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**ENGLISH LANGUAGE CENTRE SERVICE CLIMATE
AND CLIENT SATISFACTION
An Investigation of New Zealand
English Language Centres
Offering TESOL Courses**

**A thesis presented in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in
Management
at Massey University, Palmerston North and Wellington,
New Zealand**

John Walker

2003



TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to state that the research carried out for my Doctoral thesis entitled “English Language Centre Service Climate and Client Satisfaction” in the Department of Management & Enterprise Development, Massey University, Wellington, New Zealand is all my own work.

This is also to certify that the thesis material has not been used for any other degree.

Candidate

John Walker

Date

15 December, 2003



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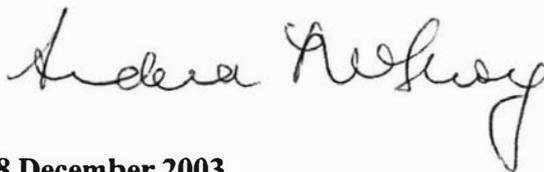
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Date

8 December 2003

ABSTRACT

The teaching of English to speakers of other languages (TESOL) conducted in English language centres (ELCs) is a major service industry in New Zealand, earning several hundred million dollars annually. Despite its increasing importance to the New Zealand economy, however, little is known about management aspects of TESOL programmes in ELCs, and particularly the nature of TESOL as a service. The research described here addressed these issues by exploring links between the service climate of ELCs in New Zealand and levels of client satisfaction with ELC service.

Focus groups of ELC staff and clients were set up to provide insights into staff perceptions of service climate and client perceptions of service provision. The data obtained was content-analysed and the findings used to construct two survey instruments. A service climate questionnaire was used to survey staff in 30 New Zealand ELCs on their perceptions of the service climate in their institutions. A satisfaction survey was used to survey clients in the same 30 ELCs on their satisfaction levels with the service provided. The surveys returned 275 usable staff responses and 1684 usable client responses. The survey data was subjected to statistical analysis.

The general conclusions of the study are that ELC staff perceive a positive service climate in New Zealand ELCs; that ELC clients are, overall, satisfied but not delighted with the service they receive; and that the more positive ELC staff perceive the service climate to be, the greater the levels of client satisfaction with ELC service.

A number of implications for management theory, for policy and for practice are stated. These include implications in the following areas: research practices and techniques used to investigate climate and client satisfaction; research into the management of TESOL in ELCs; policy on mandatory national qualifications for New Zealand ESOL teachers in ELCs; levels of ELC manager performance in traditional functional areas such as strategy, organisation and quality control; desirable staff professional and technical skills for the creation of client satisfaction; standards of teacher resources, facilities and equipment in ELCS ; and the effectiveness of ELC-client communication.

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Chapter One
INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH

The establishment of the British Empire in the 18th and 19th centuries and the rise of the USA as a global superpower in the 20th century have led to one of the major phenomena of the twentieth century, namely the development of English as an international language. English has become the preferred language for international communications, principally in the areas of trade and commerce, politics, tourism, education and academia, as well as sport and entertainment. The spread of the internet has seen English being used as the premier language of online communication. In a world where "econo-technical superiority" counts most, English is "the real powerhouse... It makes the world go round" (Fishman, 1992, p.23).

A command of English among non-native speakers is therefore seen as highly desirable, conferring advantages in terms of employability, educational achievement, mobility, and economic and social status. Demand for English language tuition therefore rose steadily throughout the second half of the twentieth century. Demand continues to be fuelled by English language entry requirements for overseas students hoping to study at Western universities and by events such as the reorientation of the economies of former soviet states to a market-orientated model.

A major response to this increasing demand for English language proficiency has been the development of TESOL (Teaching of English to Speakers of Other Languages) as a major international educational service industry. The development and teaching of ESOL programmes is a primary undertaking of English language centres (ELCs). These are either privately-owned, or are integrated into larger institutions such as universities or government-sponsored bodies like the British Council and cater to a paying, non-native speaker, student clientele.

Despite a reluctance on the part of some OECD countries to further liberalise trade in educational services (Larsen, Martin, & Morris, 2003), TESOL has acquired the status of a major industry sector worldwide. ELCs are active to varying degrees in virtually every country in the world including Australia and New Zealand. For instance, 700,000 overseas students visit Britain annually to learn English, spending over £1 billion (\$NZ3.1 billion, at January 2003 value) (ARELS, n.d.). The total economic impact of enrolments at Australian ELICOS (English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students) institutions in 2001 was estimated to be \$A710 million (\$NZ771 million at January 2003 value) (English Australia, 2002). Although a minnow by comparison, the New Zealand TESOL sector was responsible for \$245m in foreign exchange earnings in the year 2001 (Education New Zealand, 2002). The TESOL industry is therefore a modest but significant contributor to the New Zealand economy.

Since its emergence as a discipline over the past 40 years or so, TESOL has been the subject of prodigious amounts of academic research worldwide, the vast majority of which has addressed the area of ESOL teaching methodology or related linguistic issues. Management aspects of TESOL, however, have been, in comparison, largely ignored by researchers. Now, influenced perhaps by the increasing application of business style management and marketing models to the administration of educational programmes (Barlow, 1994; Greenwood & Gaunt, 1994), this situation is slowly changing. Some teacher organisations have TESOL management special interest groups and a few university courses in the United States and Britain offer TESOL management electives. Several textbooks on TESOL management have appeared (Impey & Underhill, 1994; Pennington, 1991; White, Martin, Stimson, & Hodge, 1991), as well as journal articles looking at TESOL from a management perspective (Crichton, 1994; Stoller & Christison, 1994; Waites & Wild, 1992; Walker, 1997, 1998). Nevertheless, in terms of empirical research, the management of TESOL, and particularly the management of ELCs offering TESOL programmes to paying clients, remains by and large a *tabula rasa*.

Contemporary with the emergence of TESOL, the concepts of *services management* (McDowell, 1953; Parker, 1958; Rathmell, 1966; Regan, 1963) and *climate* within organisations (Argyris, 1958; Lewin, 1936, 1951; Lewin, Lippit, & White, 1939; Pace & Stern, 1958) have occupied management researchers. Organisations offering services (as opposed, for instance, to manufacturing organisations) were increasingly seen as entities in their own right and a typology of classic criteria (e.g. intangibility, heterogeneity, perishability) was developed in an attempt to describe and understand the nature of their operations (Gronroos, 1990). While perhaps not traditionally regarded as stereotypical service organisations, ELCs actually fit neatly within the classical services framework and ELC / TESOL management is therefore, essentially, services management in a context which is a unique blend of the commercial, educational, and professional. *Climate* researchers are interested in the internal environment of organisations (Tagiuri, 1968), how the nature of that environment influences the behaviour of members of the organization, and thus how it impacts on other organisational variables such as *structure* or *effectiveness* (James & James, 1989; Zohar, 1980).

The association of the two concepts *service* and *climate* is evident in the work of researchers who examine the internal environment of service organizations as perceived by employees – i.e. *service climate* – with a view to improving our comprehension of processes and outcomes (e.g. Schneider, 1980, 1990). Within service climate research, a specific research strand examines the links between service climate and the key outcome of *customer satisfaction* with the service (e.g. Johnson, 1996; Schneider, 1980; Wiley, 1991; Yagil & Gal, 2002).

This study combines the concepts of *service*, *climate* and *client satisfaction* in an exploration of the links between the service climate of ELCs in New Zealand and the levels of satisfaction of ELC clients with ELC service.

1.2 RESEARCH PROBLEM AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The problem addressed in this research project can be simply stated:

Nothing is known about English language centre service climate in New Zealand or about levels of client satisfaction with English language centre service in New Zealand.

The problem raises questions in three areas:

1. What kind of service climate do staff perceive exists in New Zealand ELCs?
2. How satisfied are clients with the service they purchase from ELCs?
3. Is there a link between the service climate of ELCs and levels of client satisfaction with ELC service?

The research concludes that:

1. ELC staff perceive a positive service climate in New Zealand ELCs.
2. ELC clients are, overall, satisfied but not delighted with ELC service.
3. There is a link between service climate and client satisfaction in ELCs; namely, the more positive the service climate, the greater the levels of client satisfaction with the service.

The specific research questions are:

1. *What are the key elements of service climate in New Zealand ELCs?*
2. *What criteria do clients use to evaluate the service of New Zealand ELCs?*
3. *What kind of service climate do staff perceive exists in New Zealand ELCs?*
4. *How satisfied are clients with the service provided by New Zealand ELCs?*
5. *Is there a link between the service climate of New Zealand ELCs and levels of client satisfaction with New Zealand ELC service?*

1.3. JUSTIFICATION FOR THE RESEARCH

Justification for the research is provided in the following sub-sections.

1.3.1 Neglect of a sector significant to the national economy

The marketing of education by New Zealand to overseas clients is rapidly becoming a major foreign exchange earner for the country. Almost 53,000 overseas students studied in New Zealand in 2001, with an estimated foreign exchange value to the country of over \$NZ1.1 billion (Education New Zealand, 2002), shared by a number of educational institution types (Figure 1.1).

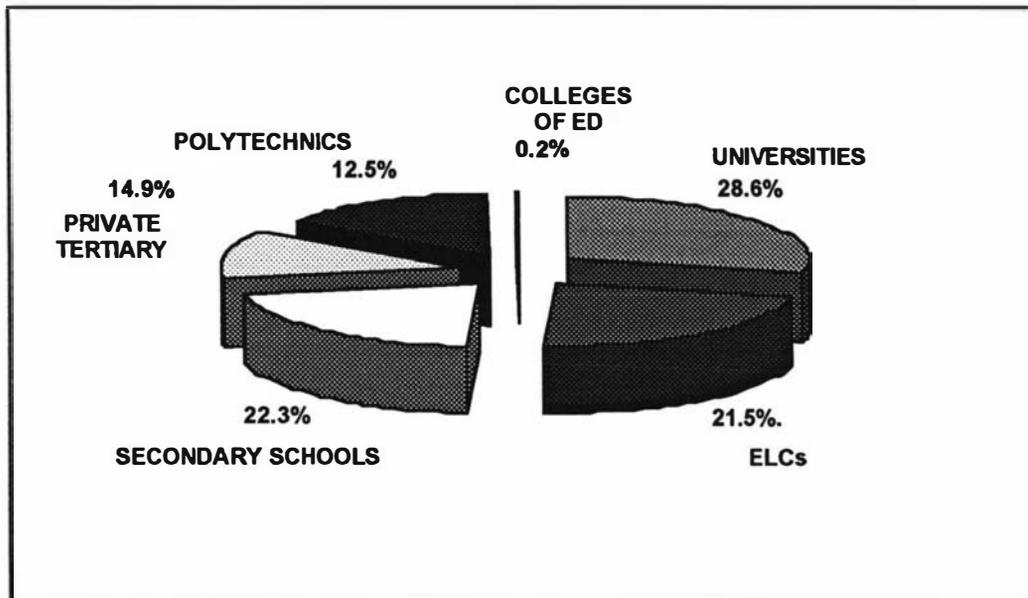


Figure 1.1. Distribution of foreign exchange earnings from overseas students among educational institutions in New Zealand, 2001

The commercial TESOL sector is a significant player within this industry and has enjoyed rapid growth in recent years. In 2000, New Zealand ELCs are estimated to have generated some \$170 million in foreign exchange (Education New Zealand, 2001) from some 18,000 overseas students. Only one year later, in 2001, foreign exchange income had increased by 44% to \$245 million and student numbers had shot up by 44% to over 26,000. In 2001, therefore, ELCs

accounted for over one-fifth of the total earnings from the sale of education to overseas students (Education New Zealand, 2002) and its clientele made up 50% of the total overseas student population in New Zealand. Much of this increase is accounted for by the rapid increase in students from the People's Republic of China (P.R. China) and the Republic of Korea (also known as *South Korea*, hereinafter referred to as *Korea*) but other traditional source markets demonstrated sizeable increases with the possible exception of Japan (Figure 1.2).

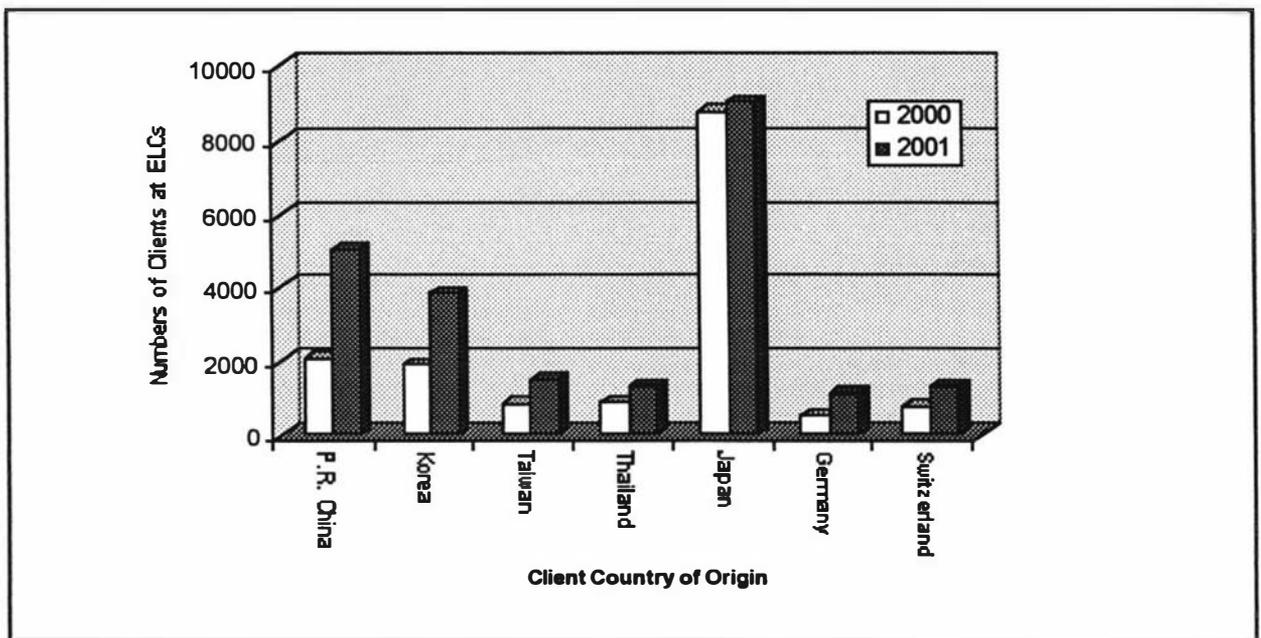


Figure 1.2. Increase in ELC client numbers in New Zealand, 2000-2001

Furthermore, many overseas students engage in peripheral tourism and are themselves visited by friends and family who generate additional income for the tourism and hospitality sectors. ELC clients may stay on in the country and participate in tertiary education for a number of years, thus bringing in even more income. The potential for further direct and indirect foreign exchange earnings for New Zealand is therefore considerable.

This potential has been recognised by the New Zealand International Education Marketing Network, which has overseen a re-branding of New Zealand as a

premier education destination for overseas students. *The new world class - educated in New Zealand* is the slogan that accompanies the brand image, which promotes seven key qualities of New Zealand such as a British-based education system, high quality living conditions and outstanding recreation opportunities, set within a wonderful natural environment. Together, these features are believed to contribute to a unique study destination and a rounded education experience for international students (Language Travel Magazine, 2001b). ELCs are an important element of this vision. Apart from global client participation and earnings data, however, we know little or nothing about how they operate in management terms. Clearly, research is needed that can explore the management of ELCs, identify issues, and contribute to increasing our knowledge of a key national industry sector, as well as to enhancing the effectiveness of the centres themselves.

1.3.2 TESOL management as an under-researched area

Pennington's (1991) comment that little research had been conducted to date in TESOL management, which is a "generally neglected area" (p. 23), has lost little of its impact over the years. Despite an increase in interest, the management of TESOL programmes in ELCs continues to be an enormously under-researched area in academic terms. Although occasional articles and university papers appear on aspects of English language programme management, much of this material merely applies existing models but does not test them empirically. There has been no sign of the development of a credible corpus of empirical research in the mainstream management literature. The few serious, empirical studies into TESOL management (Matthies, 1984; Pennington, 1994; Pennington & Ho, 1995; Pennington & Riley, 1991a, 1991b; Pennington & Xiao, 1990; Reasor, 1981), although pioneering in nature, have not yet led to the emergence of any major themes, controversies, or management models.

Client satisfaction with ELC service, a major theme of this report, is a particularly under-researched area. Individual ELCs may regularly monitor client satisfaction through feedback surveys, but these are exclusively for

internal consumption and neither the methodology, nor the analysis of data, nor the findings, are likely to be subjected to academic scrutiny. This represents a major deficiency which needs to be rectified.

The fact that ELCs are actually service operations has also been ignored. With few exceptions (Walker, 1998, 2000), there has been no attempt to explain and interpret the management of TESOL in terms of *services* management theory. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, no research project of the nature of that described here has been reported in the literature. Given the increasing significance of the TESOL industry not only in New Zealand but worldwide, a study of the management of TESOL in ELCs, particularly within a service context, is long overdue.

1.3.3 Significance of the TESOL industry to international relations

Much has been made of the outcomes of the Colombo Plan which, from the 1950's, offered Third World students scholarships to study in Commonwealth countries such as New Zealand (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2001). Over the years, numbers of these students have gone on to become influential leaders in their own countries and their special bond with New Zealand has benefited bilateral relations.

In the same way, the ability of the TESOL industry to contribute to a positive experience for its clients could have incalculable future benefits for New Zealand, particularly as the bulk of clients are from Asian countries which constitute major export partners (Figure 1.3, next page). Research is therefore indicated that can contribute to increased ELC effectiveness, thus helping to promote such a positive experience for clients.

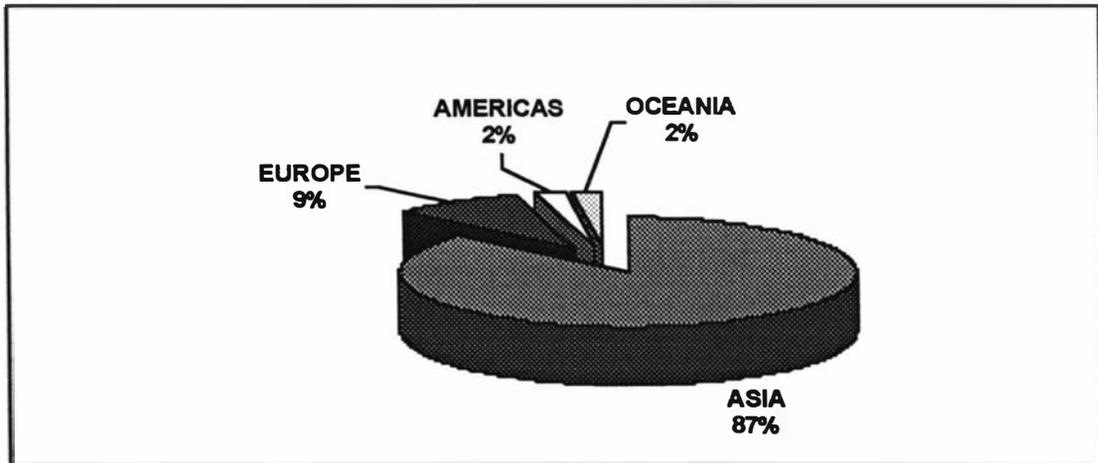


Figure 1.3. Distribution of identifiable overseas student population in New Zealand 2001, based on data from Education New Zealand (2002)

1.3.4 Poor public perception of English language centres

Despite its growing economic significance, the TESOL industry does not enjoy a particularly positive image in the New Zealand media. Whereas other New Zealand industry sectors such as information technology, agriculture, sport and tourism are regularly held up as models of innovation and business success, the New Zealand TESOL industry seems beset with negative publicity. News stories have reported on racial confrontation, extortion, sexual abuse, student abortion and even manslaughter and murder within the industry (e.g. Haines, 2002; Henderson, 2002; Richardson, 2003). The spectacular collapse of two major English language providers in late 2003 occurred against a background of complaints from Chinese authorities about standards in New Zealand ELCs, the hurried visit of the New Zealand Education Minister to China, and a slump in overseas student numbers (Johnston, O'Sullivan, & NZPA, 2003).

Such events do little to enhance the public's perception of the industry, despite an apparent tightening up of ELC accreditation standards through the advent of the NZQA and the efforts of TESOL industry organizations to promote quality assurance. This is unfortunate, since, at least from an anecdotal perspective, there are ELCs that appear to be highly professional operations. There is

therefore a need for hard data which, at the very least, might go some way towards clarifying the profile and status of the TESOL sector.

1.3.5 Need for studies into service climate

While substantial numbers of studies researching climate in organisations have been reported in the literature, the number of studies specifically looking at service climates has been minimal and these have been, with only a few exceptions, driven by one researcher (B. Schneider). The existing service climate studies have focused on banks and financial institutions (e.g. Johnson, 1996; Parkington & Schneider, 1979; Schneider, 1980; Schneider & Bowen, 1985; Schneider, Parkington, & Buxton, 1980; Schneider, Wheeler, & Cox, 1992), and only a handful of other service types have come under the scrutiny of service climate researchers (e.g. Baker & Fesenmaier, 1997; Borucki & Burke, 1999). More varied research is therefore needed in order to advance our understanding of climate within service operations.

1.4 METHODOLOGY

The study encompassed a number of educational, management and cross-cultural themes, adapting conventional business and social research methods to the unique educational context. It used the following methodology:

■ *Exploratory Research*

- Review of issues, which identifies major themes and issues within the areas of services management theory and climate theory.

■ *Qualitative Research*

- Focus group interviews with groups of ELC clients. These were conducted in five ELCs located in a number of New Zealand towns and cities.
- Focus group interviews with non-management ELC staff. These were conducted in five ELCs located in a number of New Zealand towns and cities.

■ *Quantitative Research*

- A survey of client satisfaction with ELC service. This major instrument was based largely on the findings from the client focus groups, had a multilingual format, and was used to measure client satisfaction with the service of 30 ELCs throughout the country, using a sample of 1684 clients.
- An ELC service climate survey for ELC staff. The questionnaire was based largely on the findings from the staff focus groups and was completed by 275 non-management staff in the same 30 ELCs.
- Statistical analysis of survey data using descriptive and inferential statistics, including Cronbach's Alpha, analysis of variance, and t-tests.

1.5 STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

Chapter 1: Introduction

An overview of the research project is presented. This includes the background to the problem, the research problem and research questions, the justification for the research, a brief overview of the methodology, definitions and terminology, as well as broad delimitations and assumptions.

Chapter 2: Review of Issues

This chapter examines the fundamental concepts for the project, namely the notion of *service* in ELC-based TESOL operations, *climate* in organisations and *client satisfaction*. The current status of TESOL is discussed. The origins and development of the *services* concept are delineated, including service issues, criteria and classification. It is argued that ELCs offering TESOL programmes meet all the classical service criteria and fit comfortably within the conceptual framework of service organisations. The origins and development of the *climate* concept within organization and management research are outlined. Various approaches to the conceptualisation of climate are discussed along with measurement issues. The specific area of *service climate* is examined. *Client satisfaction* is conceptualised and discussed in relation to ELC service.

Chapter 3: Methodology

A detailed discussion of the methodology used in the study is presented along with justification for its use. A classical combination of qualitative and quantitative research underpinned the investigation. Five client focus groups and five non-management staff focus groups were conducted in eight ELCs throughout New Zealand in order to identify key issues within the areas of service climate and client perceptions of ELC service. Content analysis was used to refine the issues, which were developed into scale items for two survey instruments. A service climate survey was used to obtain data on non-management staff perceptions of the service climate within individual ELCs. A client survey was used to obtain data on client satisfaction with the service of

individual ELCs. Each of the surveys was conducted in 30 New Zealand ELCs. The client data was collected personally by the researcher. Altogether, 1,684 client responses and 275 staff responses were obtained. The data was subjected to analysis using the SPSS software package.

Chapter 4 : Analysis of Qualitative Data

The findings from the two sets of ELC focus groups and the two surveys are subjected to detailed analysis. The findings from the content analysis of the focus group discussion are presented in the form of general concept areas and specific issues, which are ranked in order of frequency. Key themes are identified.

