Employing the research onion framework, this study's methodology delves deep into the layers that shape the research approach. The research onion provides a systematic progression through the layers of research considerations, starting from the broader choices and moving towards the more specific techniques.

3.1. Philosophical Stance: Pragmatism

In this study, the researcher adopted the pragmatism paradigm because the study aimed to investigate and interpret the views and experiences of performance measurements within the context of the Soweto Beauty Salons.

3.2. Research Approach: Deductive

The deductive approach, for example, has garnered significant attention. It commences with very specific observations. According to Busetto, Wick and Gumbinger (2020), these observations could be in the form of field notes, participant behaviours, or responses from interviews.

3.3. Research Strategy: Case Study

The choice of a case study design in this study stems from the belief that this approach can yield fresh insights and contribute meaningfully to the understanding of the investigated problem. The researcher perceives a case study as the most suitable design for pioneering a deeper comprehension of performance measurements within the specific context of Soweto Beauty Salons.

3.4. Target population

Snowball sampling enhances diversity and richness and was adopted in the Quantitative study. The qualitative data collection phase utilized interviews (Kumar, 2020).

3.5. Sampling

A sample of 12 participants was used for the qualitative study, while 60 was used for the quantitative study. A sample of 12 participants was selected in line with Creswell's (2018) deliberations that for qualitative research, a sample of 8-15 participants is sufficient to saturate the data. Additionally, Kumar (2020) proposed that for quantitative research, a sample of more than 30 respondents is sufficient.

3.6. Data Collection

3.6.1 Semi-structured interview guide

The researcher created a semi-structured interview schedule. When choosing interviews as the data collection method, the versatility of the tool was taken into consideration. It is adaptable and gives researchers the opportunity to ask follow-up inquiries (Creswell, 2018)..

3.7. Survey

The researcher made decisions about the recording technique for questionnaire responses, choosing the Likert scale as a classification method. The distribution of questionnaires involved emailing respondents, with email addresses obtained from the referrals. The respondents were allotted an average of 20 minutes for questionnaire completion, and a total of 150 questionnaires were distributed.

3.8. Data Analysis

The data analysis is an ongoing process that is engaged throughout the research process. In other words, the data analysis and the data collection occurred concurrently. Maree (2017) asserts that “the activity continues throughout the research process and not a procedure to be carried out at the end of the research. Data analysis allows the researcher to interpret the findings from the sample used in the research to the larger population.

In thematic analysis, the researcher familiarises themselves with the data before developing codes that build the themes. The codes are structured based on the recurrence of arguments and patterns of meanings found in the data.

The study ensures trustworthiness by adhering to pillars such as credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability. External validity, in alignment with the research objectives, was optimised by selecting respondents with an understanding of performance measurement. Internal validity was assured through the substantive theoretical framework, initial qualitative data, and adaptation of an existing questionnaire.

3.9. Limitations of the Study

The study was demarcated to Soweto Beauty Salons in Soweto, Johannesburg. It was the view of the researcher that delimitations have an impact on decreasing the generalisability of the research findings. The study could have been extended to other offices.

4. Results and findings

4.1 Qualitative findings analysis

The findings of a qualitative study were gathered via semistructured interviews.

4.1.1 Demographic details of the participants

The study recorded the following demographic details:

- Age
- Gender
- Work experience
- Designation of the respondents

The ensuing discussion below covers the outcomes of the recorded variables, commencing with the interview turnout rate.

4.1.2 Data analysis and interpretation

The thematic discussion incorporated relevant verbatims to support the codes, with participants identified as Participants 1, 2, 3, and so forth. The coded themes were instrumental in addressing the research objectives.

4.1.2.1 Key performance metrics currently utilised by beauty salons

Objective One: To identify the key performance metrics currently utilised by beauty salons in South Africa for assessing and monitoring their operational performance.

This study ascertained the key performance metrics currently utilised by beauty salons in South Africa for assessing and monitoring their operational performance. The elicited inferences were thematically analysed and are discussed below:

- Total income generation

Most participants affirmed that beauty salons use key performance metrics such as tracking the overall income generated from various services, such as haircuts, skincare treatments, nail services, and retail product sales. This metrics provide a foundational measure of the salon's financial performance, analysing the profitability of each service by considering revenue and associated costs. From this perspective, Participant 1 attested that

“Beauty salons employ a comprehensive approach to monitor and assess the total income generated, encompassing diverse services offered within their establishments. These services typically span haircuts, skincare treatments, nail services, and the sale of retail products”.