Chapter 5: Analysis of Quantitative Data

The findings from the analysis of the ELC service climate survey data and the ELC client satisfaction survey data are presented in descriptive and inferential form. The service climate data and the satisfaction data are subjected to combined statistical analysis in order to examine a possible link between the two.

Chapter 6: Conclusions and Implications

Conclusions are drawn about ELC service climate and ELC client satisfaction from the data presented in the previous two chapters, with the emphasis on the findings from the quantitative data. Conclusions are drawn about the link between ELC service climate and client satisfaction with ELC service. Conclusions are also drawn about the methodology and the research problem.

Implications are stated for management theory, for English language service sector policy and for ELC management practice. Limitations are stated and recommendations for further research are made.

1.6 DEFINITIONS AND TERMINOLOGY

There is as yet no consensus in the world of English language teaching on one overarching term to describe the teaching of English to non-native speakers of English. The acronym ESL (English as a Second Language) was popular in the United States of America and in British Commonwealth nations where English is literally the second language most citizens acquire. EFL (English as a Foreign Language) tends to be used to designate English language teaching operations in non-English speaking countries. The acronym ELT (English Language Teaching) is popular in Britain. The terms ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) and TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages), which have been popular in the United States of America since the 1960s, have now gained widespread currency in the English language teaching community. ESOL and TESOL have therefore been adopted for use in this study.

A similar lack of consistency bedevils the designation of managers. Early studies (Matthies, 1984; Reasor, 1981) used the term *Director* or *Administrator* in combination, e.g. *Program Director*, *ESL Administrator* or *Director of Studies* (DOS), which is still popular. The terms *manager* and *management* have now become more common and the term *ELT Management* has gained some ground. For the purposes of this study, the terms *TESOL Management/Manager* are used as a suitable synthesis of terms and *ELC manager* is used when referring specifically to the management of ELCs.

There is a range of terms to designate organisations that run TESOL programmes. The term *English language school* is still fairly widely used. However, combinations using *centre*, *institute*, *academy* or *college* are increasingly found. For the purposes of the study, *centre* has been chosen as a middle-of-the-road term and the organisations which are the subject of this study, irrespective of their actual names, are referred to as *English Language Centres* or *ELCs* for short.

1.7 DELIMITATIONS OF SCOPE

Delimitations refer to the *planned limitations* of the study which are within the control of the researcher, not to be confused with the *limitations* of the research methodology which generally reflect aspects outside the researcher's control. The project was subject to a number of delimitations of scope, as follows:

1.7.1 English language centre location

The study was limited to New Zealand. An effort was made to obtain a spread of different locations in both the North and South Islands (see Appendix Z), roughly proportional to the number of ELCs in that location. For instance, since most ELCs are located in Auckland and Christchurch, that is where most of the data collection was done.

1.7.2 English language centre type and size

The focus of research interest was on ELCs in both the private and tertiary sector. ELCs within high schools or in community programmes such as ESOL home tutor schemes were excluded. In principle, there was no delimitation on ELC size in terms of the number of clients. However, ELCs were excluded whose populations were so small (e.g. less than ten clients) that any data would be worthless in terms of statistical analysis.

1.7.3 Respondent characteristics

■ Focus groups

For clients, focus group participation was limited to clients with sufficient experience of the ELC service and a level of oral English proficiency which would allow them to take part in a sustained discussion. Staff focus groups were limited to non-managerial staff, including both teaching and non-teaching staff; staff on permanent and part-time contracts; full-time and part-time staff.

■ **Surveys**

ELC clients who had been in an ELC for less than a week were excluded because of potential lack of familiarity with the service. Clients with low English proficiency and no knowledge of one of the questionnaire languages were also excluded. While the decision to participate was left up to clients themselves, in some cases the researcher advised such clients not to participate for the reasons given. In terms of staff respondents, the research was limited to non-managerial staff, including both teaching and non-teaching staff; staff on permanent and part-time contracts; full-time and part-time staff.

1.8 CONCLUSIONS

This chapter provided the context for the report and an overview of the issues. It introduced the background to the problem. The research problem and research questions were presented and justifications for the research were provided. A brief overview of the methodology was given, together with definitions and terminology and broad delimitations of scope. Chapter 2 builds on this foundation by providing a more detailed description of the management theory underpinning the methodology.

Chapter Two
REVIEW OF ISSUES

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to establish a theoretical basis for the research by reviewing the key issues. The aims of the research were to examine the service climate of English language centres in New Zealand, to explore levels of client satisfaction with that service and to investigate a possible link between the service climate and levels of client satisfaction with ELC service. The research is therefore founded on three fundamental concepts, namely *climate*, *service*, and *satisfaction*.

Background information will be provided on ELC operations in New Zealand and the origins and development of the *service* concept will be discussed. It will be shown that the provision of ESOL courses in ELCs is a service, fitting neatly into the conceptualisation of *service* in the management literature. A number of significant issues relevant to the provision of ELC service will be presented and discussed and ELC-based TESOL services will be classified. The issue of client satisfaction with ELC service will be discussed, as well as measurement issues and the role of the expectations/disconfirmation model in the formation of satisfaction and word-of-mouth recommendation. Finally, the origins and development of the concept of *climate* will be presented, a number of problems and controversies examined, and the more specific concept of *service climate* will be introduced.

The theoretical and conceptual groundwork laid in this chapter will provide the rationale for the methodology used in the study, which will be described in Chapter 3.

2.2 ENGLISH LANGUAGE CENTRE-BASED TESOL AS A SERVICE

A successful language program is dependent on many factors. These relate to such elements as good management, planning and administration, topics that are rarely included in TESOL training programs.

(Richards, 1985, p. 13)

This section backgrounds ELC operations, explains concepts, examines the work of ELCs from a services management perspective, and reviews some previous research in the area.

2.2.1. English language centre TESOL operations in New Zealand

In New Zealand, commercial TESOL operations are principally carried out either in privately-owned ELCs or ELCs within tertiary institutions. ELC sizes vary from clienteles of 50 or fewer to over 200 in the larger city language centres. Of the 78 New Zealand ELCs identified for this study, 56 (72%) were private or commercial institutions offering to overseas clients a variety of language courses based mainly on a number of hours of group-based tuition per week. Clients purchase these on a short- or long-term basis. Some ELCs might specialise in preparing students for internationally-recognised English language examinations such as the Cambridge Certificate or IELTS (International English Language Testing System). Tertiary ELCs operate within universities and polytechnics, offer the same sorts of packages as commercial ELCs but also focus on providing bridging courses which prepare overseas students for tertiary study.

As yet, there is no comprehensive national data on the make-up of staff in New Zealand ELCs, the bulk of whom are ESOL teachers. A TESOLANZ (TESOL Association of Aotearoa New Zealand) survey of its members (Haddock, 1998) provided some insights but at the time of the survey, respondents from private ELCs made up only 8.2% of the sample. The survey indicated that over 87% of respondents were female. Approximately 91% of respondents had a TESOL

qualification, 89% had further academic or teaching qualifications, and 75% had a university degree. The average respondent had about 10 years TESOL experience. Just over half of respondents were employed either on a casual or a contract basis (Haddock, 1998).

To what extent ESOL teachers perceive management and service themes as relevant to their work is moot. A catalogue of New Zealand ESOL teacher core competencies compiled from teacher inputs (White, 1997) contained no explicit service-related items. Out of 54 competencies listed, the nearest item to a management-oriented competency was "able to carry out administrative responsibilities", which was rated in 50th place. These findings reflect the historical lack of emphasis on management within TESOL and highlight Pennington's (1994) comment that insufficient attention is given to the inclusion of management skills in TESOL training courses.

ELC clients are typically young adults or teenagers from a non-English speaking background (NESB). Approximately 87% of the over 26,000 English language students in New Zealand in 2001 were from Asian countries (Education New Zealand, 2002). Within the service context, they are a culturally diverse clientele who may experience difficulties adapting to a sojourn in a foreign culture.

The ELC service is multidimensional and typically contains an educational and administrative component but may also involve accommodation (homestay) and leisure - or even tourism - aspects, as well as pastoral care and guardianship responsibilities. It may, like other service types, be subject to heavy fluctuations in demand. It is typically provided to groups of clients at a time as a one-off experience. Clients may rely heavily on word-of-mouth or the advice of a friend (Soutar, McNeill, & Lim, 1994), family member, teacher or agent for their choice of an ELC. The success of the language learning component of the service may depend as much on client aptitude, motivation,

industry, and attitude as on the skills, personality, and professionalism of a teacher provider. The quality of ancillary services such as leisure activities or homestay accommodation may also contribute to some degree to the overall perception of the success of the language study experience. The effectiveness of the service provision may be affected by cultural and/or language difficulties.

The responsibility for the efficacy of strategic and organisational aspects of the ELC service lies with the ELC managers since *planning, organisation and control* are classical management functions (Fayol, 1949). This includes a duty to ensure that staff are suitably qualified and have the requisite training and knowledge to carry out their service role. However, ELCs are educational institutions which must be officially accredited, which means that this duty is shared by government accrediting institutions, particularly in respect of teaching staff.

In Australia, ELCs providing English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students (ELICOS), Adult Migrant English Programme (AMEP) providers and English Australia (EA) members must be accredited by the National ELT Accreditation Scheme (NEAS). This requires that English language teachers have an appropriate TESOL qualification plus either (1) a recognised teaching qualification (university degree or diploma) or (2) a university degree and at least 800 hours of classroom teaching experience (NEAS Australia, 2002). In Britain, ELCs belonging to the major industry groupings, ARELS (Association of Recognised English Language Service) and BASELT (British Association of State English Language Teaching) must be accredited by the English in Britain Accreditation Scheme (EIBAS), run by The British Council. Teachers on standard adult courses must have, as a minimum, a university degree plus a so-called TEFLI (Teaching English as a Foreign Language Initiating) qualification such as a Certificate in TESOL (The British Council, 2001).

In New Zealand, however, the situation is different. Private sector ELCs are accredited by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) as Private Training Establishments (PTEs). There are no legislative requirements for minimum qualifications of teaching staff in PTEs, the category ELCs belong to; in each case an assessment is made of staff qualifications and experience presented to the NZQA by the applicant institution (V. Oates, NZQA, personal communication, 28 November, 2001). While NZQA accreditors "would expect every teacher teaching an ESOL class to have a TESOL qualification" (V. Oates, NZQA, personal communication, 9 October, 2003), this does not appear to be a legal requirement as it is in Britain and Australia. Furthermore, unlike its Australian and British counterparts, the NZQA is not a TESOL specialist organisation and does not undertake specialist TESOL vetting of standards beyond a general assessment of staff suitability (V. Oates, NZQA, personal communication, 9 October, 2003).

The New Zealand TESOL industry private sector groupings, the Federation of Independent English Language Schools (FIELS) and Combined Registered English Language Schools (CRELS), maintain that their members meet NZQA and their own membership requirements (CRELS New Zealand, n.d.) that their teachers be highly qualified (FIELS, 1998b). However, there are no specifics as to what those teacher qualifications are. FIELS has developed additional quality assurance standards monitored by SGS (Societie Generale de Surveillance) and there is a strong expectation that permanent or regular teachers in FIELS ELCs be TESOL qualified (Christine Leckie, FIELS, personal communication, 14 October, 2003). The more recently formed APPEL (Association of Private Providers of English Language), which incorporates most or all FIELS and CRELS member institutions plus non-FIELS/CRELS members, does not specify any minimum teacher qualifications either, simply requiring that its members "must employ suitable teaching staff in accordance with NZQA requirements" (Association of Private Providers of English Language, n.d., Code of Conduct section, ¶ 4).

Tertiary-based ELCs appear to set their own teacher qualification requirements within the framework of their institution's accreditation system and possibly under the influence of the core competencies suggested by TESOLANZ (TESOLANZ, n.d.). Haddock's (1998) data cited above came principally from teachers in the secondary and tertiary sectors and indicated a high level of TESOL qualification (91%). While more recent data has not yet been forthcoming, anecdotal evidence would seem to indicate that tertiary ELCs have a high proportion of TESOL-qualified teachers.

From the foregoing, it would appear that New Zealand lags somewhat behind Britain and Australia in terms of developing a national standard to ensure a properly-trained and qualified population of teachers in its ELCs. TESOLANZ have promoted a set of core competencies for its members which include minimum TESOL qualifications (TESOLANZ, n.d.). The three industry associations FIELS, CRELS and APPEL appear to be interested in raising standards generally in ELCs and there is an increasing focus on quality assurance. But as yet, there is no single, common set of nationally-recognised mandatory minimum qualifications for all teachers in New Zealand ELCs. This implies that there is likely to be some variation in the level and quality of teacher qualifications across a range of institutions. The status of teaching staff as permanent or temporary/short-term employees may further contribute to such variation. This state of affairs may have implications for the quality of the English lessons which constitute the core element of an ELC's service.

2.2.2 TESOL management research

A comprehensive body of TESOL literature has accrued, the majority of it addressing ESOL teaching methodology (e.g. Finocchiaro, 1989; Harmer, 1991; Nunan, 1991; Richard-Amato, 1996), or second language themes such as language acquisition (e.g. Krashen, 1981, 1982, 1985). Numerous studies and reports have also been produced on the overseas student experience, particularly in the tertiary context, in terms of, for instance, study stress

(Burns, 1991), their expectations (George, 1994), or cross-cultural difficulties (Samuelowicz, 1987).

By comparison, the amount of research carried out into management aspects of TESOL has been relatively small (Cole & Heap, 1996; Crichton, 1994; Matthies, 1984; Pennington, 1989, 1991, 1992a, 1992b, 1994; Pennington & Ho, 1995; Pennington & Riley, 1991a, 1991b; Pennington & Xiao, 1990; Stoller & Christison, 1994; Waites & Wild, 1992; Walker, 1997, 1998, 2000). Pennington (1992a) for example, explored the issue of job enrichment in TESOL with reference to Herzberg, Mausner, and Snyderman's (1959) work on motivation and Hackman's (1987) Job Characteristics Model. Waites and Wild (1992) applied Blake and Mouton's (1985) Management Grid and other leadership models to TESOL management. Several researchers have examined the use of focus groups with English language students (Anderson, 1996; Brogan, 1990; Day, 1995; Fowle, 1999). Furthermore, national English language teaching organisations have spawned TESOL Management special interest groups and two "how-to" textbooks on ELC management (Impey & Underhill 1994; White et al., 1991) have appeared. Some universities now offer tertiary qualifications that include TESOL management components and these are being written in the area.

However, the corpus of published literature remains modest and empirical research is under-represented. In this respect, the management of ELCs offering TESOL courses is something of a poor relation compared to other areas of educational management, probably because it has not been part of the educational mainstream. Over the past forty years or so, for example, numerous empirical studies have been published reporting on environments and managerial practices in a variety of educational contexts from elementary schools (e.g. Halpin & Croft, 1962, 1963), secondary schools (e.g. Campbell, 1977; Dinham, Cairney, Cragie, & Wilson, 1995; Finlayson, Banks, & Loughran, 1971a, 1971b, 1971c, 1971d; Thomas & McTaggart, 1983; Worrell & Hale,

2001) to tertiary institutions (e.g. Johnson, Johnson, Kranch, & Zimmerman, 1999; Volkwein, Malik, Shaukat, & Napierski-Prancl, 1998; Warren & Rees, 1975) in the USA, Britain, Australia and New Zealand. By comparison, there have been only a few reports of empirical studies in the field of TESOL management. Most of them were the work of one person (Martha Pennington), and examined the work of ESL programme directors at tertiary institutions (Pennington, 1994; Pennington & Xiao, 1990; Reasor, 1981), TESOL manager job skills (Matthies, 1984), job satisfaction among teachers (Pennington & Riley, 1991a, 1991b), and burnout among ESOL teachers (Pennington & Ho, 1995).

A further limitation of the existing body of TESOL management research is that all of the writings or studies cited above are based on general management concepts and models. Apart from the contributions of this researcher (e.g. Walker, 1998), no journal articles could be located in the literature that acknowledged the *service* nature of ELC operations. Since this study views TESOL as a service and applies service management models to the ELC operations, the existing body of published TESOL management research has therefore little to offer as a basis for the research reported on here.

2.2.3 Origins and development of *services* concept

Within the field of organisations and management, the concept of *services* made a fairly late appearance on the research stage. The first serious studies of *services marketing and management* emerged as PhD dissertations in the USA in the 1950s (McDowell, 1953; Parker, 1958) and journal articles on various aspects of the field appeared throughout the 1960s and 1970s (George, 1977; Rathmell, 1966; Regan, 1963). However, it was not until the 1980s that services began to attract serious recognition as a branch of management in its own right, the first conferences specifically dedicated to services marketing taking place. Concurrently, the first journals devoted to services management and marketing themes appeared. Thereafter, there was

explosive growth in interest in the services sector, with over 1,000 publications in the period 1980-1992 as opposed to a mere 120 prior to 1980 (Glynn & Barnes, 1995).

The early services literature tended to focus on a recognition of the significance of the growing service economy, the development of a typology of services and issues surrounding services management and marketing as opposed to the management and marketing of goods (Judd, 1964; Lovelock, 1983; Regan, 1963; Shostack, 1977). A key development was the identification by Bowen and Schneider (1988) of *intangibility*, *inseparability*, and *customer involvement* as key characteristics of services. In the 1980s, *service quality* emerged as a major services theme and researchers such as Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988) led the field with their work on the SERVQUAL instrument. Other major issues were *relationship marketing* (Berry, 1983; Gronroos, 1990), *service design* (Shostack, 1984) and the notion of *the service encounter* and *the moment of truth* (Carlzon, 1987; Normann, 1984). An outgrowth of the service quality literature has been a rich vein of research into *customer satisfaction* (Bitner, 1990), which is an ongoing services research theme. Further topics of interest are *customer retention* (Berry, 1983) and the notion of *the internal customer* (Gronroos, 1981). Several of these issues pertinent to the research described in this study will be discussed below.

2.2.4 Conceptualisation of *service* and application to TESOL

This section demonstrates how the concept of a *service* can be legitimately applied to ELCs running TESOL programmes. A working definition of the term *service* is provided by Lovelock, Patterson, and Walker (1998):

A service is any act or performance that one party can offer to another, and one that is essentially intangible and does not result in the ownership of anything. Its production may or may not be tied to a physical product. (p. 5)

Although a variety of definitions of the term *service* exists, there is broad agreement that, regardless of classification, the notion of *service* contains a number of classic features (Gronroos, 1990) such as *intangibility*, *heterogeneity*, *perishability*, *inseparability*, and *customer involvement*, which are well represented in ELC TESOL operations. These features are discussed, together with some other common characteristics of services, in the following sections.

■ ***Intangibility***

Some services may be associated with the use or purchase of tangible items: the hospitality industry (hotel rooms, food, drink); the retail sector (consumer goods); air travel (aircraft seats, meals); whereas others may be purely intangible, for instance some types of entertainment, sport or education. Regardless of the degree of involvement of tangible goods, the fact remains that *the act of performing the service* is in itself an intangible. The state of being intangible implies that customers have limited tangible reference points for assessing the quality of the service provided and thus tangible aspects such as *servicescape* (the physical surroundings of the service), as well as atmospheric factors such as service *milieu*, become important (Bitner, 1990, 1992; Schneider & Bowen, 1995).

The provision of English language tuition is an intangible process aimed at the intellect (Fitzsimmons & Fitzsimmons, 1994) of the student client. While ELCs may "tangibilise" (McLaughlin & Coffey, 1992) their service provision by emphasising tangible aspects of their venue such as *décor*, facilities, diplomas, learning materials or public relations items such as T-shirts and souvenirs, the core teaching/learning activities remain intangible. On a tangibility-intangibility continuum, Shostack (1977) placed teaching at the extreme intangible end.

■ **Heterogeneity**

Heterogeneity in service operations refers to a potential degree of variability in terms of the quality of the service provided and is a consequence of the fact that the service provision is a social interaction, the success of which is partly a function of the knowledge, skills, personal attributes, degree of involvement etc. of the people involved, that is, customer and provider (Wright, 1995). All other things being equal, the interactions between two separate sets of customers and IRD officials, for instance, may reach rather different outcomes.

Although an English language provider may strive for homogeneity in the service provision, it is unlikely to eventuate, particularly in the area of learning. "Individual learners restructure, in their own way, the material we present - based on past experiences in acquiring knowledge and solving problems" (Finocchiaro, 1989, pp. 17-18) and factors such as age, ability, aspirations and needs, first language, and previous language experience are crucial factors in language learning. While a textbook may be written for a general audience, each class is unique and students need to be treated individually (Harmer, 1991). Therefore, even at identical levels of proficiency, with standardised curriculum, techniques and learning materials, the individual characteristics of the student - not to mention those of the teacher - militate against each client receiving an identical service. The quality of teaching and administrative staff, as well as the calibre of clients and their "trainability" in certain key service procedures and techniques will therefore be of interest to ELC managers in terms of actions to reduce heterogeneity.

■ **Perishability**

Services cannot be inventoried as can tangible goods (Gronroos, 1990). Unoccupied hotel rooms cannot be stored and sold at a later date. In the same way ELCs provide a service that cannot be inventoried. Like hotels, restaurants and airlines, a key management issue for many ELCs is therefore the balancing of *capacity* in terms of venues, facilities, equipment, and

teaching staff and *demand* in terms of client enrolments. The relative unpredictability of demand can have considerable ramifications for all ELC stakeholders. Anecdotal evidence indicates that it can cause ELCs to fail. It determines the employment conditions of large numbers of staff who cannot expect to be hired on permanent contracts. It sometimes causes problems within day-to-day operations since classes can be disrupted and clients of varying proficiency levels put together as a result of sudden changes in the demand on the ELC's resources. Such practices are likely to influence the levels of client satisfaction with the service.

■ ***Inseparability***

Unlike goods which can be produced then sold at a later time, services are to varying degrees simultaneously provided and consumed (Fitzsimmons & Fitzsimmons, 1994). Carrying out a transaction in the bank or visiting an optician involves both the provider and recipient of the service being present at the same time. Not only is it therefore difficult to decouple production and delivery of the service, concurrent quality control cannot be exercised as it would be in manufacturing (Schneider, Bowen, Ehrhart, & Holcombe, 2000). This means that management efforts have to be directed at enhancing the entire service climate (Schneider & Bowen, 1995). In particular, managing the human dimension becomes critical to the success of the service outcome.

The TESOL service is likewise inseparable since the classroom is intended as a venue for cooperative activities that, ideally, will lay the foundations of learning through, for example, habit forming. Such activities are facilitated by the teacher in conjunction with students, that is, the service is produced and consumed simultaneously, even though learning may continue to occur after the event. Such learning is, similarly, intended to be an outcome of the use by the student of, for example, self-access facilities, although such activities are likely to proceed without direct and continuous service provider input.

■ ***Customer involvement***

A service is essentially a performance in which customers, when physically present, actively participate (Rathmell, 1966). The customer is involved to varying degrees in the provision of the service, "contributing information and physical and mental effort" (Bateson, 2002, p. 110), which has the potential to impact not only on the nature, quality or timing of the service received (Gronroos, 1990), but also on customer satisfaction (Mills & Moberg, 1982). The level of customer expertise can determine achievement and success, thus determining levels of satisfaction. For instance, the willingness of a hospital patient to cooperate with medical staff may have a significant influence on the success of the treatment; a customer's skill in using an internet website can determine the success or failure of a sales transaction and delivery of goods.

The ELC client is likewise involved in the production of the service by participating in language tuition as a student in class and taking part in optional activities. Without the presence of the client, the service could not be provided. Even at the cognitive level, "the learner's active participation in the learning process is a fundamental premise" of basic learning theories (Finocchiaro, 1989, p. 53) .

The skills, motivation and interest in learning on the part of the client are important inputs which influence success and can determine satisfaction. The so-called "good" English language learner becomes a more efficient, effective, retentive consumer of the service by adopting proactive - rather than passive - behaviours such as developing strategies for getting practice both inside and outside the classroom or using context to assist comprehension (Nunan, 1991; Rubin & Thompson, 1983). To some extent, therefore, clients can determine the success of the English language service delivery through the strategies they adopt and the way they manage their learning. In certain types of service, customers need to be trained in specific skills before they can begin to use the service. For instance, computer users may require training in the use of new

software. This applies equally well to ELCs, where, for example, clients may need to be familiarised with a specific teaching methodology or trained to deal with unfamiliar vocabulary (Harmer, 1991) before they can begin to benefit from a TESOL programme.

Moreover, service customers have been referred to as "partial employees" (Bowen, 1986) of the organisation. Particularly in knowledge-intensive services, enhanced role clarity, motivation, and the ability to share information and accommodate expertise on the part of client "partial employees", increase the likelihood of project success and client satisfaction (Bettencourt, Ostrom, Brown, & Roundtree, 2002). The "partial employee" metaphor is particularly applicable to ELC clients who are likely to develop a close attachment to a particular ELC and its staff over an extended period of time and whose "membership" of the organisation may blur the distinction between organisational "outsider" and "insider". Indeed, the services concept of the customer as co-producer of the service (Fitzsimmons & Fitzsimmons, 1994), which presupposes the active collaboration (but limited control) of the service provider, has its parallels in the notion of the English language teacher as *facilitator, participant and resource* (Harmer, 1991).

■ **Customer – service provider interaction**

The interaction or *service encounter* (Czepiel, Solomon, Suprenant, & Gutman, 1985) between the customer and service provider has been referred to as the *moment of truth* (Normann, 1984). A customer may pass through a series of encounters with service providers while accessing the service. In the mind of the customer, each encounter is a snapshot of the organisation's service quality, contributing both to the customer's overall satisfaction and willingness to do business with the organisation again. From the perspective of the organisation, each encounter is an opportunity to showcase its status as a quality service provider and thus shape feelings of customer loyalty (Zeithaml & Bitner, 1996). Such encounters are integral to a relationship marketing

(Berry, 1983) strategy which aims to manage long-term relationships with customers in order to enhance the firm's future survival (Schneider et al., 2000). The nature of the service provider-customer interaction is therefore fundamental to the production of the "core value" of the service (Czepiel et al., 1985; Lovelock, 1992; Schmenner, 1995).

During the ELC service provision, a client experiences innumerable interactions with a series of service providers, from administrative staff to language teachers to homestay families, over an extended period of time. Thus the client's perception of service quality can be the result of a fairly complex set of encounters and relationships with front-line staff. However, the service providers most likely to have the greatest influence on client perceptions are the ESOL teachers since they are responsible for the delivery of the core content of the service, spending most formal service time with the client. ESOL teacher roles and skills have much in common with those of service providers. Key service provider roles have been identified as *participant / co-communicator, manager, consultant, and controller* (Bitran & Hoech, 1992; Gronroos, 1990; Palmer & Cole, 1995). Virtually identical roles have been ascribed to ESOL teachers (Harmer, 1991; Littlewood, 1981). A number of essential skills are also common to both groups, namely *communicative skills, interpersonal skills and reflective or analytical skills* (Bartlett, 1990; Bitran & Hoech, 1992; Brown, 1994; Irons, 1994; Zeichner & Liston, 1985).

Service staff also have *boundary spanning* roles in their interaction with customers (Yoon, Beatty, & Suh, 2001) since, given the long-term and personalised nature of many service encounters, they are increasingly expected to be "part-time marketers" (Gronroos, 1990, p.176), engaging in relationship management activities in addition to their allotted "technical" functions (Laing & McKee, 2001). However, it is not clear to what extent ELC staff, and in particular ESOL teachers, accept such a role. Research has shown that some professionals who interpret the marketing function in relatively narrow terms

may feel distaste at being obliged to become marketers (Laing & McKee, 2001). Professionals are also likely to be more committed to their profession than to the organisational culture and may feel that their particular knowledge and expertise put them in a better position than managers to assess the needs of their customers (Haywood-Farmer & Nollet, 1993; Stratemeyer & Hampton, 2001).

No data could be located on client retention in ELCs so it is difficult to discuss the significance of the client-provider interaction in terms of client loyalty through repeat business. Anecdotal evidence indicates that the vast majority of clients access a particular ELC's service only once, sometimes over an extended period of time. The notion of repeat business may not, therefore, be applicable to ELC service. However, the quality of interactions could influence client loyalty in terms of the client's decision to *stay* with a provider or not, for the period the customer has set aside for the language instruction. There is anecdotal evidence that some clients do "shop around" ELCs until they have found one that suits their temperament and learning style. Furthermore, word-of-mouth recommendation is a well-known influence on customer choice of provider (see discussion below) and could also be construed as a proxy for loyalty. Satisfied ELC clients are then more likely to demonstrate their "loyalty" to a provider by recommending the provider to a friend.

Given that the quality of the service provider-client interaction could be instrumental in influencing extension of patronage or a decision to recommend, the nature of the service encounter, as well as the quality of both administrative and teaching staff, therefore become paramount for the ELC. A key aspect of this interaction is the quality of the service provider's communication with the customer. Not only should frontline providers be trained to communicate effectively (Mudie & Cottam, 1993), communication prior to and during the service provision should be accurate and timely (Zeithaml & Bitner, 1996). Providing clients with accurate information about the

service they are paying for is the key to treating them as competent adults (Schneider & Bowen, 1995). Unless ELCs are able to use clients' own languages as a medium of communication, poor English language proficiency on the part of clients may hinder communication and lead to feelings of disempowerment and inadequacy, as well as a perceived lack of information about the service they are participating in.

■ ***Service orientation and service provider behaviours***

Given the potential for high customer involvement and the importance of the service provider-customer interaction to the success of the service operation, the human dimension in terms of *service orientation* and service provider behaviours, plays a key role. *Service orientation* refers to an individual's orientation or attitude towards the customer in terms of providing a service. The concept was originally used by Schneider (1980) and further developed by Saxe and Weitz (1982). Hogan, Hogan, and Busch (1984) referred to it as "a set of attitudes and behaviours that affects the quality of the interaction between ... the staff of any organisation and its customers" (p. 167). Hogan (1992, cited in Cran, 1994, p. 39) described service orientation as the "fussy kindness" indicative of people who are stable, dependable, charming and self confident; people who represent their organisations well when dealing with the public". Hogan et al.'s (1992, cited in Cran, 1994) service orientation scale contained three key dimensions:

- *Empathy* – a measure of ease and grace in interpersonal situations
- *Virtuosity* – a measure of "prissiness" and perfectionism
- *Sensitivity* – a measure of interpersonal sensitivity

Since the original Hogan et al. (1984) study, realisation of the significance of service orientation has become widespread. Research interest has grown in potential links between the human dimension, particularly in terms of service provider personality traits, and customer satisfaction and perceptions of service

quality (e.g. Baydoun, Rose, & Emperado, 2001; Brown, Mowen, Donavan, & Licata, 2002; Chandrasekhar, 2001; Dale & Wooler, 1991; McBride, Mendoza, & Carraher, 1997; Neng-Pai, Hung-Chang, & Yi-Ching, 2001; Sanchez & Fraser, 1993). Barrick and Mount's (1991) "big five personality factors" - *Extroversion, Emotional Stability, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, and Openness to Experience* - have been shown to be highly correlated with service orientation (Chait, Carraher, & Buckley, 2000). Customer-perceived service orientation on the part of providers is linked to higher customer perceptions of service quality (Kelley & Hoffman, 1997). Personality-related service provider characteristics such as empathy, politeness and similarity between provider and customer can have an impact on customer levels of trust in the service provider (Coulter & Coulter, 2003).

A logical outcome of service orientation would be a corresponding set of service provider behaviours. Winsted (2000) identified three dimensions of service provider behaviour that correlate highly with customer satisfaction:

- *Concern* - expresses *caring* and incorporates Parasuraman et al's (1988) *empathy, assurance* and *responsiveness*, Chandon, Leo, and Philippe's (1997) *perceived competence, listening, and dedication*, as well as *authenticity/genuineness, and respect*. This dimension also includes *knowledgeability, helpfulness, interest in customer needs, and availability*.
- *Civility* - encompasses *positive attitude, courtesy* and *attention*.
- *Congeniality* - includes *warm personality, enthusiasm, happiness, sincerity*.

Customer satisfaction has also been shown to be predicated on *social regard* behaviours such as *genuine respect, deference, and interest shown in the customer*, making the customer feel valued or important (Butcher, Sparks, &

O'Callaghan, 2003), while *friendship with a customer* is a major influence on the development of loyalty (Butcher, Sparks, & O'Callaghan, 2001). Customer-employee rapport in terms of *personal connection* and *enjoyable interaction* have been shown to impact positively on customer satisfaction, loyalty intent, and word-of-mouth communication (Gremler & Gwinner, 2000).

Given the importance in services of the provider-customer relationship and interaction, therefore, the employee who is courteous and helpful, has an inherent predisposition to provide service, has the customer's interests and welfare at heart and has the ability to establish early rapport with customers (Lovelock et al., 1998) will play a key role in creating positive customer perceptions of service quality and, consequently, customer satisfaction. Conversely, service personnel who display anti-service, deviant behaviours can sabotage the service provision and have a negative impact on customer satisfaction (Harris & Ogbanna, 2002).

Service orientation, together with corresponding behaviours, is therefore linked to service effectiveness. Access to inexpensive technology and the ease of copying service formats can reduce differences between service providers. Service orientation is therefore perceived to be a means by which organisations can create excellence and differentiate themselves from their competitors. In a New Zealand study (Burchell, Hodges, & Rainsbury, 1999), employers were asked to rank 24 graduate competencies in terms of importance now and in ten years time. Customer service orientation was ranked among the top four for both time periods. Service organisations are giving increasing attention to aspects of an applicant's personality indicative of a service orientation, rather than solely to technical knowledge or academic qualifications (Cran, 1994).

Service orientation is important for ELCs particularly because of the nature of the clients who have an imperfect command of English and face the prospect of adjusting to life in an unfamiliar culture. Apart from the support needed simply

to access the service effectively, they are likely to require a certain amount of assistance from service providers, sometimes of a practical nature, to enable them to settle down in their new environment. Boundary spanning roles may be critical here. They have an important function for service providers in "understanding, filtering and interpreting information and resources to and from the organisation and its external constituencies" (Zeithaml & Bitner, 1996, p. 307), particularly in terms of promoting client welfare. Service providers possessing attributes such as helpfulness, empathy with the clients' situation and a concern for their welfare are also likely to contribute considerably towards client perceptions of the quality of the service they receive.

While those with a service inclination are likely to be drawn into service-type employment (Schneider, 1980), this is not necessarily the case. Where ESOL teachers are concerned, for example, possession of formal qualifications does not guarantee that a teacher has the necessary service orientation attributes to function as an effective service provider in a commercial environment. The corollary is that a teacher may possess limited or no teaching qualifications, depending on the ELC employment policies, but be highly service-oriented.

Despite the recognition of the role in the service provision of human aspects such as service orientation, there is a danger in overreliance on this dimension to produce service quality at the expense of other dimensions. Schneider and Bowen (1995), for instance, cautioned services managers against what they called "the human resources trap" (p. 174). This involves placing too much reliance on service provider attitudes and behaviours towards clients at the moment of truth and not enough on other key aspects of the service provision such as facilities, timeliness and manager support. The human resources trap has an interesting New Zealand variant, known anecdotally as *friendly incompetence*. This term has been used to describe typical New Zealand tourism and service operations. The implication is that when service personnel lack training, skills, qualifications, or perhaps experience, managers assume

that these can be compensated for by the natural friendliness and helpfulness which is characteristic of New Zealanders. Overreliance on these human, service orientation aspects may make for a friendly service but not necessarily an effective one.

■ **Tangibles**

While services essentially provide an intangible "product", the importance of tangible aspects of the service venue should not be overlooked. Schneider and Bowen (1995) commented that customers are always looking for cues about the quality of the service, particularly when it is highly intangible. *Servicescapes* can have a strong influence on both customers and service providers, for instance in terms of space, furnishings, temperature and ambience (Bitner, 1992) and can influence customers' behavioural intentions (Hightower, Brady, & Baker, 2002). Parasuraman et al.'s (1988) research showed that the quality of tangibles was more important than service provider empathy as a key predictor of a customer's evaluation of service quality. The physical environment of service provider premises, as well as the interaction of service personnel and the physical environment, can have a significant effect on new customer perceptions of the corporate image of the organisation (Nguyen & Leblanc, 2002). The physical environment is a determinant of trust and customer satisfaction in personalised services (Shamdasani & Balakrishnan, 2000) and in some service types is considered the most important service element (Lentell, 2000).

Tangible aspects are likewise an important element of ELC service provision for a number of reasons. First, the ELC functions as a base or headquarters for clients, many of whom will spend much of their time there. It may be seen as a place of safety for a visitor still coming to grips with life in a different culture, perhaps even a "home from home" and thus fulfills one of the basic needs of service customers, that of physical and psychological security (Schneider & Bowen, 1995). Although the atmosphere or *milieu* is important, this will be

influenced by the appearance of the venue, the décor, furnishings, size, and layout.

Second, ELCs need to provide facilities such as toilets and classrooms up to a basic level, sometimes as a statutory requirement of their accreditation by authorities. ELC clients will constantly interact with facilities and equipment as part of their experience of the service. For example, in many ELCs a kitchen/cooking facility is indispensable, enabling clients to prepare food that meets their cultural, religious or dietary requirements.

Third, the tangibles inherent in the servicescape may have an enabling function for the learning process. The décor, comfort and layout contribute to an ambience that may impact on the emotional and psychological state of clients-as-students, thus creating a suitable climate for learning success (Burruss, 2001; Knirk, 1992; Lyons, 2002; Reutzel & Wolfersberger, 1996). Furthermore, specific facilities and equipment may support the methodology and teaching/learning philosophy of the institution, particularly when the learners are adults (Vosko, 1991). For example, the existence of a *self-access unit* for clients is fundamental in ELCs that foster learner autonomy and consider themselves to be best practice organisations. The use of quality video and audio equipment in support of teaching/learning activities is considered *de rigeur* in serious language learning institutions. A study of overseas students in higher education in Australia found that the *learning* dimension was the most important determinant of overall satisfaction with higher education services (Patterson, Romm, & Hill, 1998). Because language learning is the core of the service that the client has purchased, it is likely that *learning* is also an important issue for ELC clients. Thus tangibles in ELCs may also be an indirect influence on customer satisfaction by way of the perceived effectiveness of the learning component of the service.

■ ***Service milieu***

Schneider and Bowen (1995), referred to the need for service organisations to develop what they called an appropriate “atmosphere, tone or *milieu* pervaded by the service imperative” (p.6). On entering such a *milieu*, customers should become aware of an atmosphere conducive to satisfying their needs in a focused, friendly, efficient, and supportive manner, all of which are likely to enhance levels of customer satisfaction. Supportive provider-provider relationships also represent an integral part of service *milieu*, making an important contribution to service outcomes and increasing customer satisfaction and loyalty (Gittell, 2002).

A positive service *milieu* is particularly relevant in ELCs. As “partial employees” (Bowen, 1986) and temporary “members” of the organisation, clients are susceptible to the influences that the organisation and its permanent members may exercise on their behaviours, emotions, motivations, choices and thus, potentially, on the effectiveness of the English language course for them personally. Also, due to their possible dependence on the ELC venue as a safe haven, ELC clients may be more receptive to the influences of the *milieu* pertaining within a particular ELC.

■ ***Importance of word-of-mouth in client choice of English language centres***

Word-of-mouth (WOM) is the - generally post-purchase - activity involving a customer informing friends or relatives about a purchase experience resulting in a particular level of satisfaction. Satisfied customers spread positive WOM, which can enhance sales (Kingman-Brundage, 1994), whereas dissatisfied customers may spread negative WOM which can have the opposite effect. These actions commonly take the form of a *recommendation* or a *discommendation*. When perceived service quality is low, WOM senders engage in WOM “more often, with more people and in greater detail” (Harrison-Walker, 2001, p. 70). In specific service sectors, WOM by loyal customers has

been claimed to increase customer value two to three times (MacStravic, 1995; Winston, 1988). WOM is important in the purchase of professional services (Dawes, Dowling, & Patterson, 1992). Australian universities' "alumni are potentially the most powerful promotional tool they possess" (Patterson, et al., 1998, p. 136).

Although claims about the numbers of people told by WOM spreaders may be apocryphal (Söderlund, 1998), research repeatedly confirms that there is a significant correlation between customer satisfaction and the spreading of positive WOM (Dubrovski, 2001). WOM, furthermore, has been shown to influence the expectations of potential customers of a service (Devlin, Gwynne, & Ennew, 2002). When a service failure occurs, customers who experience a positive and speedy recovery demonstrate a strong inclination to spread positive WOM about their experience (Swanson & Kelley, 2001).

WOM has been shown to be particularly relevant to the type of overseas student context in which this study took place. A survey of overseas students in Australia, for instance, found that 52% of respondents "suggested that word of mouth [*sic*] was extremely or very important in their selection of an overseas' [*sic*] tertiary institution" (Soutar et al., 1994, p. 36). A major influence on choice of study destination for Japanese ELC clients in New Zealand was the recommendations of friends, family and agencies (Hall, 1996). The recommendation of a friend was the most important from a list of 13 possible reasons for a client to choose to study at an ELC in a particular Australian city and for certain age groups a friend was the preferred channel for information about studying in Australia (ELICOS Association, 1997). ELICOS centre managers perceived the recommendation of a friend to be the most important factor in a client's decision to study in Australia (ELICOS Association, 1997). Language travel agents in Germany regarded a WOM recommendation as the number-one tool for attracting overseas students, accounting for around 26 % of bookings (Language Travel Magazine, 2002). Finally, language barriers

and a lack of time, money and knowledge to research and evaluate information about services may cause ethnic customers to rely particularly heavily on WOM from fellow ethnic customers who are more knowledgeable (Pires & Stanton, 2000), thus making the latter more likely to be consulted by WOM seekers (Bansal & Voyer, 2000).

There appears to be, therefore, plenty of empirical support for the belief that ELC clients can function as informal marketers for ELCs by recommending ELCs to friends, family and overseas agents. But they can also spread negative WOM, thus helping to create a negative reputation for a particular destination or institution. Experienced ELC managers would be expected to be aware of this key role of WOM in potentially creating or denying repeat business for their institutions. See Figure 2.3 (p. 52) for the WOM process.

2.2.5 Classifying English language centre service

A diversity of systems has been offered for classifying services. Gronroos (1990) identified 13 different classification schemes. Several of these are based partly on some of the service features already described, for instance, *degree of intangibility*, *degree of customer involvement*, and other characteristics such as *location of the service*, *nature of the delivery* or *degree of service customisation*. Lovelock (1992), for instance, proposed a relatively straightforward classification based on:

- the nature of the service act,
- the type of customer-service provider relationship,
- the degree of customisation and service provider judgement,
- the nature of supply and demand for the service,
- the method of the service delivery.

The application of these criteria to ELC service is shown in Table 2.1 (next page). A slightly more comprehensive system was proposed by Perez-Rivera (1994), which made use of 19 separate criteria (Table 2.2, next page).

Table 2.1

Classification of ELC Services According to Lovelock's (1992) Model

CRITERIA	ELC CLASSIFICATION
DEGREE OF TANGIBILITY	intangible
RECIPIENT OF SERVICE	people's minds
RELATIONSHIP	"membership"
NATURE OF DELIVERY	continuous
CUSTOMISATION	high /variable
JUDGEMENT REQUIRED	high
DEMAND FLUCTUATION	variable
NATURE OF SUPPLY	variable
AVAILABILITY OF OUTLETS	mainly single
NATURE OF INTERACTION	customer goes to provider

Table 2.2

Classification of ELC Services According to Perez-Rivera's (1994) Model

CLASSIFICATION LEVEL	CATEGORIES	ELC CLASSIFICATION
NATURE OF ORGANISATION	Purpose (satisfy needs of)	individuals
	Structure	for profit
	Type	private
NATURE OF SERVICE	Degree of tradability	pure service?
	Service directed toward	individuals
	Degree of merchantability	low?
CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP	Type	both formal and informal
	Degree of participation	customer must be present
NATURE OF DEMAND	Level of demand	sometimes exceeds capacity
	Degree of fluctuation	variable
SERVICE PACKAGE	Number of services and goods	multiple services
	Units of service	defined by situation and time
	Degree of equipment base	medium
	Degree of customisation	medium/variable
	Degree of durability	relative to customer
DELIVERY METHOD	Availability of service	mainly one site
	Nature of delivery	continuous
	Type of consumption	independent and collective
	Allocation of capacity	reservation/order of arrival

These types of classification are useful in helping us to understand the ELC service in strategic and operational terms but they are less helpful when it comes to comparing ELCs with other service types. This is because ELC service has some unique features which make it hard to classify with accuracy. It is, for instance, an educational service but exists in a commercial context. It provides the service to groups of clients at a time but may strive to reach a degree of customisation. The problem is typically illustrated by Schmenner's (1992) classification based on a service process matrix (Table 2.3).

Table 2.3
Schmenner's (1992) Service Process Matrix

		DEGREE OF INTERACTION AND CUSTOMISATION	
		LOW	HIGH
DEGREE OF LABOUR INTENSITY	LOW	<i>Services factory</i> e.g. Airlines Trucking Hotels	<i>Service shop</i> e.g. Hospitals Auto repair
	HIGH	<i>Mass service</i> e.g. Retailing Wholesaling Schools	<i>Professional service</i> e.g. Doctors Lawyers Architects

It would be difficult to know where to place ELCs within a classification scheme such as this. Although they are "schools" and their labour intensity can be said to be "high", it would be hard to describe them as a mass service because the degree of interaction/customisation is also high. It might therefore be asked whether ELCs could legitimately be placed in the *professional service* quadrant. According to Haywood-Farmer & Nollet (1994), a professional service would possess several of these characteristics "to a reasonable degree" (p.5):

- specialized knowledge and/or high degree of training in intellectual skills
- use of individual judgement, autonomous, independent action
- performance of work that intimately affects affairs of others
- performance of work develops the profession's body of knowledge or skills
- provision of service that is advisory and problem-orientated
- self motivation
- identification with and adherence to standards and conduct of a profession

It could be argued that all of these apply at least to *the teaching staff* in ELCs. Most would be expected to have specialised knowledge and qualifications in second language teaching. They are required to use their individual judgement in teaching and advising students. A large part of their work involves counselling and pastoral care. They have to be self-motivated. Although there may not be a code of conduct for New Zealand ESOL teachers, there is a well-established TESOL professional association (TESOLANZ), which attempts to promote standards. Whereas the professional service label has traditionally been applied to professions such as lawyers, accountants or architects, there appears to be, therefore, a reasonable case for including ELC/TESOL operations within this service classification.

2.2.6 Modelling English language centre TESOL operations

■ Service maps

A common difficulty for managers of service organisations is conceptualising an operation that is essentially intangible. A solution to this problem based on the concept of flowcharting takes the form of *service maps* or *service blueprints* (Kingman-Brundage, 1994, 1995; Shostack, 1984). Such tools normally provide a snapshot of a service system comprising:

- the total service system, including inputs, outputs, processes, and controls,
- external relationships e.g. interactions with customers, marketing actions,
- interrelationships between structural elements of the service organisation.

Apart from rendering the intangible tangible, such blueprints facilitate management planning, organising, and control functions by, for example, identifying the potential fail points in the process and can be applied to a range of service types (e.g. Getz, O'Neill, & Carlsen, 2001).

Figure 2.1 (next page) depicts a model of an ELC operation based on the concept of the service system blueprint. The service system activities are separated by the *line of visibility*. Above this line - "onstage" - are interactions between the service provider and the client. Below the line - "offstage" - are activities outside the client's view comprising management functions such as strategy or control and support functions such as administration or homestay coordination. For both client and ELC there are typical inputs and outputs.

■ ***The Three-Tier services model***

Schneider and Bowen (1995) suggested a three-tiered view of service organisations which has some similarities with the service blueprint model, but is more highly developed and supported in terms of detailed management actions aimed at achieving superior service. The Three-Tier model is based on

- a *Coordination Tier*, focusing on management activities,
- a *Boundary Tier*, focusing on service provider–customer contacts,
- a *Customer Tier*, focusing on customer expectations, needs, competencies.

Figure 2.2 (page after next) presents an adaptation of Schneider and Bowen's (1995) model to the ELC service operations context.