Participant 9 also argued that,

“In essence, the total income generation metric serves as a cornerstone for financial evaluation within beauty salons. It not only offers a quantitative snapshot of the revenue streams derived from various services but also delves into the cost considerations, enabling a comprehensive analysis of the financial viability of each service category”.

Therefore, as salons continue to navigate the complexities of the industry, the adoption and refinement of key performance indicators such as these become indispensable tools for ensuring continued financial health and prosperity.

- Service quality and client satisfaction

The maintenance of service quality and client satisfaction was also noted by the participants as key performance metrics currently utilised by beauty salons for assessing and monitoring their operational performance. Thus, maintaining high-quality services and products is the salon's top priority, and the metrics relating to customer feedback and regular reviews help assess service quality. In this regard, Participant 2 indicated that

“In the field of beauty salons, adhering to high-quality services and products is the primary goal. To measure and ensure this is achieved, salons utilize specific metrics centered around customer feedback and routine audits”.

Participant 5 also highlighted that,

“Customer feedback obtained through various channels such as surveys or direct interactions is an important indicator of service quality. By actively seeking and analysing feedback, salons can gain insights into customer perceptions, preferences, and areas for improvement”.

Participant 8 also stated,

“Regular audits are another key indicator in assessing the quality of a beauty salon’s services. These audits involve the systematic review and assessment of all aspects of service delivery to ensure compliance with established standards and protocols.”

Participant 9 argued that,

“The goal of emphasizing service quality metrics is to increase customer satisfaction and foster loyalty. When customers experience consistently high-quality service, their satisfaction increases, resulting in a positive perception of the salon”.

Therefore, as expressed by participants, the overall goal goes beyond mere performance metrics; it is aimed at increasing customer satisfaction, fostering loyalty, and positioning salons for continued success in a highly competitive industry.

4.1.2.2 Integration of technological advancements and their influence on performance measurement practices

Objective Two: To investigate the integration of technological advancements and their influence on performance measurement practices in South African beauty salons.

The integration of technological advancements significantly influences performance measurement practices in beauty salons. Technology has revolutionized various aspects of salon operations, enhancing efficiency, customer engagement, and the ability to track and improve performance. In this regard, the study ascertained the integration of technological advancements and their influence on performance measurement practices in Soweto beauty salons.

- Digital booking and appointment systems

These systems enable salons to measure appointment occupancy rates and optimise staff and resource allocation based on booking trends. Similarly, Participant 3 opined the following:

“Beauty salons leverage social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and Pinterest to showcase their work, share beauty tips, and connect with their target audience. They create visually appealing content, including images and videos of their services, to attract and engage potential clients”.

Participant 6 also indicated,

“Social media tools facilitate direct interaction with clients. Salons respond to comments, messages, and reviews, creating a sense of community. Engaging content, such as polls, Q&A sessions, and live videos, encourages active participation and builds stronger relationships with customers”.

Participant 8 also highlighted that:

“Many beauty salons collaborate with influencers and beauty bloggers to reach a wider audience. Social media analytics tools assist in identifying influencers whose followers align with the salon's target demographic. These partnerships can significantly boost brand visibility”.

The views elicited from the participants highlighted the critical role of digital booking and appointment systems in shaping the technologically progressive landscape of beauty salons in Soweto.

- Digital marketing analytics and social media tools

The participants acknowledged the importance of digital marketing analytics and social media tools for integrating technological advancements and influencing performance measurement practices in Soweto beauty salons.

Participant 1 also posited that,

“The digital marketing analytics and social media tools enable online review platforms and customer feedback to provide insights into customer satisfaction and areas for improvement, supporting efforts to improve reputation and service quality”.

Participant 4 noted,

“The platforms such as Pinterest is ideal for creating boards with hairstyle ideas, beauty tips, and product recommendations. These tools aid in creating eye-catching graphics and visuals for social media posts and advertisements”.