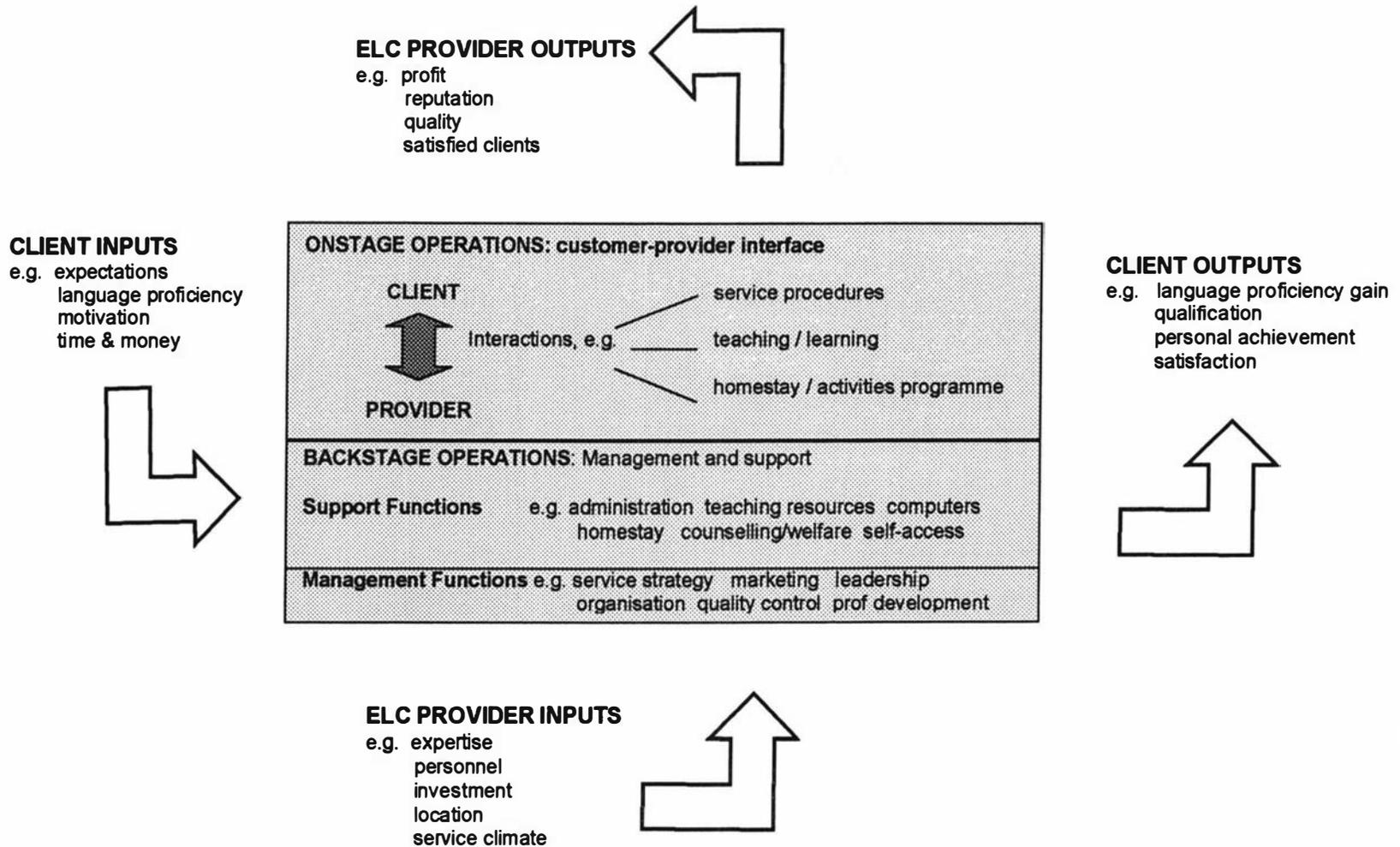


Figure 2.1. ELC service operation model based on Shostack's (1984) service system blueprint

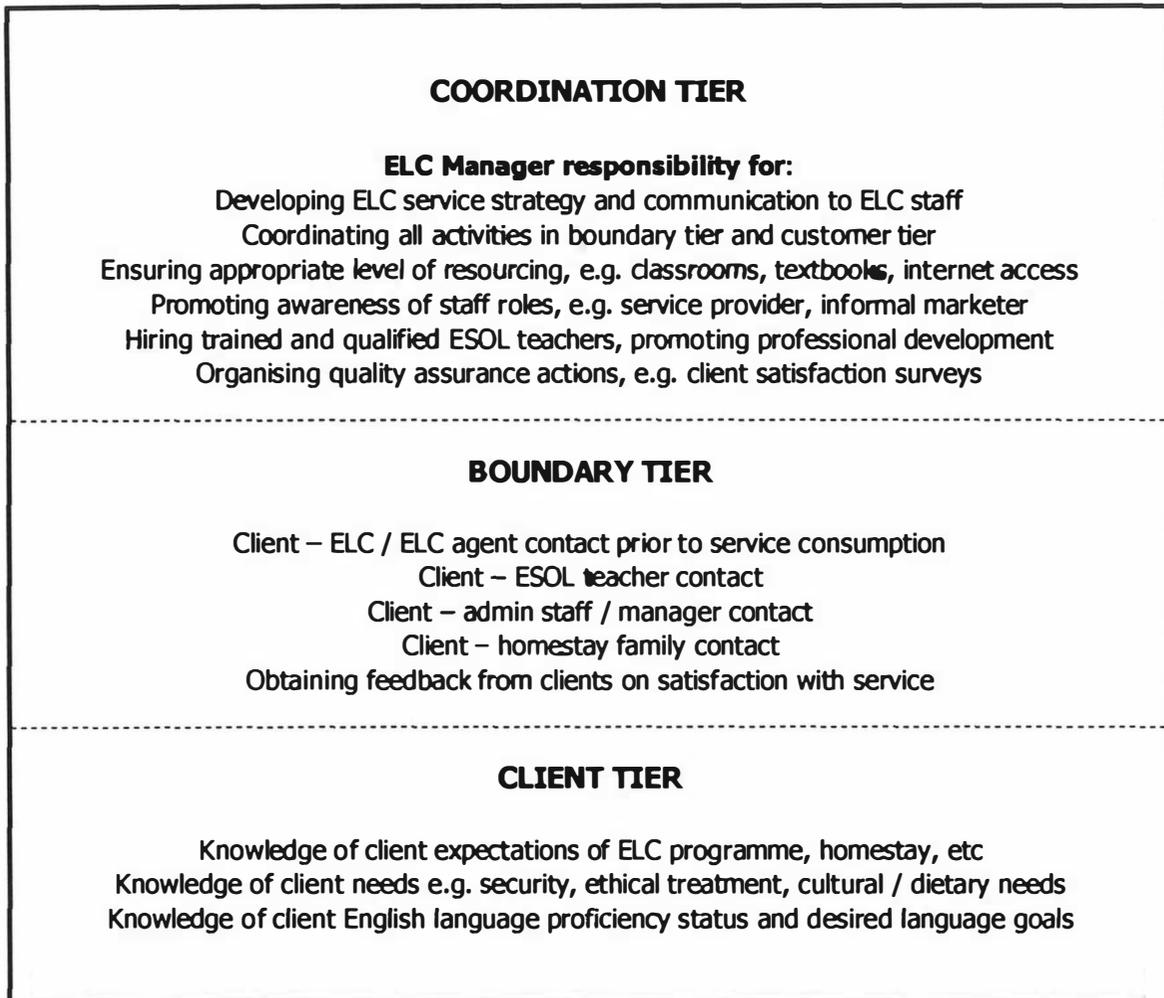


Figure 2.2. ELC service operation model based on Three-Tier model of service organisations (Schneider & Bowen, 1995)

The Three-Tier model has similar advantages for service managers and service providers as service system blueprints, that is, the ability to obtain a tangible view of the intangible. However, the Three-Tier model, in addition to highlighting strategic, human relations, resourcing and quality control aspects as well as customer-provider interaction, also emphasises knowledge of customer expectations, needs and competencies, which are particularly important issues for ELC service. While the service system blueprint provides an operational-functional overview of the service, the Three-Tier Model offers additional strategic focus on the status of the client/customer and may be of more practical use to ELC managers and staff.

■ **English language centre operations as drama**

The concept of 'the dramaturgy analogy' has been used by a number of writers (Deighton, 1994; Lovelock, 1995; Palmer & Cole, 1995) to describe the nature of the service encounter. This perspective makes use of the frontstage-backstage metaphor to view the entire service operation as akin to a theatre environment. The ELC operation represents a particularly pertinent application of this metaphor.

A backstage crew (administrators) supports the actors (ESOL teachers) who perform onstage (classroom), coordinated and led by the director (ELC manager/DoS) and playing to an audience (students). Indeed, it is not uncommon for ESOL teachers to view their lesson as a performance, wear 'a costume' (for role plays), study 'a script' (lesson outline), use 'props' (realia) to infuse their lesson with authenticity. They may get nervous before going 'onstage' but overcome their nerves once they are 'on' and use artistic skills, exaggerated gestures and movements, mimic and facial expressions as well as voice modulation and humour to win over the audience and even to get them to participate. Stevick (1980) saw language teachers as essentially performing and believed that there is in teaching a "requirement of play acting" which involves teachers in "mask-changing" (p. 29).

2.3 CUSTOMER/CLIENT SATISFACTION AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE CENTRE SERVICE

2.3.1 Conceptualisation and operationalisation of customer satisfaction

Customer satisfaction has been defined (Lovelock et al., 1998) as "a consumer's post-purchase evaluation of the overall service experience...an affective state or feeling reaction in which the consumer's needs, desires and expectations...have been met or exceeded" (p. 116).

Customer satisfaction encompasses a number of related cognitive and affective elements on the part of the customer including *expectations, confirmation/disconfirmation of expectations, needs, regret, dissonance, performance evaluation, perceived quality, value judgement, attribution of outcomes, mood and emotions* such as *anger* or *delight* as well as *equity* (Liljander & Mattsson, 2002; Oliver, 1997; Olsen & Johnson, 2003; Szymanski & Henard, 2001). Indeed, satisfaction may be influenced by so many factors, including the referent's age, general level of life satisfaction and the number of purchase choices available, not to mention the cost of the service to the customer, that Peterson's and Wilson's (1992) comment, "operationally, customer satisfaction is a complex and elusive phenomenon" (p.68), would seem to be something of an understatement.

Customer satisfaction is commonly conceptualised in the marketing and services literature as an outcome of the comparison customers make between their prepurchase expectations of the service performance and postpurchase perceptions of that performance. This conceptualisation is known as the *disconfirmation of expectations paradigm* (Cardozo, 1965; Churchill & Suprenant, 1982; Oliver, 1980). Yi's (1990) review showed that there is substantial empirical evidence supporting the role of disconfirmation of expectations in the formation of satisfaction/dissatisfaction. Further studies (e.g. Danaher & Haddrell, 1996) have continued to provide support. Meta-

analysis of satisfaction studies showed that, along with *equity*, disconfirmation had the strongest correlation with satisfaction on average (Szymanski & Henard, 2001). The importance of disconfirmation to the satisfaction process should lead managers to focus on improving disconfirmation levels, avoid situations where they overpromise and under-deliver (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1985) and match their service delivery to customer expectations (Gutek, Groth, & Cherry, 2002). Given the inherent intangibility of services, the quality of a service resides in the customer *perceptions* of the quality of the service performance (Buzzell & Gale, 1987). Within the service experience, the operation of the disconfirmation paradigm leads to customer satisfaction or dissatisfaction with a range of service encounters, which over time crystallises into *perceived service quality* (Patterson & Johnson, 1993).

Figure 2.3 (next page) demonstrates the disconfirmation and word-of-mouth process. If perceived performance fails to meet expectations, a *negative disconfirmation* occurs and the customer is dissatisfied or disappointed. If performance exceeds the customer's expectations, a *positive disconfirmation* occurs and the customer is strongly satisfied or delighted (Oliver, 1980). Dissatisfaction/disappointment may produce negative WOM, while strong satisfaction/delight may produce positive WOM. *Confirmation* of expectations occurs when customers find that the service provided meets their expectations. This produces in the mind of the customer a "neutral" state, which has been referred to as *mere satisfaction* (Patterson, 1993). In terms of services best practice, mere satisfaction is not enough, since "marginally satisfied customers are at risk of being lured away by a competitor's offering" (Lovelock et al., 1998, pp. 116-117). Positive disconfirmation is therefore far more important because it produces not just mere satisfaction but strong satisfaction or delight.

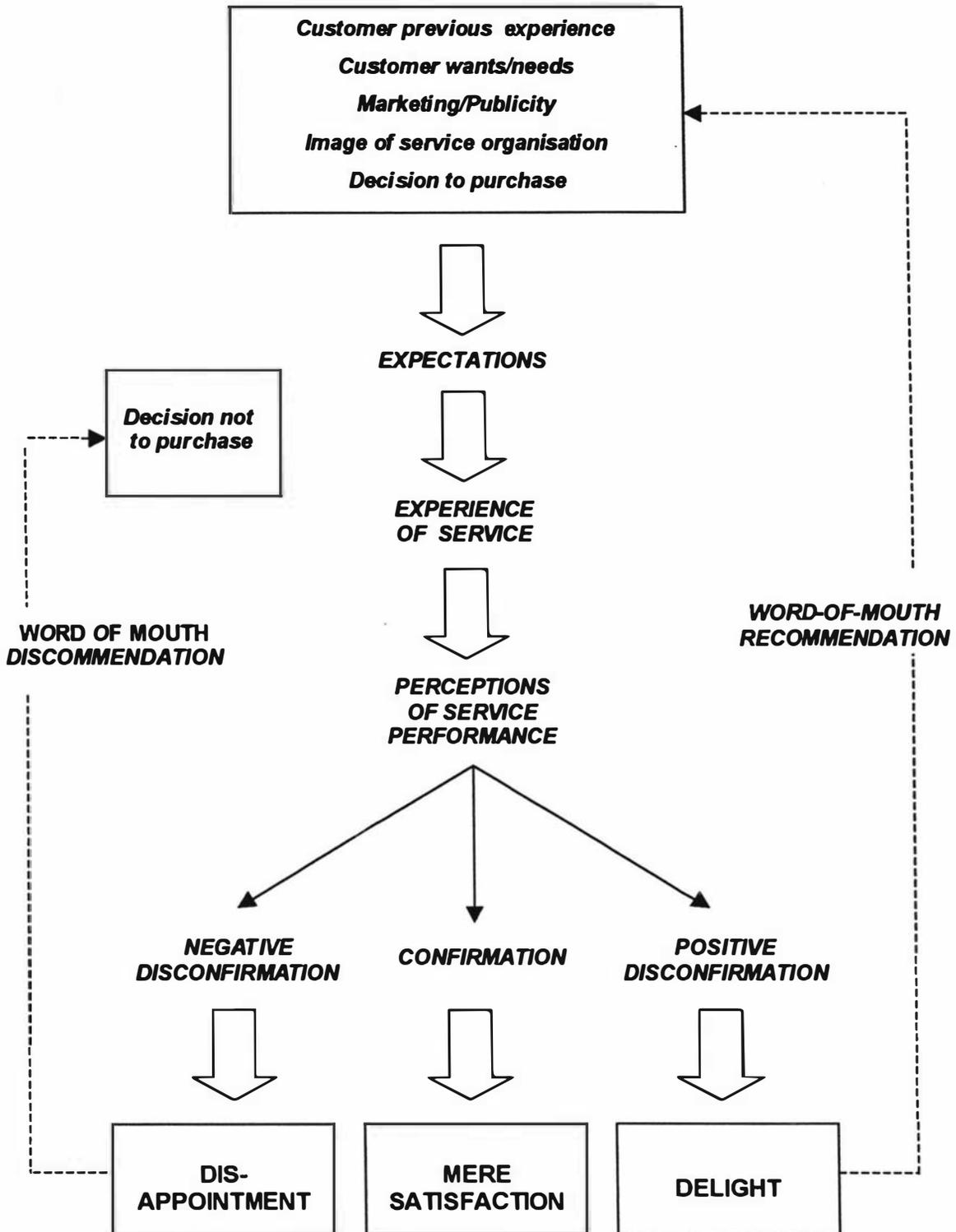


Figure 2.3. Customer disconfirmation of expectations & word-of-mouth cycle (based on Patterson, 1993)

Service firms need to delight customers, since it is only delighted customers who develop the sort of loyalty behaviours firms need for long-term customer commitment (Hallowell, 1996; White & Schneider, 2000). In one study, for instance, "completely satisfied" customers were 42% more likely to be loyal than "merely satisfied" customers (Jones & Sasser, 1995, cited in Stauss & Neuhaus, 1997, p. 237). More importantly for ELCs, it is delighted clients who are more likely to spread positive WOM for the organisation (Lovelock et al., 1998). A key indicator for ELCs of their performance, therefore, would be the extent to which clients are delighted with specific aspects of the ELC's service.

There is, however, one apparent weakness of the disconfirmation of expectations paradigm. This relates to a logical inconsistency (Spreng, MacKenzie, & Olshavsky, 1996), namely, that if a customer *expects* poor performance and then *receives* poor performance, in theory, the customer is satisfied. In reality, however, it must be asked how likely it is for a customer to engage and pay for a service, in the expectation that the service performance will be poor. Only in contexts where no other choice is available, such as public/government services, is such a scenario probable, which may account for reported levels of unusually high satisfaction with such services (Lovelock et al., 1998). In a competitive service industry such as TESOL, however, this is unlikely.

2.3.2 Client satisfaction and English language centre performance

Service organisations may choose a number of methods for measuring their performance. Financial measures of performance, for instance, such as Return on Investment have been used in such comparative studies (Denison, 1990; Kotter & Heskett, 1992; Siehl & Martin, 1990). An additional approach for ELCs might be to measure client English language proficiency gain since this is the principal *raison d'être* of ELCs. This would mean ensuring that clients were tested at the commencement and conclusion of their language course, using the same standardised test. However, such a measure would present a limited

view of the entire service provision, since it does not take into account other components of the ELC experience such as the homestay, *milieu*, facilities or activities programme.

Services researchers have also used *customer satisfaction* as an indicator of performance. Since satisfying customers is a primary obligation on companies, all company activities, policies, and programmes should be assessed in terms of how well they meet this obligation (Peterson & Wilson, 1992). There is more than adequate evidence in the literature of performance as either a direct or an indirect driver of satisfaction (Bolton & Drew, 1991; Churchill & Suprenant, 1982; Oliver, 1980, 1981, 1993, 1997; Spreng et al., 1996; Tse & Wilton, 1988; Wirtz & Bateson, 1999; Yi, 1990). The effectiveness of service operations is viewed in the services literature largely as a function of customer satisfaction with the service process (Gronroos, 1990; Peterson & Wilson, 1992; Wilson, 2002) because assessment of the quality of a service organisation's output is entirely in the mind of the customer, regardless of any objective efficiency measures or "expert" opinion (Bowen & Ford, 2002). Measures of customer perceptions of service process outputs or service levels are, moreover, considered to represent good practice in terms of service performance measurement (Voss, Johnston, Fitzgerald, & Sylvestro, 1990). It seems, therefore, that customer satisfaction has substantial support as at least one key indicator of service performance. However, there are some specific client satisfaction issues where ELCs are concerned, and these are discussed in the next section.

2.3.3 English language centre client satisfaction and service evaluation

ELC client satisfaction is dependent on the value judgement the client makes of the quality of the various aspects of the ELC service. But how well are ELC clients able to judge the service performance of an ELC? With respect to higher education, Barnett (1992) commented: "Clients of a professional service are not necessarily the best judges of the service they receive..." (p. 17).

Barnett's point was that students may lack the knowledge, experience and maturity to be able to judge whether particular methodologies, content or courses of action represent a competent choice on the part of the educational service provider. Also, students have less-defined cognitive structures and are more outward focused than other, mature, groups of consumers, meaning that inward focused factors such as affect, expectations and disconfirmation may be less instrumental in terms of their satisfaction assessments (Szymanski & Henard, 2001).

Second language students in particular may have difficulties accurately evaluating the teaching-learning component of an ELC's service. Their cultural backgrounds may lead them to have a totally different perception from their teachers of what is an effective methodology and what is not. Teachers in ELCs, for example, commonly encounter Asian clients who are used to a language teaching-learning style based on outdated grammar/translation ideology, and who reject the active-communicative methodology now considered best practice in Western TESOL circles. Such clients can become troublesome and even disruptive if they perceive that the ELC's methodology conflicts with their preconceived notions of best practice. Unless clients can be shown that the ELC's methodology is actually going to be effective, they may register dissatisfaction with this part of the service.

ELC clients may also have unrealistic expectations of what they can achieve in terms of language and study success within a specific period of time and the realities of both the service performance and their own performance may cause severe disappointment and dissatisfaction. Although some clients may retrospectively adjust their expectations of the service performance to fit in with their actual perceptions (Patterson, Romm, & Hill, 1994), this may not always be the case. The success of a language course, furthermore, depends on a complex interplay of factors, not least of which is the client's own aptitude to learn a language and willingness to expend the required levels of effort

needed for success. Outcomes of language instruction may not be immediate and it may take many months before a client is aware of having made progress.

ELC client satisfaction may also be determined by clients' status as "novice consumers" or "expert consumers" of the service. Whereas novices do not know what to do or how to perform in terms of their role in the service provision, expert consumers do. Novices need to be taught a "service script" so that they can develop the sort of confidence that will lead to effective utilization of what the service has to offer and thus, perhaps, to satisfaction with the service (Bateson, 2002). High customer familiarity with the service process is linked to higher levels of customer satisfaction (Söderlund, 2002). Although most ELC clients will have had prior experience of language instruction, many will not have attended a commercial language school, nor will they be familiar with particular instructional approaches in the New Zealand ESOL context. Their transformation from novices to experts may therefore be linked to the length of their stay in an ELC – the longer they attend, the more "expert" they become. Length of time in the ELC could therefore be linked to satisfaction levels.

A further issue for ELCs relates to diversity of their clientele. There is increasing evidence in the literature that different national and cultural groups, for instance, may respond differently to service provision and express different levels of satisfaction (e.g. Espinoza, 1999; Johnson, Herrmann, & Gustafsson, 2002; Maruca, 2000; Mattila, 1999; Snow, Bartel, & Cullen, 1996; Triplett, Yau, & Neal, 1994; Ueltshchy & Krampf, 2001). Language barriers and associated factors oblige ethnic consumers to rely more on WOM, as previously discussed, but also to develop more long-term relationships with service providers (Pires & Stanton, 2000). Client personal characteristics may also elicit diverse client responses. Research in a retail services context (Homburg & Giering, 2001) has shown that while age, income and variety seeking were important moderators

of client satisfaction and loyalty, gender and levels of client involvement in the service were not. Such issues underline the importance of ELC manager awareness of the make up of ELC clientele and the key marketing function of WOM among potential clients.

Given these issues, ELCs may *manage client expectations* of the service (Lovelock et al., 1998), that is, view customer expectations as a strategic issue (Schneider & Bowen, 1995) and take steps to shape or influence customer expectations with a view to creating a positive perception of eventual service performance. Conventionally, service organisations manage customer expectations by delivering what they promise or even overdelivering, thus creating positive disconfirmation and delight. Complex, professional services such as TESOL may need to go further, devoting resources to educating new clients about the nature of the service – including, for instance, teaching methodology - and, specifically, about what the client can realistically achieve within a given period of time. Although the teaching-learning component is the core of the service, other factors such as the attitudes and service orientation of the ELC staff, the nature of the homestay experience, emotional and physical comfort levels, and a number of tangibles such as decor, facilities, or location may be equally or even more important in terms of creating client satisfaction.

2.3.4 The measurement of customer/client satisfaction

■ *Measurement issues*

There are pitfalls in the traditional satisfaction analysis involving "direct" measures of satisfaction, for instance, the generation of a list of key service features, the rating of these features in terms of importance and an evaluation by the customer of the service in terms of the features (Oliver, 1997). Problems include: the fact that practical constraints mean that not all features could possibly be included; ambiguity over the actual meaning of the term "importance" and its conceptualisation by individual respondents; and the fact

that such surveys often do not actually measure *satisfaction* but other concepts such as *like/dislike*, *service quality* or *likelihood of repeat business*.