Participant 10 stated,

“There are social media analytics which provide data on post engagement, audience demographics, and the performance of paid advertisements. This offers impressions and audience growth”.

Therefore, the multifaceted impact of digital marketing analytics and social media tools on performance measurement is instrumental for strategic decision-making and continued success in the dynamic environment in which beauty salons operate.

4.1.2.3 Optimise their operational performance using tailored performance measurements

Objective Three: To provide recommendations for beauty salon practitioners in South Africa to optimise their operational performance using tailored performance measurements.

To optimise operational performance in beauty salons in South Africa, practitioners can consider implementing tailored performance measurements. In this regard, the study provided interventions for beauty salon practitioners in South Africa to optimise their operational performance using tailored performance measurements.

- Comprehensive Total Income Metrics

The participants highlighted that beauty salons industries must utilize comprehensive total income metrics to optimize their operational performance using tailored performance measurements. Participant 4 emphasised the importance of a comprehensive gross revenue metric, stating:

“We conduct a detailed analysis of gross revenue, breaking down each service provided. This approach helps us identify the most profitable services and guides us pricing strategy. It’s not just about overall revenue; it’s about understanding the dynamics of each service’s contribution to total revenue.”

Participant 10 supported this idea and stated:

“A detailed analysis of total revenue is critical. By understanding the performance of each service, we can make informed decisions on pricing and resource allocation. It provides an overview of our revenue streams detailed view and help us optimize our operational performance.”

Therefore, this collective stance underscores the need for salons to employ tailored performance measures based on a detailed understanding of their revenue dynamics to successfully navigate the industry landscape and achieve ongoing operational excellence.

- Emphasize Client Satisfaction Metrics:

Most of the participants affirmed that the beauty industry in Soweto must emphasize client satisfaction metrics to optimise operational performance using tailored performance measurements. This entails regularly collecting client feedback through surveys, reviews, or direct communication. Against that background, the organization will use this information to measure and improve service quality, ensuring high levels of client satisfaction and loyalty. Participant 4 emphasised the importance of prioritizing customer satisfaction metrics, stating the following:

“Collecting customer feedback on a regular basis is critical. Through surveys, comments, or direct communication, we can gather valuable insights. This information helps measure and improve service quality and ultimately ensure high-quality service, customer satisfaction and fostering loyalty.

Participant 6 echoed this sentiment, stating:

“We actively engage with customers to get their feedback. Surveys and direct communication help us measure how well we meet their expectations. It’s not just about collecting data; it’s about using it to continuously improve service quality and maintain high levels of customer satisfaction and loyalty.”

In essence, the collective view confirms that customized performance measurements based on customer satisfaction indicators provide Soweto’s beauty salons with a pathway to not only meet but also exceed customer expectations, ensuring continued success and loyalty in a highly competitive industry.

4.2 Quantitative data analysis

This section presents and discusses the results from the quantitative data used in the study since a mixed methodology approach was chosen for the study.

4.2.1 Response rate

A total of 60 questionnaires were circulated to the participants, 55 of which were responded to, giving a response rate of 92%. This response rate is considered enough to proceed with the data analysis according to Mugenda and Mugenda (2013). Therefore, the study proceeded with data analysis.

4.2.2 Reliability and validity

The study used the Cronbach’s alpha to check for reliability of the instrument, with a greater focus on internal consistency. The results obtained are given in Table 1.

Table 1: Reliability test results

Variable	Number of items	Cronbach's Alpha	Internal consistency
Key performance metrics currently utilised by beauty salons In South Africa	5	0.923	Excellent
The integration of technological advancements and their influence on performance measurement practices in South African beauty salons	5	0.951	Excellent
Recommendations for beauty salon practitioners in South Africa to optimise their operational performance using tailored performance measurements	5	0.938	Excellent
Overall	15	0.937	Excellent

The results indicate that all the variable constructs had a Cronbach's alpha above 0.9, indicating excellent internal consistency, which means that the research instrument is trustworthy, as are the results obtained. The main results of the study are presented in line with the research objectives.