An issue commonly reported in the literature is that findings from customer satisfaction surveys tend to be skewed towards the positive with up to 80% or 90% of customers commonly reporting that they are satisfied or very satisfied (Danaher & Haddrell, 1996; Peterson & Wilson, 1992; Stauss & Neuhaus, 1997) with a particular service or product. In spite of this very positive result, a number of studies have shown (Stauss & Neuhaus, 1997) that such professed satisfaction is no guarantee of customer loyalty and that measures of customer satisfaction may not provide a reliable indicator of future customer behaviour. In one study of customers who switched brands, for instance, 90% were found to have been satisfied or very satisfied with the brand they switched from (Reichheld & Aspinall, 1994).

Peterson and Wilson (1992) argued that the well-known skewness phenomenon either meant that there was indeed a high level of general customer satisfaction with goods and services, or that the satisfaction measure was a function of a number of factors in the process, the respondents or the methodology used. Although the former explanation cannot be dismissed out of hand, common sense would tend to suggest that the explanation is rather more complex. While discarding a "ceiling effect" in the measurement scales and response rate bias (for example, satisfied customers are more likely to respond to satisfaction surveys), Peterson and Wilson (1992) cited a number of empirical studies which suggested that satisfaction measures were subject to influence and potential contamination by methodological factors such as:

- *Data collection mode bias*: The level of satisfaction expressed may depend on the type of data collection procedure used.
- *The question form*: The use of a positive form of words (i.e. "satisfied") may result in greater reported satisfaction than a negative form (i.e. "dissatisfied").

- *The question context:* Asking a general question before a specific question may result in a more satisfied response for the latter.
- *Measurement timing:* Customer satisfaction appears to be highest immediately after purchase but declines over time.
- *Response styles:* Personal characteristics may dispose respondents to suspend critical judgement and evaluate to an over-positive extent.
- *Mood:* Responses may be related to respondent mood at the time of the survey, particularly if respondents have not thought about the topic until asked a specific question.

The operationalisation of these factors in terms of the client satisfaction survey used in this study is discussed in Section 3.6.1.

■ ***The choice of a satisfaction scale***

Although single item measures of customer satisfaction have been in use, such scales do not capture the complexity of the various dimensions of satisfaction, nor are they sound in terms of establishing reliability (Danaher & Haddrell, 1996). Evidence weighs in favour of multi-item scales to capture satisfaction data, particularly in terms of their increased reliability and convergent and discriminant validity (Yi, 1990). For these reasons, much of the customer satisfaction research has moved to multi-item scales which are able to capture responses to key components of the particular service.

A survey of the satisfaction literature identified three broad categories of customer satisfaction scale in use by researchers (Danaher & Haddrell, 1996):

- *performance scales, e.g. poor, fair, good and excellent*
- *disconfirmation scales, e.g. worse than expected to better than expected*
- *satisfaction scales, e.g. very satisfied to very dissatisfied*

Of these three, the *disconfirmation* model has enjoyed increasing support in the literature (e.g. Danaher & Haddrell, 1996; Erevelles & Leavitt, 1992; Parasuraman et al., 1988; Yi, 1990) since, as discussed in Section 2.3.1, it embraces one of the key elements of the satisfaction response, namely *expectations*, and addresses the complexity of the satisfaction concept as a psychological process (Oliver, 1997), involving the dichotomy between what clients expect of a service and what they actually perceives they have got. When subjected to quantitative analysis, comparison with expectations has a higher correlation with customer retention than either quality or satisfaction measures. Also, the use of a disconfirmation scale can reduce asymmetry in the measure of perceived service, which skews results towards the top end of the satisfaction scale (Devlin, Dong, & Brown, 1993; Rust, Zahorik, & Keiningham, 1994).

Patterson et al. (1998) likewise found that the concept of expectation was an important reference point for the development of customer satisfaction among overseas students in Australian universities and that "the disconfirmation of expectations paradigm explains (dis)satisfaction at least on individual dimensions" (p. 154).

Danaher and Haddrell (1996) demonstrated the disconfirmation scale to be superior to either the satisfaction or the performance scale in terms of reliability and convergent, discriminant, and face validity. The disconfirmation scale also corrected the skewness commonly experienced with other forms of satisfaction scale and was also found to have greater managerial value, because it provided a more consistent picture of customer satisfaction with individual elements of the service.

2.3.5 Comparative English language centre satisfaction studies

The general lack of empirical research into ELC management issues has already been reported. This lack extends to surveys of client satisfaction with ELC performance. Several searches of the education and management databases could detect no journal reports of ELC client satisfaction surveys. Although the language travel industry regularly surveys ELC clients in various countries, such surveys tend to be rudimentary (e.g. Language Travel Magazine, 2001a). More extensive, professionally managed surveys may be carried out by individual institutions or by industry bodies but the findings are generally for internal, member consumption only. One Australian English language industry body that produces substantial occasional reports with some client satisfaction data is Education Australia (formerly The ELICOS Association). While the most recent report is not publicly available at the time of writing, the previous report (ELICOS Association, 1997) used data from 41 member ELCs and a sample of 2,134 English language students, representing 4.4% of the total 1996 ELICOS student population. However, client satisfaction was only one of many dimensions. Satisfaction items were restricted to one each on *ESOL programme quality*, *ELC accommodation assistance* (not the same as a homestay programme) and *welfare/social programme*. No other satisfaction data is reported.

In response to the question, "How satisfied are you with the quality of the English language course you are currently taking?", 44% of respondents said they were satisfied or very satisfied and 14% that they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied, while 42% had a "neutral perception" (ELICOS Association, 1997, p. 149). Furthermore, 62% of respondents said they would recommend their ELC to a friend. Although it is possible to compare the New Zealand survey reported here with the ELICOS survey in terms of recommendation findings, it is not possible to compare the satisfaction findings because of the nature of the questions and the different type of satisfaction scale used. Such issues make it difficult to establish levels of comparability for the ELC client satisfaction findings from the research presented in this study.

2.4 CLIMATE AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE CENTRES

Climate is a generic term referring to a class of dimensions that many have argued is so broad and diverse as to make the concept useless.

(Glick, 1985, p. 605)

The research reported on here investigated the service climate of English language centres. This section explores the origins, conceptualisation and application of *climate*, discusses problems, controversies and measurement issues, and examines the nature of service climate.

2.4.1 Origins of the *climate* concept

The word *climate* is derived from the Greek κλιμα, meaning *the slope or inclination of the earth*, thus a region or zone of the earth. Over time, *climate* came to mean *the atmospheric conditions prevailing in a particular place* and this led on to metaphorical usages such as *political climate, climate of opinion, intellectual climate, social climate* and so on (Tagiuri, 1968). Irrespective of the specific context, the metaphorical sense in which *climate* is used remains essentially the same (Tagiuri, 1968) because:

each time it refers to some feature or characteristic of the *environment* that has consequences for the *behaviour* of an individual or group and to which the person or persons are somehow sensitive.....When everything else is held constant but the climate, behaviour differs. (p. 18)

The relationship between these two concepts, *environment* and *behaviour* provides the focus of the interest in the term *climate* as it is used in this study.

At the very least since the work of Mayo (1933), Roethlisberger and Dickson (1939) led to the emergence of the Human Relations School of management thought, the environment that people work in has been regarded as a key influence on their behaviour, specifically in terms of explicating their motivation

and performance in organisations. Managers and researchers, particularly in the areas of organisational behaviour and psychology, have been interested in investigating the inherent nature of organisations in order to capture those elements that may influence incumbent behaviour and thus the outputs of the firm, with a view to improving productivity. It was to this end that interest grew in the concept of *climate* as applied to the management of organisations.

The concept *climate* in its organisational-behavioural-psychological sense emerged from *Gestalt psychology*, a branch of psychology which argues that people perceive the world in wholes and that human behaviour should therefore be studied wholistically rather than atomically (Malim & Birch, 1998). However, over time, social psychology became a more important influence (Verbeke, Volgering, & Hessels, 1998). *Climate* found initial expression in the early *climate* literature and the Lewinian field theory (Lewin, 1936, 1951). The first mention in an organisational setting is commonly taken to be Lewin et al's (1939) study of how different leadership styles create social climates which go on to affect productivity (Schneider, 1990).

Subsequent work was carried out by: Lewin (1951), who described the need to consider the situational and contextual factors that influence behaviour and developed the equation $B = f(P, E)$, that is, behaviour is a function of the person and the environment; Fleishman (1953) in his study of leadership climate in a training context; Morse and Reimer (1956) in their study of participation and decision-making among employees; Argyris in his study on group dynamics (1958); Pace and Stern (1958) in their study of climates in colleges in the USA; McGregor (1960) who expounded the concept of "Theory X" and "Theory Y" managerial climates; Likert (1961) and Barker (1965) who made qualitative observations of natural organisational settings; and Halpin (1966) who examined the organisational climate of elementary schools in the USA.

These efforts culminated in the appearance of Tagiuri and Litwin's (1968) work of collected articles which explored *climate* as a construct in an organisational context. Although the term *climate* as used in a psychological-behavioural sense had been extant for some 30 years, it was not until Tagiuri and Litwin's (1968) work that a commonly accepted conceptualisation of the term began to crystallise.

2.4.2 Conceptualisation of *climate*

The concept of *climate* has been subject to definitional confusion, particularly in respect of its relation with the concept of (*organisational*) *culture*. The fact that 32 separate definitions of *climate* have been identified in the literature (Verbeke et al., 1998) are testimony to this. Some of the major issues are discussed below.

Early climate studies tended not to shed much light on a clear conceptualisation (Reichers & Schneider, 1990). Nevertheless, *climate* gradually acquired a meaning roughly along the lines of *the quality of the internal environment of an organisation as experienced by its members*. Forehand and Gilmer's (1964) definition focused on the features of the organisation as specifiable, measurable properties. They saw *climate* as a set of characteristics that:

- distinguish the organisation from other organisations,
- are relatively enduring over time,
- influence the behaviour of the organisation's members.

Tagiuri and Litwin's (1968) collection of edited articles was the first attempt at a serious conceptualisation of the term *climate*, presenting a variety of views ranging from that of *climate* as representing *the intrinsic characteristics of the organisation* to that of *climate* as *individual perceptions of these conditions*. Tagiuri (1968) took exception to Forehand and Gilmer's (1964) undue emphasis on the organisation as a whole and the lack of focus on member's sensitivity to

different organisational attributes and therefore offered this definition of *climate*:

a relatively enduring quality of the internal environment of an organization that (a) is experienced by its members, (b) influences their behaviour, and (c) can be described in terms of the values of a particular set of characteristics (or attitudes) of the organization. (p. 27)

Tagiuri (1968, pp. 24-25) also provided a detailed taxonomy of the properties of *climate* as he saw them (Table 2.4). Some of the enduring elements of *climate* are already identifiable from this list of attributes, principal among which are: the notion that *climate* is created by agencies external to the individual, that it can be subject to consensus and shared meaning, and that it can be a cause, leading potentially to various effects, for instance, individual or organisational performance.

Table 2.4

Tagiuri's (1968) Properties of Climate

CLIMATE PROPERTY
A molar, synthetic concept
A particular configuration of situational variables
Component elements may vary
The meaning of an enduring situational configuration
Has a connotation of continuity
Determined by characteristics, conduct, attitudes, expectations of other persons
Phenomenologically external to the actor
Phenomenologically distinct from the task
In the actor's/observer's head, though not necessarily in conscious form
Capable of being shared consensually and interpreted in terms of shared meanings
Not a common delusion but based on external reality
Has potential behavioural consequences
<u>An indirect determinant of behaviour by acting on attitudes, expectations, states of arousal</u>

Litwin and Stringer (1968) reinforced the notion of *perception* as a key component of *climate* and they defined *climate* as “a set of measurable properties of the work environment, based on the collective perceptions of the people who live and work in the environment and demonstrated to influence their behaviour” (p.1).

These two works (Litwin & Stringer, 1968; Tagiuri & Litwin, 1968) are regarded as marking the beginning of the contemporary history of the concept of *climate* (Reichers & Schneider, 1990). Throughout the 1970s, a series of articles examined the links between *climate* and other behavioural-organisational constructs. These included: *an individual's level in the hierarchy* (Schneider & Bartlett, 1970), *organisational structure* (Payne & Pugh, 1976), *needs* (Downey, Hellriegel, & Slocum, 1975), *groups and subgroups* (Drexler, 1977; Howe, 1977), *job satisfaction* (Payne, Fineman, & Wall, 1976) and *performance* (Guion, 1973; La follette & Sims, 1975; Lawler, Hall, & Oldham, 1974; Pritchard & Karasick, 1973).

At the same time, articles began to appear reviewing the concept and attempting to find a common approach to issues such as conceptualisation and measurement (Field & Abelson, 1982; Hellriegel & Slocum, 1974; James & Jones, 1974; Powell & Butterfield, 1978; Rousseau, 1988; Woodman & King, 1978). As an outcome of these activities, consensus began to form around a confirmation of Litwin and Stringer's (1968) original notion of *climate* as *a perception or a reflection of the way people in organisations perceive and come to describe the characteristics of their environment* (Verbeke et al., 1998).

■ **Current status of the climate concept**

Climate is probably one of the best-researched constructs in recent times within the area of organisational behaviour. Guion (1973) suggested that it could be one of the most important constructs in many years to enter the area of industrial-organisational psychology.

A key reason for this strong interest lies in the fact that *climate* has a functional character because it is both a basis for interpretation and a guide to action. Organisational members gain a perception of the kind of policies, practices and procedures that are rewarded, supported, and expected and that indicate the sort of goals that are important to the organisation and how they are to be achieved (Kopelman, Brief, & Guzzo, 1990). Thus, as is clear from some of the previous examples given of climate studies, climate researchers have been concerned to establish links between *climate* and organisational variables in an attempt to explicate behaviour – in particular, employee behaviour - within organisations.

Because *climate* is conceptualised as an intervening variable between organisational inputs and outputs, climate studies have tended to focus on the search for both the antecedents to an organisation's climate and outcomes of particular climate states. For instance, James and James (1989) showed that *climate* was linked to antecedents such as *structure*, *socialisation*, and context variables including *technology*. Aspects of human resource practice such as *goal emphasis* or *reward orientation*, as well as *organisation design*, have been linked to *climate* (Kopelman et al., 1990) and have been found to have a significant, indirect effect on customer satisfaction (Rogg, Schmidt, Shull, & Schmitt, 2001). Management support has been shown to contribute directly to job satisfaction and work effort and indirectly to customer perceptions of employee service quality (Yoon et al., 2001).

Climate has also been linked to individual outcomes such as *effort*, *citizenship behaviours*, *job satisfaction*, *staff turnover* and *productivity* (Hackman & Oldham, 1976; James & Tetrick, 1986; Reichers & Schneider, 1990; Schneider & Bowen, 1985) and to organisation-level outcomes such as *organisational effectiveness* and *efficiency*, *technical performance*, *corporate performance* and *safety effectiveness* (Kangis & Williams, 2000; Kopelman et al., 1990; Kozlowski & Hults, 1987; Zohar, 1980). Of particular interest to the research

presented here is the demonstration of a significant relationship between employee perceptions of climate on the one hand and customer satisfaction and customer reports of service quality on the other (Schneider et al., 2000; Wiley & Brooks, 2000). A major outcome of these studies, therefore, was that they appeared to demonstrate a causal link between *climate* and elements of organisational performance.

2.4.3 *Climate and culture*

As noted above, a fundamental controversy in the literature has been the confusion between *climate* and *culture*. The popular use of the term *culture* as applied in the management literature to organisations is linked to the symbolic interaction and social constructionist theories of cultural anthropologists and ethnographers such as Margaret Mead (1901-1978), but it was not until the early 1980s that "the cultural perspective burst onto the organizational studies scene" (Denison, 1996, p. 619). Although previous writers such as Barnard (1938) had discussed the importance of norms and values in organisations, it was Pettigrew (1979) who initiated contemporary interest in the notion that organisations have cultures with his article tracing the development of an organisation's culture over time. Deal and Kennedy's (1982) classic was followed by a plethora of studies, both scholarly (e.g. Schein, 1985) and popular (e.g. Peters & Waterman, 1982).

In spite of the fact that the terms *climate* and *culture* have clearly different origins and are based on discrete intellectual traditions, Schneider's (1985) comment that they were "used interchangeably for years" (p. 595) points to the blurring that has existed between them. By the late 1980s, some consensus seems to have emerged that *climate* referred to organisational members' *perceptions* of a set of organisational dimensions (Reichers & Schneider, 1990) whereas the term *culture* was applied to the *inherent nature* of an organisation's values, beliefs and assumptions. "Culture exists at a higher level of abstraction than climate and climate is a manifestation of culture" (Reichers

& Schneider, 1990, p. 29); organisational culture deals with beliefs, perceptions and behaviour whereas organisational climate has been built up from measures or qualitative assessments of individual perception (Pettigrew, 1990).

Differences also became apparent in the purposes of climate studies and culture studies. Climate studies commonly view organisations as rational entities with defined purposes and are concerned with explaining why some organisations are more effective than others, as well as focusing on the behaviour of organisational members with a view to managing and - possibly - changing that behaviour. Culture studies tend to focus on an understanding of behavioural motivators, language, or symbolism (Hoy, Tarter, & Kottkamp, 1991; Reichers & Schneider, 1990) using description and comparison, that is, looking at the dimensions of one culture and comparing them with another.

Despite perceived differences between *climate* and *culture*, it is indeed important to remind ourselves how closely related they are, as Reichers and Schneider (1990) commented:

Both climate and culture deal with the ways by which organization members make sense of their environment. These sense-making attempts manifest themselves as shared meanings that form the basis for action. Both climate and culture are learned, largely through the socialization process and through symbolic interaction among group members. (p. 29)

Each of the two concepts should therefore be viewed as important for an understanding of the other. In particular, climate studies should be acknowledged for their key role in providing insight into an organisation's culture. A number of writers (e.g. Turnipseed, 1988) have conceptualised *climate* as existing within *culture* and have acknowledged the possible mutual effects the two concepts have on each other. *Climate* is "the top layer on an organization's culture" and *culture* includes *climate* (Schneider & Bowen, 1995,

p. 239). According to Verbeke et al. (1998), "organisational climate is created by a group of interacting individuals who share a common frame of reference, i.e., the organisation's culture, as they come to terms with situational contingencies" (p. 308).

Sparrow and Gaston (1996) likewise perceived "considerable overlap between the two, with climate resulting from an organization's culture" (p. 694). Increasingly, therefore, *climate* is being seen as a "window" into the *culture* of an organisation. While the two concepts are different, climate is a useful indicator of culture (Payne, 2000). In Denison's (1996) view, *culture* and *climate* are merely different components or interpretations of the same phenomenon. Recent research (Glisson & James, 2002), however, provided some evidence in support of the view that *climate* and *culture* are separate constructs.

2.4.4 Climate studies in services and education

Since the emerging popularity of the climate concept in the 1950s and 1960s, a considerable number of climate studies have been carried out in a wide range of industry and organisation types. Two areas of climate research that might be expected to be of interest for a study of service climate in ELCs are those of *climate in educational contexts* and *climate in service contexts*. Although the two research streams share some common ground and claim to be studying what is essentially the same concept, rather different approaches have been taken and different emphases laid by the researchers in each case.

Education climate researchers have focused on climate type classification and in particular on identifying "positive", "healthy" or "open", as opposed to "negative", "unhealthy" or "closed" climates (Deer, 1980; Halpin & Croft, 1962, 1963; Hoy et al., 1991). Such an approach is not evident in the services climate literature. The main thrust there has been to link employee perceptions of key

dimensions of a service organisation's climate with perceptions of effectiveness, such as customer satisfaction.

This fundamental difference in approaches may be a reflection of the respective commercial/non-commercial orientations of the types of organisations studied. However, it serves to underline the difficulties involved in attempting to apply lessons from these two - ostensibly similar but in fact rather diverse - research streams to a study of ELC service, which might *seem* to synthesise elements of both. While the two streams can offer valuable data, there are in fact problems that urge caution when attempting to apply their findings to a study of ELC service climate.

The small body of extant climate for service research has focused largely on banks, financial institutions, and retail outlets and the researchers were able to access sizeable respondent populations within large national organisations. Such organisations are likely to differ somewhat from ELC service operations in terms of size, the nature of the work, the status of the service providers, the structures, the reporting relationships, and the organisational cultures.

Similar problems exist in relation to educational climate research. Much of it has focused on US, British or Australian public or state school or college systems (Deer, 1980; Halpin & Croft, 1962, 1963; Hoy et al., 1991). Studies of school climate have tended to be generic, that is, studies of climate *per se* and not deconstructed into discrete climates (see below). Furthermore, such studies have tended to focus on issues that are literally foreign to the type of educational institution which is the subject of this report, for example issues such as school discipline, parental involvement, or the widespread use and effectiveness of standardised national achievement tests. Intrinsic features of the schools studied differ so markedly from those of ELCs that it is difficult to establish any commonality. Differences include the range of subjects taught, the duration of the student's association with the institution, the relative

institution sizes, the class sizes, age parameters, student characteristics and cultural backgrounds, as well as modes of assessment and teaching culture.

The large number of college and university climate studies similarly tend to be focused on institutions in the USA but, in contrast to the school climate research, are almost completely deconstructed, focusing on specific domains. These often refer to quasi-societal themes such as the treatment and integration of minorities or disciplinary issues (e.g. Heggins, 2001; Pewewardy & Frey, 2002; Pfeifer & Schneider, 1974), topics that may have little relevance to ELC service. A search of the various databases could not locate any studies of service climate within an educational context.

For these reasons, the sizeable corpus of studies in educational climate have been discounted as pertinent to this study. The literature on service climate is dealt with below (Section 2.4.7).

2.4.5 Climate problems and controversies

Despite some consensus on a conceptualisation of *climate* by the early 1970's, the concept continued to be "ambiguous, nebulous and controversial (Furnham, 1997, p. 581) and the area of climate research "a conceptual morass" (Glick, 1985, p. 601). There persisted "many conflicting definitions of climate, inconsistencies in operationalisation and little theoretical integration" (Rousseau, 1988, p. 140). A number of problems and controversies continue to surround the *climate* concept and some of these are discussed below.

■ *Climate – objective or subjective?*

A controversy surrounds the issue of whether climate is *subjective* or *objective*. *The subjective view* sees climate as the perception of the organisational environment held by its members. That is, climate represents a cognitive structuring created by individuals over time (Drenth, Thierry, & de Wolff, 1998; James & James, 1989; James & Sells, 1981). Individuals interpret and respond

to contextual variables in a psychologically meaningful manner and not on the basis of objective descriptions of contextual attributes (Moran & Volkwein, 1992). A problem with this approach is that in assuming meaning is imposed by individuals on organisational processes and events, it may not adequately take into account the extent to which interaction with other individuals is significant, particularly in terms of interpretation and assignment of meaning (Moran & Volkwein, 1992).

The objective view, conversely, sees climate as the attributes of the organisation, that is, a set of objective characteristics, such as size or structure, that can be observed and perceived by organisational members but which exist independently of these perceptions (Denison, 1990). According to this view, climate is therefore "how it is", not "how it is seen to be". Thus to Glick (1985, pp. 601, 605), climate consisted of "a class of organisational rather than psychological characteristics" and when climate research is carried out, data should be collected on informants' - *not* respondents' - descriptions of the actual climate, not their psychological climate. Glick (1985) therefore saw climate as an external stimulus, whereas other researchers (e.g. James, Joyce, & Slocum, 1988) saw climate as an internal representation of the external stimulus. Research supporting the objective view has shown that structural variables such as *centralisation*, *size* and *structural level* are linked to climate perceptions (Hellriegel & Slocum, 1974; Payne & Pugh, 1976.)

There are, however, several problems with the objective/structural approach. A number of studies have identified different work group climates in organisations and this finding is inconsistent with the notion that structural factors are common throughout organisations. In addition, if a climate is a response to identifiable organisational structural characteristics, an organisation's climate should logically demonstrate a consistent and significant relationship with these characteristics. However, findings from structure/climate relationship studies have reported a high degree of inconsistency between the two. Nor does the

approach give enough credence to subjective response to and interpretation of organisational contexts (Moran & Volkwein, 1992).

■ ***Perceptions and consensus / interaction***

Within the subjective/perceptual approach to climate there are a number of controversies surrounding the issues of *perception* and *consensus/interaction*. A major dissension exists between two groups of researchers who are best represented by, respectively, L.R. James and B. Schneider. Both are prolific writers and researchers in the areas of psychology and organisational behaviour.

The ideas of James and his various collaborators (e.g. James & Jones, 1974; James et al., 1988; James & Sells, 1981) embody an approach to climate that has been referred to as the *cognitive schema approach* (Anderson & West, 1998). This approach views individuals as employing *schemata*, that is, cognitive patterns of social interaction stored in the memory (Malim & Birch, 1998) or "internal semantic meanings, semantic networks, prototypes, cognitive categories" (James & McIntyre, 1996, p. 421) not only to apprehend and describe environmental attributes but also to *assign value to them* through a process of cognitive appraisal. It follows that although two individuals may experience the same environmental attributes, the operation of different schemata is likely to result in markedly differing evaluations of those attributes.

This school of thought therefore rejects the notion that climate should necessarily be assigned, studied and measured at anything higher than the individual level since "only rarely do members of a situationally defined collective such as a team agree completely (that is, demonstrate consensus) on the psychological variables that comprise climate" (James & McIntyre, 1996, p. 419).

Not only do people respond to work environments in terms of how they perceive them, the meaning of a particular situation to an individual is the most important aspect of perception. Thus James and Sells (1981) defined climate as "individuals' cognitive representations of cognitive environments ... expressed in terms of psychological meaning and significance to the individual" (p. 276).

However, some climate researchers reject the evaluative nature of perceptions and prefer to focus on their *descriptive* nature. Climate consists of "psychologically meaningful descriptions of the work environment that serve as a basis for interpretation and... a guide to behaviour" (Kopelman et al., 1990, p. 297). Perceptions of climate summarise people's *descriptions* of their organisational experiences and not their *affective* or *evaluative* reaction to what they have experienced (Koys & DeCotiis, 1991). By reflecting individual perceptions of an organisation, climate focuses on *descriptive beliefs* regarding organisational properties rather than *normative beliefs*. While the former tell us what is in the eye of the beholder, the latter imply what should be done (Rousseau, 1990).

In contrast to the *cognitive schema approach*, the *shared perception approach* (Anderson & West, 1998) stresses that, over time, due to the interactive nature of the organisational context, employees develop *shared* or similar perceptions that represent their organisational climate (Ashforth, 1985; Glick, 1985; Reichers & Schneider, 1990; Schneider, White, & Paul, 1998). Schneider's (1987) attraction-selection-attrition model and theories of social behaviourism (Mead, 1934) and symbolic interactionism (Blumer, 1969) have been offered to support the *shared perception* point of view (Schneider & Reichers, 1983). Meaning, which includes perceptions, descriptions, and evaluations, is not inherent in things or people but is a socially constructed reality and arises from interactions among people, for instance in work groups. Thus Schneider et al. (1998) viewed climate as "the *shared* perceptions of employees concerning the practices, procedures and kinds of behaviours that get rewarded and supported in a particular setting" (p. 151).

A recent study of *collective climate* (see below) found strong correlations between the formation of collective climates and employee interaction (Young & Parker, 1999), findings that would tend to lend support to the symbolic interactionist perspective on climate. However, the fact that acquired meanings are actually shared among members of a social unit cannot simply be assumed but must be demonstrated through evidence provided by empirical data (James, James, & Ashe, 1990).

A further problem concerns the use of the terms *concur/agree/agreement*, *shared*, and *consensus* to describe the nature of climate perceptions, which have been popular with climate researchers since early days (e.g. Evan, 1968; Tagiuri, 1968). As Verbeke et al. (1998) noted, the "shared" element has now become more central to the conceptualisation. The problem is that while an accurate interpretation of *climate* hinges to a certain extent on the exact meaning of these terms, they are not normally defined or explicated by their users (e.g. Cohen, 1995; Glick, 1985; Kopelman et al., 1990; Koys & DeCotiis, 1991; Schneider et al., 1998) and in fact have been used interchangeably.

What exactly do we mean when we say that perceptions are "shared" or that there is "consensus" on perceptions? It could, for instance, be said that both *agreement* and *consensus* imply active rather than passive states, i.e. interaction and communication among members of a group on a particular issue. On the other hand, *shared* could imply something held in common but not necessarily as a result of interaction and/or agreement and perhaps even without mutual knowledge of the sharing. Employees, for instance, could "share" a dislike of a manager without actually having discussed their feelings with each other. It is therefore not clear whether *shared perceptions* necessarily mean the same as *consensus/agreement* on perceptions.

A further element has been introduced into the debate by the development of the concept *climate strength*, based on the work of Chan (1998) and operationalised by Schneider, Salvaggio, and Subirats (2002). While climate strength is “like” the term *consensus* (Schneider et al., 2002, p. 221) as discussed by Lindell and Brandt (2000), the former is based on a dispersion model but the latter is based on a direct consensus model. In other words, the conceptual difference lies in the way that climate consensus/climate strength is measured.

While the role of consensus/agreement has been emphasised by climate researchers, little appears to have been done to research the issue of exactly how consensus/agreement is, for instance, related to climate antecedents, outcomes or other variables (Lindell & Brandt, 2000) or how shared perception results from social interaction (Rousseau, 1990). One of the few exceptions was the investigation of climate strength and service quality (Schneider et al., 2002). However, climate studies have tended to either conveniently ignore the issue or use inappropriate statistical measures to argue for consensus (Lindell & Brandt, 2000).

The issue is important because, if one is to take the shared perceptions approach, consensus across dimensions must be demonstrated to be of an acceptable level within a particular organisation, otherwise climate cannot be said to exist. However, this is a doubtful theoretical position, since a construct should exist globally or not at all (Glick, 1985). The problem of taking a valid climate measure is discussed in more detail in Section 2.4.6 below.

■ ***Psychological, organisational, and collective climates***

This controversy concerns the “unit of theory” (James, 1982) for climate and relates to the level at which the climate construct should be operationalised, that is at the individual level or at the organisational level. Partly as a result of the different approaches outlined in the previous section, *cognitive schema*

adherents maintained that since *climate* is actually a product of personal values developed through a person's perceptions and interpretation of situations through psychological processes, the term *psychological climate* (Burke, Borucki, & Kaufmann, 2002; James et al., 1990) was an appropriate descriptor.

James et al. (1990) discerned four factor clusters of psychological climate, namely, *role stress and lack of harmony, leadership facilitation and support, job challenge and autonomy* and *work group cooperation, friendliness and warmth*. They further explained (pp. 55-56) the key aspects of psychological climate as:

- valuations or cognitive appraisals of environmental attributes in terms of their acquired meaning and significance to an individual;
- higher-order schemata resulting from personal values representative of attributes in the work environment which are desired for enhancing, maintaining or protecting an individual's sense of organisational wellbeing;
- an appraisal of the degree to which the work environment is beneficial as opposed to detrimental to one's self.

According to Rousseau (1988) psychological climate is formed by factors such as personality, individual thinking styles, cognitive processes, organisational structure, organisational culture and social interaction. Rousseau (1988), however, maintained that the problem with psychological climate is that it is virtually identical to *cognitive style*, that is, the way in which individuals conceptually organise their environment. If one adopts this approach, is perceived climate, then, not merely a function of a person's personality, rather than of the actual organisation?

If the notion of a *psychological climate* originates from the cognitive schema school, the construct of *organisational climate* is more closely associated with the shared perceptions approach. Empirical studies (Drexler, 1977; Paolillo & Paolillo, 1982; Zohar, 1980) appear to confirm the existence of organisational climate as a construct. Wallach (1983) developed a three-dimensional measure

of organisational climate based on the work of a number of climate researchers including Litwin and Stringer (1968). However, an actual explanation of how organisational climates form has not been so easy to develop (Moran & Volkwein, 1990).

Organisational climate "is expected to be widely shared within organisational units subjected to the same policies, practices and procedures" (Kopelman et al., 1990, p. 295). Moran and Volkwein (1992) defined *organisational climate* as:

A relatively enduring distinguishing characteristic of an organisation which embodies members' collective perceptions of their organisation in terms of dimensions such as autonomy, trust, cohesiveness, support, recognition, innovation and fairness; results from member interaction; serves as a basis for interpreting the situation; reflects prevalent norms, values and attitudes of the organisation's culture; influences and shapes behaviour. (p.20)

This definition is interesting for the fact that not only does it see organisational climate as being based on perceptions and interactions among members, it also sees climate as reflective of the organisation's culture. How these perceptions of a range of external stimuli actually lead to shared perceptions and meanings of organisations is an issue that has occupied a number of climate researchers (e.g. Schneider & Reichers, 1983).

A further climate type, namely *collective climate*, has also been identified. While a *collective climate* - like organisational climate - results from agreement of members regarding their perceptions of an organisational context, it may be represented in terms of clusters of individuals who share similar perceptions of their work environment. These similar perceptions may be a result of similar individual characteristics such as *work experience*, *length of time with the organisation* or *age*, but work-related factors such as *function* and *location* may

also account for the similarities (Rousseau, 1988). In an organisational context, therefore, collective climates would be held by subgroups of employees with something in common.

However, what exactly that something is remains unclear. Are collective climates comprised of groups of people who share similar interpretative schemata (but may, for instance belong to different work groups) or are they members of the same department or employee interactionist group (Schneider & Reichers, 1983)? Young and Parker (1999) put this to the test and their findings supported the interactionist view, that is, they found a close relationship between shared climate perceptions, employee interaction, and the formation of collective climates. Nevertheless, they admitted that there is still disagreement regarding the actual meaning of *collective climates* and that there is still a suspicion that "they are simply statistical artefacts of the clustering procedures used to generate them" (p. 119).

■ ***Discrete climates***

One of the problems with the practical application of *climate* has been the complexity of the construct. While the multidimensional nature of climate enables it to encompass a large number of psychological and organisational dimensions, this is also a disadvantage as such a state of affairs renders the construct indistinct (Guion, 1973). "Saying that everything is related to everything else does not provide much of an explanation" (Glick, 1985, p. 606). A reductionist approach may therefore be called for.

One solution to limiting the number of climate dimensions is for researchers to use dimensions specifically associated with the study's criteria of interest (Glick, 1985). Focusing on *discrete* or *facet-specific* climates in this way reflects a trend away from undifferentiated summary perceptions of entire organisations towards "conceptual vigour, methodological sophistication and precision in the use of perceptual data" (Rousseau, 1988, p. 148). Since *climate* is not an

omnibus construct, "non-specific measures of climate are useless for anything but the most gross description of the range of variation in organisations" (Schneider & Reichers, 1983, p. 22).

A number of researchers have taken this advice, deconstructing the generic term and focusing on a particular domain or dependent variable within the broad climate concept and, in some instances, investigating links between these variables and specific organisational outcomes. Despite dissenting voices (e.g. James et al., 1990), empirical support for such an approach was provided by Lindell and Brandt (2000).

As Tagiuri (1968) pointed out, this use of discrete climates was already evident in the early climate research. Lewin et al. (1939) and Fleishman (1953), for example, focused on *leadership style*, McGregor (1960) explored *managerial climate*, and Hall and Schneider (1973) emphasised *the climate surrounding psychological success*. One of the earliest articles linking climate specifically to services, examined the perceptions of employees and managers of the *service climate* or climate for service of a bank (Schneider, 1980).

Further studies have looked at, for example, the climate for *safety* (Sherif, 2002; Zohar, 1980), *motivation* (Litwin & Stringer, 1968), *innovation* (Delbecq & Mills, 1985), *quality* (Banas, 1988), *industrial relations* (Dastmalchian, Blyton, & Adamson, 1991), *creativity and change* (Isaksen & Lauer, 2002), *fairness* (Henley & Price, 2002), *diversity* (Hicks-Clark & Iles, 2000), *initiative and psychological safety* (Baer, & Frese, 2003), and even *sexual harassment* (Fitzgerald, Drasgow, Hulin, Gelfand, & Magley, 1997), as well as the *learning climate* (Cunningham & Iles, 2002; Hult, Ketchen, & Slater, 2002), the *ethical climate* (Peterson, 2002; Wimbush & Shepard, 1994), the *cultural climate* (Ancis, Sedlacek, & Mohr, 2000), and the *moral climate* (Cohen, 1995) of organisations.

Such a focused approach is beneficial, both in terms of binding the construct and facilitating the creation of more precise instruments for assessing organisational climate (Schneider, 1990).

■ ***Application of approaches***

This overview of climate controversies has, of necessity, been brief and the issues presented in summarised form. Other attempts have been made to summarise the various approaches to climate study (e.g. Moran & Volkwein, 1992) but the field remains confusing and complex. As far as this study is concerned, the approach taken was based on the *subjective/perceptual* approach of climate, which acknowledged the role of interaction as argued by Schneider and Reichers (1983). This study likewise adopts a *discrete climates* approach by focusing on dimensions of a climate for service within the organisations surveyed, that is ELCs in New Zealand, and investigating the link with a specific organisational outcome, that is, client satisfaction.

2.4.6 Climate measurement issues

If we accept Schneider et al.'s (1998) definition of climate above, instruments for measuring climate would be expected to specify practices, procedures, and behaviours that are expected of employees by management. In terms of a climate for service, for example, the meaning employees attach to the rewards and support for service-oriented practices, procedures and behaviours communicates a message about what particular service outcomes are valued and - at least in theory - focus is therefore directed on the energies and competencies needed for the attainment of these outcomes (Schneider, 1990). In reality, the measurement of climate is characterised by a number of problems and controversies, several of which are discussed in this section.

■ ***Climate dimensions***

The two most common climate measurement approaches are *categorical* and *dimensional* (Furnham, 1997). The former attempts to classify climates into specific categories. Halpin and Croft (1962), for example, categorised school climates as “open”, “autonomous”, “controlled”, “familiar”, “paternal” or “closed”. However, this is a limited methodology as it lacks fine discriminability, may not use appropriate categories, and fails to address the fact that organisational climates are multidimensional (Furnham, 1997). While the categorical approach has therefore not been particularly popular in its pure form, it has been subject to some adaptation (e.g. Sparrow & Gaston, 1996).

The latter - *dimensional* - approach has been the preferred option among climate researchers who view *climate* as a multidimensional construct consisting of measurable dimensions that apply across a variety of work environments and also across organisations. Statistical methods were used to develop a variety of climate scales or taxonomies of climate dimensions. However, such has been the proliferation of dimensions that there was a danger of there being as many different scales as there were surveys (Furnham, 1997). One study (Koys & DeCotiis, 1991), for instance, identified over 80 separately labelled dimensions of climate in the literature.

To illustrate this point, three examples of global dimensional climate scales are provided (Table 2.5, next page). Although over 30 years old, Litwin and Stringer’s original (1968) climate scale appears to have retained its currency with a number of researchers (e.g. Sommer, Bae, & Luthans, 1995). Those developed by Kopelman et al. (1990) were used by Cohen (1995) and Butcher (1994). Moos’s (1974, 1994) scale was used by Turnipseed (1988) and Minor (1998). As is evident from the Table 2.5, there is some overlap across the scales in terms of construct but there are also considerable differences which serve to illustrate the problems inherent in reaching consensus as to a scale for

the measurement of a global organisational climate. This gives some indication of why the discrete climates approach has become so popular.

Table 2.5
Examples of Climate Scale Dimensions

LITWIN & STRINGER (1968)	KOPELMAN, BRIEF & GUZZO (1990)	MOOS (1974 AND 1994)
STRUCTURE feeling workers have about constraints in work situation - number of rules, regulations, procedures	GOAL EMPHASIS the extent to which management clarifies goals	INVOLVEMENT employee concern about and commitment to their jobs
RESPONSIBILITY feeling of being own boss, not having to double-check decisions	MEANS EMPHASIS the extent to which management clarifies methods	CO-WORKER COHESION mutual employee support
RISK sense of riskiness/challenge in job and work situation	REWARD ORIENTATION the extent to which rewards are perceived as based on performance	SUPERVISOR SUPPORT includes encouraging mutual employee support
REWARD feeling of being rewarded for job well done, emphasis on reward vs punishment	TASK SUPPORT the extent to which employees get what they need to complete tasks	AUTONOMY extent to which employees are encouraged to make their own decisions
WARMTH/SUPPORT feeling of good fellowship and helpfulness in the organisation	SOCIOEMOTIONAL SUPPORT the extent to which management consider the personal welfare of employees	TASK ORIENTATION emphasis on planning, efficiency and performance
CONFLICT feeling that management not afraid of different opinions/conflict, emphasis on immediate settling of differences		WORK PRESSURE work demands, time pressure
		CLARITY employee knowledge of what to expect plus communication of rules and policies
		MANAGERIAL CONTROL management use of rules, procedures to control staff
		INNOVATION emphasis on variety, change, new approaches
		PHYSICAL COMFORT physical quality of work environment

In an attempt to address this issue of scale proliferation and dissensus and develop one authoritative instrument, Koys and DeCotiis (1991) content analysed existing scales and synthesised the key elements. Their resulting scale is displayed in Table 2.6. In terms of dimensional scales for the measurement of discrete climates, as would be expected, each scale tends to be tailor-made to fit the respective concept under investigation as a retail service climate scale (Borucki & Burke, 1999) demonstrates (Table 2.7).

Table 2.6

Synthesis of Climate Scale Dimensions (Koys & DeCotiis, 1991)

<p>AUTONOMY e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •closeness of supervision •individual responsibility 	<p>PRESSURE e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •role ambiguity/role conflict •achievement emphasis •job standards 	<p>RECOGNITION e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •feedback •rewards
<p>COHESION e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •conflict •peer relations •esprit de corps •workgroup cooperation 	<p>SUPPORT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •leader consideration •leader work facilitation •management awareness 	<p>FAIRNESS e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •fairness of reward system •policy clarity
<p>TRUST e.g.</p> <p>intimacy vs aloofness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •leader trust •openness 		<p>INNOVATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •organisational flexibility •challenge and risk

Table 2.7

Retail Climate Scale Dimensions (Borucki & Burke, 1999)

CONCERN FOR EMPLOYEES	CONCERN FOR CUSTOMERS
Goal emphasis	Organizational service orientation
Means emphasis/training	Merchandise-related obstacles
Management support	Employee-preparation-related obstacles
Non-monetary reward orientation	Human-resource-related obstacles
Monetary reward orientation	

■ ***The aggregation issue***

Climate has a perceptual-psychological foundation. As Schneider (1990) pointed out, climate research is dominated by the assumption of a connection between members' perceptions and their behaviour, and perceptions are therefore the fundamental diagnostic data of climate research. However, a controversy remains over individual-level and shared/organisational perceptions of climate. This dichotomy becomes more controversial when applied to methodological issues, specifically the assessment or measurement of climate within organisations. The problem centres round climate researchers' practice of measuring what are essentially individual perceptions but then aggregating the perceptions to yield a composite of the lower level scores that can then be used for comparative purposes across sub-units, branches or organisations. Since climate is expressed - and measured - in terms of an individual's perception of the dimensions of that climate (Schneider, 1990), it has been argued that such practices can produce only misleading results.

However, while acknowledging the two positions, it has been pointed out that they are not mutually exclusive (Anderson & West, 1998) and some researchers who have perceived the issue to be more a question of methodology than conceptualisation adhere to the belief that perceived climate is an organisational phenomenon that can be aggregated (Dastmalchian et al., 1991). Schneider (1990) argued that there is no problem as long as perceptions are analysed at a meaningful level and their aggregation at that level makes conceptual sense. This implies that respondents must be provided with "a frame of reference appropriate for the level of analysis for which the data will be used" (Schneider, 1990, p. 388). In other words, the ability to aggregate depends on the content of a survey instrument in respect of the particular respondents and the measure of within-organisation variance. "A small within-organisation variance would suggest that climate is useful and representative of an organisational attribute" (Dastmalchian et al., 1991) since that would imply consensus among individuals.

Sparrow and Gaston (1996) likewise concluded that "consistent patterns and characterizations of climate can be identified at the organizational level from measures of individual perceptions" (p. 695). Findings from several studies (Schneider, Ashworth, Higgs, & Carr, 1996; Schneider et al., 1998; Wiley, 1996) into surveys of employee perceptions of organisational policies, practices and procedures would tend to support the validity of such aggregation at least at unit level and suggest that more reliance than previously thought possible can be placed on the accuracy of such surveys. Other studies (Anderson & West, 1998; Griffin & Mathieu, 1997) have supported the validity of the shared perceptions approach within work groups in organisations and the aggregation of data at that level. The sheer number of climate studies that make use of aggregated data are likewise testimony to the general acceptance - at least for the practical purposes of research - of this practice.

■ ***The consensus issue in the measurement context***

Convincing as these arguments may sound, and Dastmalchian et al.'s (1991) stance notwithstanding, the problem of actually establishing consensus needs further clarification. Specifically, what is the most suitable statistical procedure for validating climate consensus within a sample? Climate is usually measured by using a climate instrument that asks respondents to rate organisational attributes on a Likert scale. *Climate quality* (Lindell & Brandt, 2000) is determined by the proximity of the mean to the positive endpoint of the scale. Thus on a Likert scale with ratings from 1 to 5, the closer the mean is to 5, the higher the climate quality. Some researchers have traditionally assumed that a measure taken using such a procedure and based on a normal analysis of variance (ANOVA) would be sufficient to demonstrate consensus. However, other researchers (James, Demaree, & Wolf, 1984) have pointed out the limitations of ANOVA in specific data collection scenarios and particularly when ANOVA is derived from comparisons of within-group variance with empirically obtained values of between-group variance (Lindell & Brandt, 2000).

The controversy over the most suitable index of climate consensus led James, Demaree, and Wolf (1993) to propose the r_{wg} index as a likely solution. This is computed by comparing within-group variance to a theoretical reference distribution. James et al. (1993) stressed that r_{wg} was an indicator of interrater *agreement* but not interrater *reliability*. While r_{wg} has itself been the subject of considerable debate in the literature (e.g. Kozlowski & Hattrup, 1992; Schmidt & Hunter, 1989), it has been used apparently with success in a number of studies (Andrews & Rogelberg, 2001; Hater & Bass, 1988; Kozlowski & Hattrup, 1992; Lindell & Brandt, 2000; Schneider & Bowen, 1985).

■ **Description vs valuation/affect**

As discussed in the previous section, a number of climate researchers have emphasised the descriptive rather than the valuative/affective nature of the perceptions involved in climate development and have consequently made specific recommendations about the choice of wording in climate instruments. "The accuracy and construct validity ofmeasures [in climate questionnaires] can be improved by asking descriptive rather than affective questions" (Glick, 1985, p. 608). If this advice were accepted and implemented, it would mean that respondents could only be required to *describe* a particular attribute but *not* ascribe a value to their perceptions of it. An item like "My manager provides me with feedback on a weekly basis" would be acceptable since it could attract only a *descriptive* response, whereas "My manager provides me with useful feedback on a weekly basis" would be rejected since it requires a *valuative* response. A climate instrument based on the descriptive approach is in theory likely to produce a "pure" picture of the particular climate being studied.

In practice, however, it may be difficult to divorce description from valuation (Ashforth, 1985) and more complex items than the two examples above could cause difficulty for a respondent. Glick (1985), for instance, gives the example of an item that requires a respondent to report on the level of pressure on

employees to be productive within the organisation. Glick insists that the respondent must report accurately on the pressure within the organisation *regardless of the pressure on the respondent him/herself*. The question has to be asked, how could a researcher ensure, no matter how well-constructed the wording of both the item and the instructions, that respondents are able to divorce their own affect in respect of the attribute of *pressure*? Such "distance" on the part of respondents would appear difficult, if not impossible, to confirm in reality.

Furthermore, a review of climate instruments currently in use and reported in the literature indicates the widespread use of the valutive alongside the descriptive approach. For instance, Butcher (1994, p. 512) included these two items within the dimension "Goal Emphasis": "My supervisor sets goals to improve my performance" and "My supervisor sets realistic work standards". While the former can clearly be descriptively processed, the latter appears to require a valutive response. The verb "rate", which in itself implies valuation rather than description, is commonly used in instructions to climate questionnaire respondents as well as in discussions of climate research methodology. In addition, choice of scale may be problematic. Typical climate questions include abstract dimensions such as "pride", "trust", "knowledge", "manager responsiveness" or "manager support" (Borucki & Burke, 1999; Cohen, 1995; Schneider et al. 1998; Young & Parker, 1999), which have a pretty clear affective/valuative connotation. It is difficult to imagine how a survey respondent could respond "descriptively" to such items.