4.2.3 Key performance metrics for assessing and monitoring operational performance

The first objective of the study was to identify the key performance metrics currently utilised by beauty salons in South Africa for assessing and monitoring their operational performance. The questionnaire consisted of a number of metrics currently utilised by beauty salons in South Africa for assessing and monitoring; these metrics are mainly used in the literature, and the participants had to indicate the extent to which they agreed with the given assessment statement. Table 4.2 summarises the results.

Table 2: Performance metrics used for beauty salons.

	Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD	Total
1.	Customer Satisfaction	70.9%	21.8%	7.3%	0.0%	0.0%	100%
2.	Financial Performance	60.0%	30.9%	0.0%	9.1%	0.0%	100%
3.	Employee Productivity	58.1%	20.0%	7.3%	7.3%	7.3%	100%
4.	Inventory Management	40.08%	9.1%	12.7%	18.2%	20.0%	100%
5.	Marketing Effectiveness	54.5.3%	30.9%	14.6%	0.0%	0.0%	100%

The results shown in Table 2 indicate that the most commonly used matrix used was customer satisfaction since approximately 71% of the participants strongly agreed with the statement supported by approximately 21.8% who agreed with the statement.

These results are in tandem with the findings of Moda and King (2019), who argued that customer satisfaction is one of the key performance indicators in beauty salons since the nature of the customers in the industry is highly valued.

4.2.4 Technological advancements and performance measurement practices

The second objective of the study was to investigate the integration of technological advancements and their influence on performance measurement practices in South African beauty salons. The questionnaire was also developed based on the empirical literature that identified the role of technological advancement in influencing performance measurement. The results obtained are given in Table 3.

Table 3: Influence of technological advancement on performance measures

	Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD	Total
1	Technology has enhanced the accuracy and reliability of our performance metrics.	14.5%	29.1%	9.1%	16.4.0%	29.1%	100%
2	Our beauty salon utilises advanced technology for customer relationship management, leading to better performance insights.	80.0%	14.5%	5.5%	0.0%	0.0%	100%
3	The use of technology has improved the overall efficiency of performance measurement in our beauty salon.	32.7%	38.2%	0.0%	20.0%	9.1%	100%
4	The integration of technology has positively influenced our ability to track and analyse financial performance.	74.5%	16.4%	0.0%	9.1%	0.0%	100%
5	Technology has played a significant role in improving our beauty salon's ability to adapt to changing market trends and customer preferences.	25.4%	27.3%	9.1%	18.2%	20.0%	100%

The results given in Table 3 indicate that the most agreed-upon assessment statement was that beauty salon utilises advanced technology for CRM, leading to better performance insights; 80.0% of the participants strongly agreed, while 14.5% agreed with the statement.

These results are consistent with the empirical literature, where the studies by Kumar and Kushwaha (2018), Madichie et al., 2019, and Mehmood (2021) also found similar results in terms of how advancement in technology improves performance measures.

4.2.5 Recommendations for optimising operational performance

The study also aimed to provide recommendations for beauty salon practitioners in South Africa to optimise their operational performance using tailored performance measurements. A set of possible methods that can be adopted were presented to the participants, who subsequently expressed the extent to which they agreed with the statements. The results are given in Table 4

Table 4: Ways to *optimise* operational performance

	Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD	Total
1	Implementing a Customer Feedback System to Enhance Service Quality	70.1%	9.1%	9.1%	0.0%	11.7%	100%
2	Embracing Technological Solutions for Efficient Appointment Scheduling and Management	27.3%	21.8%	20.0%	10.9%	20.0%	100%
3	Investing in Continuous Staff Training and Development Programmes	67.3%	21.8%	9.1%	1.8%	0.0%	100%
4	Utilizing Advanced Inventory Management Systems to Minimize Waste and Improve Accuracy	34.5%	20.0%	10.6%	17.0%	34.0%	100%
5.	Enhancing Marketing Strategies through Increased Online Presence and Social Media Engagement	60.0%	9.1%	12.7%	9.10%	9.1%	100%

The results presented in Table 4 show that the most suggested way to optimise performance is through implementing a customer feedback system to enhance service quality, as shown by 70.1% of the participants who strongly agreed, supported by 9.1% who agreed with the statement.