It can therefore be seen that while in theory a descriptive response may be desirable, in practice, given human constraints and the sorts of information researchers need to get from respondents, it is virtually impossible to exclude a valutive or even an affective element from the responses of participants in climate surveys.

2.4.7 Service climate

As noted above, a major segment of climate research has focused on *discrete climates*. This approach has been adopted in this study, which concerns itself with the *service climate* of ELCs. This section examines the concept of service climate, reviews the literature, and identifies some generic dimensions.

■ Conceptualisation of service climate

A service organisation such as an ELC would be expected to have a *service climate* or a *climate for service* (Schneider, 1980). This concept has been explained by Schneider et al., (1998) as "employee perceptions of the practices, procedures and behaviours that get rewarded, supported and expected with regard to customer service and customer service quality" (p.151).

A strong service climate might be said to exist in an organisation when employees perceive that management regard quality service as important and support and reward employees who deliver such service (Schneider et al., 1998). Both Johnson (1996) and Schneider et al. (1998) found that a climate for service might develop if *foundation issues* are addressed which indicate management's concern for employees. These foundation issues (Schneider et al., 1998) include internal service, that is the mutual support among departments and colleagues, and facilitative conditions such as sharing information with staff, providing feedback, appropriate supervisor behaviours, training, and the removal of obstacles to the provision of excellent service (Schneider & Bowen, 1993).

Further key human resource practices are: the facilitation of personal career development and planning; of newcomer entry to the organisation through socialisation and training; and of job performance, plus the fostering of an awareness of working for an organisation that has a high status and image in the community (Schneider, 1994). A measure of the service climate of the organisation would be based on employees' perceptions of how these concepts

are operationalised as practices or behaviours that result in the delivery of superior service.

Early service climate research was carried out by Schneider and various collaborators, who identified service climate themes in banks and financial institutions in the USA by investigating employee perceptions of their workplace service climate, as well as customer perceptions of the quality of service provided by those employees (Parkington & Schneider, 1979; Schneider, 1980; Schneider et al., 1980). These studies appeared to show a positive service climate was inconsistent with employee role ambiguity, conflict, frustration and turnover. Schneider et al.'s (1980) dimensions of service climate among bank employees are displayed in Table 2.8.

Table 2.8

Dimensions of Service Climate (Schneider et al., 1980)

SERVICE CLIMATE DIMENSION
Bureaucratic orientation to service (e.g., following rules, procedures, routines)
Enthusiast orientation to service (e.g., sense of "family", innovation)
Managerial behaviour (e.g. planning, goal-setting)
Rewards for service excellence
Customer retention
Personnel support (e.g. training)
Operations support
Marketing support (e.g. understanding customers)
Equipment/supply support

A further study of the employees of three financial institutions in the USA identified a "passion for service" – that is, a strong or positive climate for service - among employees (Schneider et al., 1992). A positive climate for service correlated most strongly with the solicitation of and responsiveness to customer opinion. Other key correlations are shown in Table 2.9 (next page).

Table 2.9
Positive Correlations With a Passion for Service (Schneider et al. 1992)

RANKING	VARIABLE
1	Solicitation of/responsiveness to customer opinion about quality of service
2	Selection process
3	Existence of established procedures for delivering service
4	Performance feedback or non-monetary rewards
5	Perceived internal equity of compensation
6	Timing, availability and content of training
7	Interaction/coordination between units/levels
8	Organisational planning and emphasis on service outside location

Baker and Fesenmaier's (1997) study of service climate in a theme park compared managers' and employees' perceptions of customer expectations of quality service with significant factors in the service climate. The findings showed correlations between specific elements of the service climate and respondent ratings of quality expectations. A key implication of the study was that variation in manager and employee ratings of customer expectations could be explained by understanding their perceptions of service climate.

In their study of service climate in a large retail store chain, Borucki and Burke (1999) found that there was a positive relationship between service climate variables and the importance of service to management and that service climate variables were predictive of sales personnel performance which, in turn, was predictive of financial performance. This research was significant in underlining the link between a management concern for both employees and customers, thus suggesting that the nature of the climate for service can actually impact on the "bottom line" of an organisation.

However, a study of service climate in *small* businesses (Andrews & Rogelberg, 2001) turned up a different set of findings, namely that "the more the owner

valued service, the lower the employees rated the service climate” (p. 127). This contradictory finding was explained by the researchers as due to a false consensus effect: a specific owner projected her values on to staff, assumed they valued service as much as she did, and therefore did not see the need to actively encourage positive service behaviours.

The service climate studies cited here are of interest as representative of the body of research but given the over-emphasis on financial institutions in the USA, the findings must be treated with some caution since they may not be generalisable to other service types. Service operations are highly differentiated in terms of type, size, and complexity. Specific service types are likely to possess their own particular service climate properties and even within one service type there may be fundamental differences between the processes involved and the way that customers respond to these processes (Danaher & Mattson, 1998). The contrary findings from the last two studies cited above provide a suitable illustration of these points.

Nevertheless, when taken together with the general climate literature, it appears that some generic elements of a climate for service within organisations can be identified. Pugh, Dietz, Wiley, and Brooks (2002) synthesised two decades of climate research into eight *drivers of service climate* (Table 2.10, next page), which have some similarity with some of the generic dimensions of climate (Section 2.4.6). These drivers are supplemented by a more substantial list of service climate elements gleaned from the literature (Appendix A).

Table 2.10
Drivers of Service Climate (Pugh et al., 2002)

DRIVER	DEFINITION
CUSTOMER ORIENTATION / SERVICE QUALITY EMPHASIS	Management emphasises meeting customer needs and their expectations for service quality.
MANAGEMENT SUPPORT	Management facilitates employees' service delivery.
HIRING	Management hires employees who are motivated and able to meet customer demands / maintains adequate staffing levels.
TRAINING	Management provides training that equips employees with the knowledge and skills needed to service customers efficiently.
REWARDS AND RECOGNITION	Management recognizes and rewards employees for their service performance.
TEAMWORK	Management fosters teamwork in the service delivery process.
SUPPORT SYSTEMS	Management designs systems that remove obstacles to work and enhance employees' abilities to serve customers.
CUSTOMER FEEDBACK	Management solicits and uses feedback from customers to improve service delivery.

The application of Schneider et al's (1998) definition of service climate to ELCs would result in a set of ELC staff perceptions about the practices, behaviours, and procedures rewarded, supported, and expected in the ELC context. The elements of service climate as presented in this section should apply likewise to ELCs especially in areas such as: management facilitation of the service provision and the removal of obstacles; manager communication with staff in terms of, for example, information sharing and the clarification of manager expectations (Johlke & Duhan, 2000); and collegial support (King & Garey, 1997).

2.4.8 Linking service climate and client / customer satisfaction

One of the goals of this study was to explore a possible link between the nature of the service climate of ELCs and levels of client satisfaction with the service. This type of research is known as *linkage research* (Wiley, 1996) because it investigates links between employee perceptions of an organisation's climate and critical organisational outcomes such as customer satisfaction and business performance (Wiley & Brooks, 2000). In reporting on research into service climate and satisfaction in retail stores Wiley (1991) described strong positive relationships between customer satisfaction and how employees described key aspects of a store's working environment. "Those stores most favourably described by employees are generally those stores most favourably described by customers" (p. 121). Wiley's (1996) review of similar studies concluded that the greater the prevalence of certain leadership or organisational practices, the more energised and productive the workforce, leading in turn to greater customer satisfaction and, further, to stronger business performance.

Schneider (1980) made one of the first explorations of service climate and customer satisfaction. In his seminal article about service in a bank, he hypothesised that service employees actually desire to provide good service but often come under stress because of conflicting demands of management and customers. He maintained that positive outcomes for both employee and customer are a direct function of the extent to which the organisation demonstrates a climate for service. Specifically, he set out to prove that "the way customers perceive their treatment when they use the organisation's services should be positively related to what employees say about the organisation's service practices and procedures" (p.55). Schneider found a close relationship between specific elements of service climate and customer reports of superior service (Table 2.11 next page).

Table 2.11

Service Climate Elements Linked to Customer Satisfaction (Schneider, 1980)

SERVICE CLIMATE ELEMENT
Service orientation / customer focus
Manager behaviour exemplifies superior service
Efforts at customer retention
Adequate numbers of well-trained staff
Well maintained equipment
Good level of resourcing

Schneider et al.'s (1980) bank study showed strong correlations between customer and staff perceptions of the quality of the service provided. A replication study (Schneider & Bowen, 1985) largely confirmed this link; later studies also found significant relationships between employee and customer attitudes in service organisations (e.g. Schmit & Allsheid, 1995; Tornow & Wiley, 1991; Wiley, 1991). Wiley's (1991) exploration of the link between retail store service climate and customer satisfaction produced a set of service climate elements most strongly related to customer satisfaction (Table 2.12, next page).

Johnson's (1996) study of the link between employee perceptions of service climate and customer satisfaction in a US bank revealed strong correlations between overall customer satisfaction and information seeking, training and rewards and recognition. Service strategy, service systems, sales and service relationships, and evaluation of service performance had mid-level correlations (Table 2.13, next page). Johnson concluded that his study was evidence for the argument that creating a climate for service is likely to enhance customer perceptions of service quality delivery. Significantly, again, Johnson, like Schneider (1980) and Schneider and Bowen (1985), found a positive correlation between employee and customer perceptions of service quality.

Table 2.12

Service Climate Elements Strongly Linked to Customer Satisfaction (Wiley, 1991)

SERVICE CLIMATE ELEMENT
Timeliness in service delivery
Level of resourcing (tools, equipment, supplies)
Focus on quality over making deadlines
Access to information needed for superior service provision
Quickly rectifying customer problems
Security for employees and company property
Employee satisfaction with training levels
Quality of training for new employees
Perception of customer rating of products and services
Efficient processes and procedures

Table 2.13

Positive Correlations Between Service Climate and Customer Satisfaction (Johnson, 1996)

RANKING	VARIABLE
1.	Information seeking from customers and employees about service quality
2.	Staff training
3.	Rewards and recognition for excellent service
4.=	Service strategy
4.=	Estimate of customer satisfaction
6.	Service systems, i.e. established policies and procedures
7.=	Service support, i.e. cooperation and teamwork between units
7.=	Employee service orientation

It is of interest to compare the results of Johnson's (1996) study with those of Schneider et al. (1992) (Table 2.9). Schneider et al. did not survey customers and the two studies used markedly different methodologies. However, an examination of the findings from both studies shows surprising similarities in the climate variables that correlate significantly with a passion for service on the one hand and customer satisfaction on the other. Specifically, the strongest correlation in both studies was with a virtually identical variable, namely solicitation of opinions/information seeking from customers. Of the eight items listed, six are either identical or similar across the studies. These are:

- seeking customer opinion about quality of service,
- training,
- existence of established service procedures,
- reward/recognition for good work,
- service planning/strategy,
- cooperation/coordination between organisational units.

This comparative finding would tend to support the view - at least in terms of the type of service looked at in these studies - that specific themes such as those listed above may be key elements of an effective climate for service, in terms of producing customer satisfaction.

Schneider et al. (1998) examined the direction of causality between employees and customers in service organisations, that is, does climate for service cause customer perceptions of service quality or vice-versa, or is the relationship reciprocal? Contrary to expectations, a reciprocal relationship was identified. However, given customer involvement in the service and close customer interaction with service providers, such a result is not wholly surprising. Increasing attention is being paid to this reciprocal relationship (e.g. Zeithaml & Bitner, 1996). Schneider et al.'s (1998) findings were confirmed by Yagil and Gal (2002) who concluded that customer satisfaction increases service workers' sense of control, thus enhancing their perceptions of service climate.

Schneider et al. (2002) hypothesised a link between service climate strength and customer satisfaction, namely that when climate strength is high, employee perceptions of the service climate will be more closely related to customer experiences of the service climate. Their investigation of four dimensions of service climate, *customer orientation*, *managerial practices*, *customer feedback*, and *global service climate* found that the hypothesis was supported only for the managerial practices dimension. Schneider et al. concluded that "managers have a more direct and more immediate impact on employees than do other climate constructs" and that "how the manager behaves is a key to the behaviour customers experience" (p. 227).

This section has identified some of the service climate variables that have been found to be linked to customer satisfaction. It should, however, be remembered that most of the studies cited focus on a narrow range of service types. New Zealand ELCs possess characteristics that set them apart from the sort of services so far subjected to service climate research. Most are small- to medium-sized enterprises, sometimes run by owner-managers, with small workforces consisting of both professional and non-professional staff. They provide an educational service, yet function in a commercial environment. They have a young, multinational clientele which accesses the service over variable periods of time.

In addition, as Schneider and Bowen (1995) pointed out, customer satisfaction with a service could also be dependent on individual differences within customers, the degree of customer involvement in the production of the service, or simply the appearance of the service facility and its staff. Although one of the aims of this study is to investigate a possible link between ELC service climate and client satisfaction, it therefore remains to be seen what parallels with previous studies, if any, can be drawn.

2.5 CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to examine service climate and client satisfaction with the service provision of ELCs in New Zealand and to investigate a possible link between the two. This chapter presented an overview of some of the key issues pertinent to such a study, focusing on the three theme complexes of *climate*, *service*, and *satisfaction*.

Background information was provided on ELC operations in New Zealand and the origins and development of the *service* concept were discussed. It was demonstrated that the provision of ESOL courses in ELCs is a service, fitting neatly into the conceptualisation of *service* in the management literature. A number of significant issues relevant to the provision of ELC service were presented and discussed. An attempt was made to classify ELC service within existing models. The issue of client satisfaction was discussed with regard to measurement issues and the role of the expectations/disconfirmation model in the formation of satisfaction and word-of-mouth recommendation. The origins and development of the concept of *climate* were presented. A number of problems and controversies were examined and the more specific concept of *service climate* was discussed.

This chapter laid the theoretical and conceptual groundwork for the study, thus providing a rationale for the choice of methodology. An overview of the methodology is presented in Chapter 3.

Chapter Three
METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

3.1.1 Preview

This chapter outlines the methodology used in the two phases of data collection. Justifications are provided for the methodologies used and detailed descriptions are given of the populations and samples, the construction of survey instruments, ethical issues and the various data collection procedures, as well as the limitations of the methodology. The research findings, discussion, and conclusions are covered in the subsequent two chapters.

3.1.2 Qualitative and quantitative methodology

No precedents existed in the literature to guide the researcher in terms of the nature of service climate and client satisfaction within the management and operation of ELCs. There was no indication of key issues, themes or concepts, nor could any data from empirical research be located. A combination of phenomenological and positivist approaches was therefore used in order to explore the background to climate and satisfaction in ELCs and to gather the necessary data. This involved a preliminary stage of qualitative research to identify issues and gain insights, which were then subjected to quantitative methods.

Qualitative research derives from *phenomenology*, the study of human experience, particularly viewed without pre-judgement or prior assumption (Husserl, 1928). It focuses on the *emic* perspective or the "insider" view (Holloway, 1997) and attempts to understand behaviour in organisations by familiarisation with the people involved and their perceptions, values, rituals, symbols, beliefs and emotions (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 1996). It is an interpretative approach (Weber, 1922) which focuses on humans, their relationship with the world (Heidegger, 1927), and their attempts to interpret and make sense of reality. The theoretical framework derives directly from the qualitative data obtained in a specific context and which is characterised by

“thick” or detailed description. There is usually a close relationship between the researcher and the subjects (Holloway, 1997). Although qualitative research may lack control, be time- and resource-consuming, and be difficult in terms of interpretation of the data, it is seen as more natural, providing insight into people’s meanings and perceptions and leading to new theories (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, & Lowe, 1991).

The quantitative approach is based on the scientific method which traditionally tests and verifies or refutes hypotheses. It is concerned with the observer’s rather than the research subject’s perception and involves research based on a framework imposed by an outsider (Holloway, 1997). It emphasises the directly and physically observable and the assumption that cause-effect relationships must be logically analysed, as well as the use of quantitative methods. Quantitative research is thus a form of *positivism*, i.e. the belief that the world should be measured objectively rather than subjectively and that descriptions of worldly phenomena can be reduced to observable facts and the mathematical relationships between them (Coolican, 1994; Easterby-Smith et al., 1991). Criticism of quantitative methodology (e.g. Sapsford & Abbott, 1996), cites its artificiality, its lack of in-depth understanding of people’s lives, the use of surveys based on decontextualised variables that do not reflect the complexity of the real world, or its inability to generate new theory. On the other hand, quantitative methodology can reach larger populations with relative speed and economy, data being subjected to statistical analysis. With its greater control and methodological rigour, increased objectivity, validity, reliability and replicability of findings (Coolican, 1994) can be claimed.

These two approaches can be regarded as complementary rather than contradictory and many researchers employ both in an attempt to exploit their strengths. The use of such a combination is beneficial since it tends to enhance the research design (Krueger, 1994) and provides more perspectives on the phenomena being studied, particularly when research is being carried out

within organisations and with managers (Easterby-Smith et al., 1991). This was the approach taken in this study (Figure 3.1).

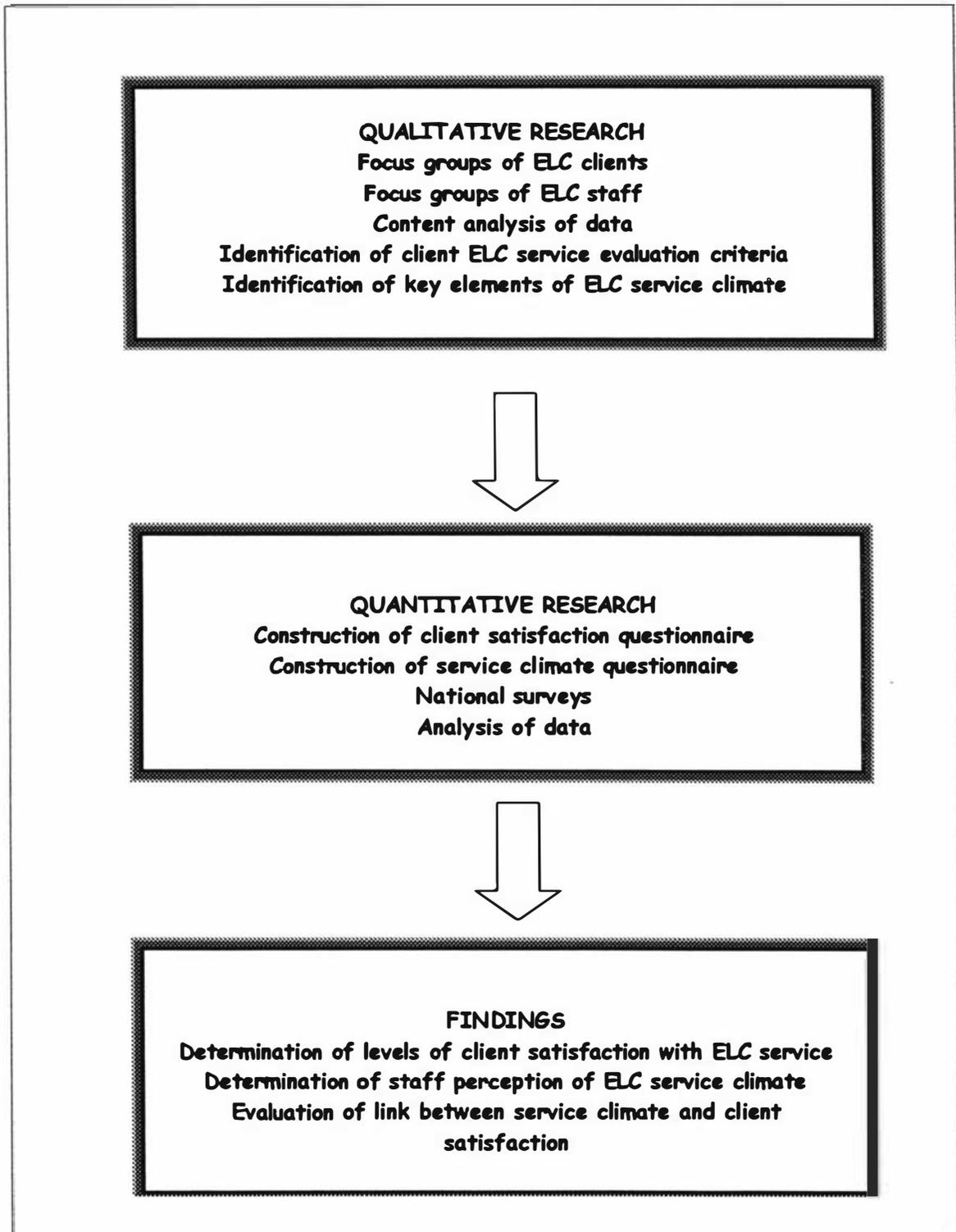


Figure 3.1. Overview of the research

Qualitative methodology was used "to suggest variables to be studied in subsequent quantitative investigations" since "there is so little known about the given phenomenon that it would be difficult for quantitative researchers to look for the right variables" (Slavin, 1992, p. 73). Before a quantitative study could be carried out, a phase of qualitative investigation was therefore required to collect, first, data on service climate in ELCs from a staff perspective and, second, data on ELC performance from a client perspective. Specifically, the qualitative research addressed these issues:

- For ELC staff, what organisational practices determined the provision of superior service to ELC clients?
- For ELC clients, what did they expect from an ELC in terms of superior service, that is, what aspects of the service were most likely to result in their satisfaction with the service?

The answers to these questions would address the first two research questions:

What are the key elements of service climate in New Zealand ELCs?

What criteria do clients use to evaluate the service of New Zealand ELCs?

Focus group interviews and content analysis of qualitative data were selected as the two most appropriate methodologies to achieve this outcome. The findings were used as the basis for the design of two survey instruments aimed at a much larger sample and intended to

- survey ELC staff on their perceptions of their organisation's service climate,
- survey ELC clients on their satisfaction with the ELC service.

The findings from these surveys were subjected to statistical analysis and were used to address the other three research questions:

What kind of service climate do staff perceive exists in New Zealand ELCs?

How satisfied are clients with the service provided by New Zealand ELCs?

Is there a link between the service climate of New Zealand ELCs and levels of client satisfaction with New Zealand ELC service?

3.2 FOCUS GROUP METHODOLOGY

3.2.1 Origins and conceptualisation

Focus groups were selected as the most suitable methodology to fulfill the requirements of the qualitative phase of the research. The original development of focus groups as a research methodology in the early 1940s is attributed to Merton (Merton & Kendall, 1946) and their use has spread from the social science field into business, health, and marketing. Focus groups are recommended due to their ability to quickly convey the consumer experience to business managers, the unique nature of the information gathered, as well as the expanded knowledge available from them (Vaughn, Schumm, & Singagub, 1996).

A focus group has been defined (Krueger, 1994) as:

a carefully planned discussion designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, nonthreatening environment. It is conducted with approximately seven to ten people by a skilled interviewer. The discussion is comfortable and often enjoyable for participants as they share their ideas and perceptions. Group members influence each other by responding to ideas and comments in the discussion. (p.6)

However, attempts at a prescriptive approach to defining focus groups have been rejected (Greenbaum, 1988; Morgan, 1997; Vaughn et al., 1996) since all that can be agreed about focus groups is that they have four basic features:

- A number of respondents participate simultaneously.
- The respondents interact.
- There is a facilitator present.
- There is a discussion outline (Greenbaum, 1988).

This view implies that the parameters of focus group methodology are fairly broad, that methodology is likely to vary depending on the specific context and possibly that focus group methodology is subject to change and innovation over time (Morgan, 1997).

3.2.2 Advantages and disadvantages of focus group methodology

Focus groups can be used to obtain data about new topics, to generate new hypotheses, to explain attitudes, beliefs and experiences within a specific population, to explain unexpected results, to evaluate instruments and programmes, or to assess the effects of group interaction on a particular topic (Seal, Bogart, & Erhardt, 1998). Of these five uses, the first three were pertinent to this study.