These results are supported by the literature in which Mekonnen (2022) agreed that valuing the feedback given by customers is central to the performance of businesses. This is because considering feedback allows the business to offer services that meet the needs of the customers, and by doing so,

more Therefore, the results imply that salons need to perform better in all dimensions and need to use several digital social media platforms to receive feedback from clients so that they can improve their services.

4.3 Discussion of findings

The findings of the study are triangulated, in line with the mixed methods research approach, and discussed on how they converge or diverge in addressing the research objectives.

4.3.5 Key performance metrics currently utilised by beauty salons

The study's qualitative and quantitative findings offer a comprehensive perspective on key performance metrics and recommendations for beauty salons in South Africa. Qualitatively, the research identifies total income generation and service quality/client satisfaction as crucial metrics. Total income generation involves a nuanced analysis of revenue from diverse services, providing insight into financial viability, as outlined by participants such as Participants 1, 4, and 9. Service quality/client satisfaction metrics, emphasised by Participants 2, 5, 8, and 9, focus on customer feedback and routine audits to ensure high-quality services, foster loyalty, and enhance customer satisfaction. Quantitatively, the study suggested optimizing operational performance through strategies such as implementing a customer feedback system (70.1% strongly agreed, 9.1% agreed) and enhancing marketing through increased online presence (60.0% strongly agreed, 9.1% agreed). Agreement is also expressed for investing in staff training (67.3% strongly agreed, 21.8% agreed), although a lower consensus exists for advanced inventory management and technological solutions for scheduling. Despite these variations, both qualitative and quantitative findings underscore the importance of customer feedback, social media engagement, and technology in shaping performance measurement practices for beauty salons, offering a holistic understanding for industry practitioners.

4.3.6 Technological advancements and performance measurement practices

The triangulation of findings from both qualitative and quantitative studies on the integration of technological advancements in South African beauty salons reveals points of convergence and divergence. Qualitatively, participants emphasised the transformative impact of digital booking and appointment systems, citing streamlined operations, enhancing appointment rate tracking, and optimised staff allocation. Additionally, the quantitative results strongly support (80.0%) the utilisation of advanced technology for CRM and its positive influence on performance insights. However, while both studies affirm the positive influence of technology on beauty salon performance, the nuances in participant perspectives and the varying emphases on specific technological aspects highlight the complexity of this integration. The results collectively suggest that leveraging

technology for customer management and financial tracking is crucial, but the degree of impact on specific performance metrics may vary based on contextual factors and individual experiences within the beauty salon industry.

4.3.7 Optimise Their Operational Performance Using Tailored Performance Measurements

The utilisation of technology, specifically digital platforms and systems, emerges as a common thread in recommendations, whether through implementing customer feedback systems, enhancing online presence and social media engagement, or embracing technological solutions for appointment scheduling and management. The importance of staff training and development is recognised in both studies, highlighting the need for continuous improvement in the skills and capabilities of salon personnel. However, there are points of divergence, with the first study focusing on total income metrics and client satisfaction as primary interventions and the second study presenting a broader set of recommendations, including inventory management and marketing strategies. Despite these differences, both studies underscore the transformative impact of technology on performance measurement practices, emphasising its role in customer engagement, feedback collection, and marketing analysis within the beauty salon industry.

4.4 Findings from the study

The findings were derived from a literature review and from the primary study.

4.4.5 Findings from the primary study

The primary study addressed the research objectives with inferences elicited from both quantitative and qualitative studies.

4.4.5.1 Objective Three: To identify the key performance metrics currently utilised by beauty salons in South Africa for assessing and monitoring their operational performance.

The primary study addressed the first objective regarding the key performance metrics currently utilised by beauty salons in South Africa for assessing and monitoring their operational performance. Qualitatively, total income generation and service quality/client satisfaction emerge as pivotal metrics, delving into nuanced aspects of financial viability and customer-centric practices. The study highlights participants' perspectives, such as those from Participants 1, 4, and 9, emphasising the significance of diverse revenue streams. Additionally, insights from Participants 2, 5, 8, and 9 underscore the importance of customer feedback and audits for ensuring service quality, loyalty, and overall satisfaction. Quantitatively, strategies for optimizing operational performance, including a customer feedback system and enhanced online presence, receive strong agreement. The findings also

suggest a consensus on investing in staff training, albeit with varied levels of agreement on advanced inventory management and technological solutions.

4.4.5.2 Objective Two: To investigate the integration of technological advancements and their influence on performance measurement practices in South African beauty salons.

The primary study addressed the second research objective regarding the integration of technological advancements and their influence on performance measurement practices in South African beauty salons. Qualitatively, participants underscore the transformative impact of digital booking and appointment systems, emphasising streamlined operations, enhanced appointment rate tracking, and optimised staff allocation. The quantitative results further strengthen these insights, indicating a substantial consensus (80.0%) on the effective use of advanced technology for customer relationship management and its positive influence on performance insights. While both strands of the related research confirm the positive impact of technology on beauty salon performance, the variations in participant perspectives and the diverse emphases on specific technological aspects highlight the intricate nature of this integration.

4.4.5.3 Objective Three: To provide recommendations for beauty salon practitioners in South Africa to optimise their operational performance using tailored performance measurements.

The primary study addressed the third research objective regarding the recommendations for beauty salon practitioners in South Africa to optimise their operational performance using tailored performance measurements. The participants held that optimizing operational performance in South African beauty salons can be achieved through tailored performance measurements. The use of technology, particularly digital platforms and systems, emerges as a common recommendation in both studies, encompassing customer feedback systems, online presence and social media engagement, and technological solutions for appointment scheduling and management. Staff training and development are also recognised as important in both studies, emphasising the continuous enhancement of salon personnel's skills and capabilities.

4.5 Conclusions

The primary goal of the study was to comprehensively explore performance measurements within the context of the South African beauty salon industry, with the objective of providing insights and recommendations that will facilitate the enhancement of beauty salon performance in South Africa.

The study concluded that, in South Africa, to optimise their operational performance, beauty salons must have tailored performance measurements. The adoption of technology, such as digital platforms and systems, is highlighted as a key strategy, including the implementation of customer feedback systems, strengthening online presence and social media engagement, and utilizing technological solutions for appointment scheduling and management. While there have been variations in the specific recommendations, they all underscore the transformative impact of technology on performance measurement practices, particularly in customer engagement, feedback collection, and marketing analysis within the beauty salon industry. By implementing these recommendations, beauty salon practitioners in South Africa can enhance their operational performance and ultimately achieve greater success.

4.6 Recommendations for the study

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are proposed to optimise the operational performance of beauty salons in South Africa:

4.6.5 Implement tailored performance measurements

Beauty salons should develop and utilize performance metrics that align with their specific goals and objectives. This includes measuring total income generation and monitoring service quality/client satisfaction as crucial metrics. By customizing performance measurements to their unique needs, salons can obtain a comprehensive understanding of their operational performance.

4.6.6 Embrace technological advancements

Beauty salons should embrace technology to enhance their performance measurement practices. This includes implementing customer feedback systems to gather valuable insights and feedback, enhancing their online presence and social media engagement to attract and engage customers, and utilizing technological solutions for appointment scheduling and management. By leveraging technology, salons can streamline operations, improve customer management, and optimise staff allocation.

4.6.7 5.4.3 Investing in staff training and development

Continuous training and development of salon personnel play vital roles in optimizing operational performance. Salons should prioritize staff training to enhance their skills and capabilities, ensuring that they are equipped to deliver high-quality services and meet customer expectations. By investing in their staff, salons can improve service quality, customer satisfaction, and overall operational performance.

4.6.8 5.4.4 Consider inventory management

The study suggested that beauty salons should pay attention to inventory management as a key aspect of operational performance. By implementing effective inventory management strategies, salons can minimise waste, optimise stock levels, and improve cost efficiency.

4.6.9 Staying up to date with industry trends

Beauty salons should stay informed about industry trends and best practices. This includes keeping up with technological advancements, marketing strategies, and customer preferences. By remaining relevant and adapting to changing trends, salons can remain competitive and continuously improve their operational performance.

4.7 Managerial implications

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, management should consider the following factors long-term impact of technology, employee perspectives including staff training and development, further research can delve deeper into the perspectives and experiences of salon employees. By implementing the suggested areas of recommendations Beauty salons could improve their position in the sector.

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