There are a number of advantages in using focus groups as a research methodology (Frey & Fontana, 1991). They

- can harness the potential of group dynamics to uncover new data;
- are less costly and more efficient than individual interviews;
- bring the researcher closer to more respondents;
- are flexible, e.g. allowing the researcher to probe;
- provide further insight through non-verbal actions of participants.

Focus group methodology can therefore increase the researcher's understanding of the depth and variation of the context, can identify previously unknown language or symbolism and can help test hypotheses. There are, however, also some limitations (Frey & Fontana, 1991):

- relatively high facilitation skill level required
- practical problems, e.g. location, group composition and access
- group process problems, e.g. responses affected by group size, pressure to conform, interpersonal conflict, production of irrelevant data
- potential lack of generalisability of data to a wider population

However, few empirical evaluations of focus group methodology have been carried out (Morgan, 1997). Many of these "presumed" strengths and weaknesses of focus groups have therefore not been empirically investigated (Morgan & Krueger, 1993; Seal et al., 1998). Several of these presumed strengths and weaknesses of focus group methodology were identified in the course of the research and are discussed in the following section.

3.2.3 Rationale for the use of focus group methodology

In this study, focus group interviews were selected as a key qualitative methodology to obtain data leading to the development of dimensions for both the ELC employee and the client survey instruments. The methodology

- helped clarify target audience vocabulary and thinking patterns;
 - enabled the researcher to discover how respondents see reality;
 - helped identify the dimensions of each domain;
 - assisted the development of quantitative procedures;
 - provided insight into the potential wording of the survey instruments,
- thus enhancing the validity of the subsequent survey instrument (Krueger, 1994; Morgan, 1997).

A piece of qualitative research is *valid* when it has gained complete access to the knowledge and meaning of the informants (Easterby-Smith et al., 1991). The researcher took precautions to ensure this by development of specific question frames and the organisation and facilitation of the focus groups, as well as the content analysis of the data (described in the following sections and chapter). *Reliability* pertains to the likelihood that other researchers using similar qualitative methodology on other occasions would come to the same conclusions (Easterby-Smith et al., 1991). This criterion is slightly more difficult to defend since the make-up of the focus groups on any other occasion is likely to be different. Nevertheless, the precautions in terms of selection of participants and the actual methodology used (described below) would seem to

indicate that at least similar data would be obtained. Given the small size of the sample however, *generalisability* of the findings could not be claimed.

Morgan and Krueger (1993) made the point that professionals' "language and logic are too different and removed from the people they are trying to serve" (p. 16), thus focus group data can provide dimensions, topics, and authentic language for subsequent questionnaire development. This argument was well borne out in the course of the fieldwork. For instance, participants of the staff groups identified one of their key roles as that of mediator between clients and New Zealand society, using the term *interface*. Since the researcher identified this term as an accurate expression of an important concept in the study, he adopted it and used the concept (although not the actual term) in the subsequent survey instrument.

Focus groups are particularly appropriate when

- there is a power differential between participants and decision makers;
- there is a gap between professionals and their target audience;
- investigating complex behaviour and motivations;
- there is a need to learn more about a degree of consensus on a topic;
- a friendly research method is needed that is respectful and uncondescending (Morgan & Krueger, 1993).

Each of these scenarios pertained, at least to some extent, to this investigation. For example, the participants in the group discussion were employees or clients while the decision makers were either the ELC managers or, in some cases, the parents or families of the clients. In this instance, the focus group discussion allowed people not normally consulted to express their perspectives on the issues. Also, given the sensitivity in some ELCs toward allowing research access, such a methodology, it was hoped, went some way towards building trust between the institution and researcher, as well as among the focus group participants.

The drawbacks and weakness of focus group methodology notwithstanding, it would appear that there was a good justification for its use in the context of this research.

3.2.4 Obtaining a sample

■ *Conceptualisation*

Sampling involves selecting subgroups from a population to represent that population for research purposes (Cooper & Emory, 1995). While quantitative research designs typically use randomly selected samples, qualitative research methods such as focus groups select participants based on predetermined criteria related to the extent to which participants are homogeneous and are able to contribute to a successful focus group. The principle of homogeneity is a basic premise of focus group research methodology since it helps create an environment conducive to productive discussion and it is easier for the researcher to segregate specific opinions if the participants represent a discrete segment (Greenbaum, 1988). This kind of sampling is referred to as *purposive sampling* (Vaughn et al., 1996).

Purposive sampling is nonrandom, potentially biased and can lead to large sampling errors (Sproull, 1995). However, in using purposive sampling, researchers are less interested in generalisability than in the collection of rich data and the ideas of the members of the chosen sample (Holloway, 1997). Purposive sampling also increases the possibility that variability common in social phenomena will be reflected in the data collected (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). Researchers choose a group or a number of individuals in whom they have an interest. They may be the members of a culture or a community who have knowledge of the setting or phenomenon under study. These key informants have had experience of an event or condition and are informed about the culture or topic under investigation (Holloway, 1997, p. 142).

It was such principles that guided the decision to use, for the focus group phase of the research, a purposive sample consisting of two groups of key informants drawn from two populations within the New Zealand TESOL community.

The first population was defined as **non-management staff currently employed in English language centres in New Zealand**. This included both teaching and non-teaching staff. Managers were excluded since the focus of service climate research is on employee, not management, perceptions of service climate (see definition and comment, Section 2.4.7).

The second population was defined as **clients currently enrolled in TESOL courses at New Zealand English language centres**. Although there were no actual exclusions for this qualitative phase, an attempt was made to obtain group interview participants with reasonable English proficiency and some experience of ELC services (see next page).

■ **Sampling Frame**

The term *sampling frame* refers to the "list or other representation of the elements in a population from which the sample is selected" (Sproull, 1995, p.110). No sampling frame existed which individually listed either staff or clients of English language schools in New Zealand. In view of the Privacy Act and the practical difficulties involved (such as the fluid nature of the organisations' clientele) no such lists could be obtained from the organisations involved. An approach therefore had to be made to the managers of ELCs in New Zealand to request them to inform staff and clients of their respective organisations about the planned focus group interviews and invite them to take part. English language centres were selected from the membership list on the then current web page of Education New Zealand (Education New Zealand, 1996). During the period the focus groups were being planned, the list contained around 50 of the estimated 70 to 80 ELCs in New Zealand. From the

list, 18 centres were identified that appeared to represent a cross-section of New Zealand ELCs in terms of the following criteria:

- *Type:* Either privately-owned-and-operated commercial ELCs (hereinafter referred to as *private* ELCs) or ELCs run along commercial lines but belonging to publicly funded tertiary institutions such as polytechnics or universities (hereinafter referred to as *tertiary* ELCs)
- *Size:* There was no specific data on this but from the information posted on the organisations' websites a rough estimate of the size of the ELC could be made.
- *Geographical Location:* Although most New Zealand ELCs are concentrated in Auckland and Christchurch, there are numbers dotted around the country. An attempt was therefore made to obtain a spread in terms of geographical location.

Letters were written to the managers of the 18 ELCs (Appendix B), requesting their assistance to set up, initially, focus groups consisting of staff members of the organisations. From the outset, the researcher felt that making a direct request to a single ELC to provide both a staff group and a client group might be asking too much and could lead to outright refusal. Given the problems of gaining entry, this proved to be an accurate assumption.

Eight out of the 18 ELCs approached agreed to participate in the research. In terms of the client groups, the researcher carried out a simple screening procedure in order to ensure appropriate participants were obtained. ELC managers were requested to identify mature clients able to develop and present an opinion, with good English language proficiency, reasonable experience of ELC service, and from a range of different nationalities. Gender balance was also requested. In terms of both client and staff groups, an

absolute minimum of six participants and, if possible, seven to eight was requested as an optimum number (see more on this below). Given the enforced reliance of the researcher on the goodwill and interest of the managers of the organisations approached to obtain sufficient participants for the group interviews, a greater level of sampling methodology sophistication was not possible in this phase of the research.

■ **Group and participant numbers**

Two common questions often asked about focus group interviews are how many groups are required and how many participants a group should have. These questions need to be set against the context of this study in terms of the difficulty of entry to the institutions, the small numbers of employees in each ELC and the small overall number of potential respondents in the New Zealand ELC/TESOL community.

On the issue of how many groups to run, Krueger (1994) suggested that the researcher should continue to run groups until *theoretical saturation* occurs, that is until little new information is provided. Krueger (1994) recommended that the researcher evaluate the situation after the third group and go on to a fourth group only if the third has thrown up new insights. Alreck and Settle (1995) did not specify a number but made the point that one group interview might be enough if the group is representative of a homogeneous population. If not, several groups may be required to ensure a representative sample. More might also be needed if nationwide coverage is needed (Krueger, 1994) and several groups depending on the differentiating characteristics of each group Knodel (1993). Based on these principles, an initial number of four to five groups was aimed at for each of the two target groups in this study, that is a maximum of 10 groups.

Focus groups should consist of between six and 12 participants (Alreck & Settle, 1995; Babbie, 1998; Krueger, 1994). Numbers above 12 are not

recommended because of the limitations on individual participation and there is a trend towards mini-focus groups of four to six participants because of recruitment, hosting and comfort issues (Krueger, 1994). With these comments in mind, the ideal number of participants aimed at was between six and eight. In practice, experience appeared to vindicate this decision.

Ten focus groups, five client and five staff, were therefore run in eight ELCs located in Auckland, Rotorua, Napier, Wellington and Christchurch, from August to November, 1999. In nine out of 10 groups, at least six respondents took part, an overall total of 68 respondents. Thirty-five respondents took part in the client focus groups from a total of 12 countries, as can be seen from Table 3.1 (next page). Although Japanese clients predominated, there was still a respectable spread of nationalities. No clients from P.R. China participated since the period when the focus groups took place was just before the current mass influx and there were virtually none in New Zealand ELCs at that time. Table 3.1 also shows that while good gender balance was achieved overall, females were in the minority in three groups. Respondents were not asked their ages but the range was estimated at twenty to forty years.

In all, a total of 33 ELC staff participated in the staff focus groups, 25 of whom were ESOL teachers and eight, administrative staff. Of the 33, 27 were female and six male, a ratio of 82% to 18%. The female-male teacher ratio was 76% to 24% which very roughly approximates to Haddock's (1998) finding of an 87% to 13% gender split among New Zealand ESOL teachers. (His study did not take in administrative staff.) The breakdown of ELC staff participants is displayed in Table 3.2 (next page).

Table 3.1

Client Respondents by ELC, Gender and Nationality

ENGLISH LANGUAGE CENTRE						
CLIENT COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	1	2	3	4	5	TOTAL SAMPLE
GERMANY		2m	1f			3
AUSTRIA			1f			1
SWITZERLAND	1f 1m	1m	1m			4
THAILAND			1f	1m	1m	3
JAPAN	2f 1m		1f 2m	1m 2f	2f	11
RUSSIA	1m	1m				2
SOUTH KOREA	1m	1f			1m 1f	4
CZECH REPUBLIC		1m 1f	1f			3
BRAZIL				1m		1
SWEDEN		1f				1
UZBEKISTAN					1f	1
CAMBODIA					1f	1
TOTAL MALE	4	5	3	3	2	17
TOTAL FEMALE	3	3	5	2	5	18
TOTAL ALL	7	8	8	5	7	35

Table 3.2

Staff Respondents by ELC, Job Type and Gender

ENGLISH LANGUAGE CENTRE						
STAFF JOB TYPE	2	3	6	7	8	TOTAL SAMPLE
TEACHER	3f 2m	3f 2m	4f 1m	5f	4f 1m	25
ADMINISTRATOR	1f	2f	2f	2f	1f	8
TOTAL MALE	2	2	1	0	1	6
TOTAL FEMALE	4	5	6	7	5	27
TOTAL ALL	6	7	7	7	6	33

3.2.5 Gaining entry to organisations

Gaining entry to organisations and access to research participants to carry out research is a well-known problem for the field researcher. The term *gatekeepers* refers to "individuals...who control information and can grant formal or informal entry and access to the setting and participants" (Holloway, 1997, p. 77). In terms of this study, the gatekeepers in question were New Zealand ELC managers who either owned or managed the organisations to which entry was required. Obtaining gatekeeper permission to enter the field site may involve protracted negotiation and bargaining and according to Neuman (1994), it is ethically and politically astute to meet personally with gatekeepers to gain approval for the research. This was not always possible but good relationships were developed with gatekeepers by phone and email.

Easterby-Smith et al. (1991) pointed out that:

gatekeepers will rarely provide a researcher with access purely for the love of science and knowledge... Unless one can make use of networks or unless the research is clearly felt to be in the interests of the gatekeeper, the chances are that he will not be prepared to commit that most valuable resource: his time. (p. 54)

Neuman (1994) regarded gaining entry as "more analogous to peeling the layers of an onion than opening a door" (p. 393), requiring increasing levels of trust commensurate with the depth and/or variety of access required.

These comments from the literature were borne out by the experiences of the researcher. Given the fact that most New Zealand ELCs are small institutions operating in a highly competitive environment, there is a degree of suspicion of outsiders requesting entry to the organisation for research purposes. This presented a considerable barrier in the initial stages of the investigation and slowed down the progress. Because the researcher was entirely dependent on the ELC manager for the organisation of the focus groups and, specifically, for

passing on to employees and clients the researcher's invitation to take part, considerable tact and diplomacy were required simply to ensure that the group interviews actually were able to take place. Protracted negotiations were therefore required before a suitable number of focus groups could be set up.

3.2.6 Ensuring participation

Having established an optimum number of participants per focus group, a further issue was the problem of ensuring that those people who had committed to participation in the focus group actually showed up. ELC managers were requested to invite seven to eight members of their staff or students, in the hope that the minimum of six could be maintained. The manager was asked to forward the names of interested potential participants to the researcher who sent each one a personal letter timed to arrive approximately five days before the scheduled session. The letter included a formal invitation to attend and provided background information about the research as well as the timing and venue (Appendices C and D). This opening of direct personal contact with each potential participant prior to the focus group was seen as a means of creating in the mind of each one a psychological commitment to the researcher and to the research project. These methods, however, were not seen as foolproof and consideration was also given to offering potential group participants a cash payment to take part.

The question of providing participants cash incentives to participate in research, is controversial because it might encourage favourable attitudes towards issues and attract unqualified people only interested in the money (Alreck & Settle, 1995). However, it is not uncommon for researchers to pay and even to advertise in the press for research participants. There is support in the literature for the use of monetary incentives to compensate participants for their time and effort and amounts from \$US20-\$US100 are suggested (Alreck & Settle, 1995; Krueger, 1994; Morgan, 1988). Krueger (1994) commented that in practice it would be virtually impossible to conduct focus groups without

attention to incentives, citing a study which found 66% of focus group participants saw monetary compensation as the main motivator.

After some reflection on these issues, it was decided that some form of payment would be appropriate in this case. However, the advice of Alreck and Settle (1995) was followed, that is, to choose a level and type of compensation that is commensurate with the task, in terms of the availability of the participants and the effort expected from them. After consultation with colleagues and ELC managers, it was decided to offer employee participants compensation of \$30 and client participants \$20.

Whatever the rights and wrongs of the incentive issue, these combined methods indeed had very positive results. With only one exception, the minimum of six participants per group was achieved. From the 69 who had undertaken to participate only two did not show and in both cases illness was the reason. Indeed, in one case, one more participant than expected took part, as he said, purely out of interest in the topic of discussion. Several participants made positive comments and expressed pleasure that they were being recompensed monetarily for giving up their valuable time. Another spin-off – apart from ensuring attendance – was therefore that the participants were motivated to participate actively and appeared well-disposed towards the researcher. The group sessions therefore took on a positive, "working" character and one result was that a rich vein of data was collected.

3.2.7 Focus groups with second language speakers

Due to the distinctive characteristics of the ELC client participant groups, consideration had to be given to adapting what might be called conventional focus group procedure to suit a specialised context. While the use of focus group methodology is reported on mainly in a North-American/European context, it is not uncommon for it to be used in other cultural contexts (e.g. Bertrand, Ward, & Pauc, 1992; Fuller, Edwards, Vorakitphokatorn, & Sermsri,

1993; Sandhu, 1993) or with ethnic minorities in western countries (e.g. Free, White, Shipman & Dale, 1999; Jarrett, 1993; Kwan & Holmes, 1999). In the studies cited, the participants belonged to a homogeneous ethnic or cultural group and spoke a common language. Typically, where inadequate participant proficiency in the first language of the researcher(s) was identified as an issue, a facilitator was selected from the same ethnic or cultural group as the participants (Fuller et al., 1993; Krueger, 1994) and the discussions were conducted in the native language of the participants. The transcripts of recorded discussion might then first be prepared in the native language and then translated into English (Fuller et al., 1993).

In the investigation reported here, the researcher was faced with a radically different situation. First, although the focus groups were to be conducted in English, the participants did not speak English as their first language. Although the researcher requested the organisations to identify proficient speakers as participants, there was no guarantee that the desired level of proficiency would be fully represented. Second, the participants, by design, were not selected from one ethnic or national group, but represented a range of ethnic or national groupings. Third, the facilitator did not belong to the ethnic or national groups of any of the participants.

Since English would have to be used as a common language, a low level of English language proficiency on the part of participants was a potential barrier to successful focus group outcomes. With the addition of possible cultural inhibitions, there was the potential for active participation on the part of the participants to be limited and for some of the 90-minute period set aside for discussion to be of reduced value. The researcher therefore came to the conclusion that a major assistance for the participants would be to let them have a copy of the outline questions before the focus group discussion. The hope of the researcher was that not only would this facilitate the participants' comprehension of the questions and the concepts and allow them time to

reflect on the issues in preparation for the session. It would also assist their mental preparation for a group discussion in a foreign language and increase their confidence in speaking out on the topics in question.

The researcher was aware that such a course of action might be regarded as breaking the "rules" of conventional focus group practice. However, the literature provided strong support for such flexibility and adaptation in running focus groups (Krueger, 1994; Morgan, 1997; Vaughn et al., 1996). In running cross-cultural focus groups, there may be a need to adapt traditional practice to local conditions in countries such as South Africa, Thailand and Japan (Fuller et al., 1993; Hofmeyr, Templer, & Beaty, 1994; Lokon, 1987). Language difficulties with focus groups of English language students led other researchers similarly to adapt the normal focus group techniques (Brogan, 1990; Day, 1995; Fowle, 1999). Anderson's (1996), standard procedure with multilingual client groups, for instance, was to provide the focus group participants with around six questions *prior to* the session.

The focus groups described here fell into the same category of cross-cultural/language difficulty. In order to be able to contribute meaningfully to the focus group discussion, participants needed time to familiarise themselves with unfamiliar concepts and reflect on them prior to the session. The potential for compromising group dynamics and spontaneity by supplying the participants with a question outline seemed minor in comparison with the likelihood of the client focus groups being a failure by *not* doing it. A lack of preparation on the part of the participants could lead to a totally ineffective focus group session. In practice, the decision appeared correct. Some participants had clearly given careful thought to the issues and had made notes to assist them in the presentation of their views. As the focus group transcripts show, some of the discussions were lively, developing into debates where a healthy exchange of views were made. There was no indication that a prior knowledge of the questions hindered the group dynamic or the formation of

opinions and in fact, the opposite appeared to be the case. The client focus groups were also different in terms of the facilitator role – given the clients' language and cultural inhibitions, a more proactive role was required than in the staff focus groups.

3.2.8 Data collection

The ELC staff group questions covered the following areas (see Appendix E for exact formulation of the questions):

- the participants' understanding of the concept of providing excellent service
- the participants' perceptions of their role as service providers
- how ELCs can provide excellent service
- how managers can help their staff to provide good service
- the role of mutual support among colleagues
- possible barriers to providing good service

The client group questions (see Appendix F) covered the following areas:

- client goals in purchasing ELC service
- what an ELC can do to provide excellent service
- features of a poorly performing ELC
- how ELCs can assist clients achieve their goals
- most and least enjoyable aspects of ELC service

The proceedings of each of the 10 focus groups were audio taped using a multi-directional conference microphone. In order to facilitate an early commencement of data analysis, focus group discussions should be transcribed immediately after they are conducted (Vaughn et al., 1996). Duplicate copies were first made of the recorded tapes and they were transcribed verbatim at the first opportunity. Each transcript was double checked against the original tape recording to ensure accuracy and corrections and revisions were made. On average, each group interview generated approximately thirty pages of transcript. Content analysis was then carried out.

3.3 CONTENT ANALYSIS

3.3.1 Conceptualisation

Content analysis involves making inferences about variables by systematically and objectively analysing the manifest content of data collected during research activities and expressing the findings in quantitative form (Berelson, 1952; Sproull, 1995). The key activity is *coding*, that is meaningfully dissecting qualitative data while keeping the relations between the parts intact, differentiating and combining the data, and reflecting on the resulting information (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The codes are labels or tags which allocate units of meaning to the data being analysed (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The unit of analysis for the coding process is determined, that is, what portion of the data will be selected as the smallest unit to analyse (Sproull, 1995), which represent the themes identified in the data. The source document containing the data to be analysed is then scrutinised and codes are assigned to these themes. Once code assignment is complete, a frequency count can be carried out and the findings represented in summary form. This type of *manifest* content analysis, that is, analysis focusing on the material explicitly presented in the data collected, therefore has a strong *quantitative* character and is not regarded as a qualitative research methodology (Holloway, 1997).

Content analysis has a number of advantages, depending on the type of source material used. It has wide applicability in terms of the content to be analysed, an absence of response bias, and ease of checking for accuracy (Sproull, 1995). Particularly at the manifest level of analysis it has shown itself to be a reliable methodology although there are problems with some types of source material such as non-standard formats and older documents (Sedlack & Stanley, 1992). The major disadvantage of content analysis is the time required to carry it out (Sproull, 1995). Furthermore, some types of document might present difficulties during the coding phase of the analysis (Sedlack & Stanley, 1992).

In content analysis, the researcher is *systematic* in applying identical sets of methods to a consistent body of source data (Sedlack & Stanley, 1992). An example from this study is the use of a specific question schedule. *Objectivity* in content analysis refers to the need for the researcher clearly to determine classification parameters in order to facilitate possible replication of the study. How this was achieved is described in detail below. Analysis must therefore also be *verifiable* (Krueger, 1994). That is the researcher must leave a "trail of evidence" (p.130) that would allow another researcher to repeat the study and arrive at similar conclusions. This researcher ensured that such a "trail" was available by making tape recordings of focus group sessions, preparing transcripts and notes, and developing code and theme lists.

These three requirements are encompassed by a fourth, namely that the theory underpinning a research study should be used as a framework for developing data analysis (Vaughn et al., 1996). The theoretical exposition is a reflection of the research questions and at this point it is worth reiterating the two that pertain here. The rationale for using focus group methodology in this study was as a means of collecting data in order to identify variables to be used in the construction of two survey instruments.

In terms of the ELC staff focus groups, the variables related to staff perceptions of the service climate of the organisation and their identification would help answer the first research question, *What are the key elements of service climate within ELCs in New Zealand?* In terms of the client interviews, the variables related to the clients' perceptions of the service levels provided by the organisations and their identification would help answer the second research question, *What criteria do clients use to evaluate the service of New Zealand ELCs?* These research questions were expanded into a question schedule which was used as a discussion framework with the staff and client focus groups respectively.

Given that the principal aim of this stage of the focus group was to obtain data for the subsequent quantitative survey, content analysis of the data appeared an obvious methodology to use.

3.3.2 Content analysis of focus group data

■ Coding Issues

When carrying out coding actions, the three most important decisions the researcher has to make relate to the selection of *categories*, *units of analysis* and an appropriate *enumeration system* (Sedlack & Stanley, 1992). Holsti (1969, cited in Sedlack & Stanley, 1992) advised that categories should be *relevant*, *exhaustive*, *mutually exclusive*, *independent*, and *unidimensional*.

The notion that categories should be *relevant* refers to the need for the researcher during the coding process to identify categories that reflect the original purposes of the research (Sedlack & Stanley, 1992) as expressed, for instance, through the research questions. The following example from the staff focus groups serves to illustrate a relevant category. The first research question was: *What are the key elements of service climate within ELCs in New Zealand?* These elements are based largely, as discussed in Chapter 2, on the perceptions of employees of their workplace climate. From the climate literature, the researcher was aware that a major theme was likely to be the support obtained from the employees' manager. In answer to the researcher's question "What can a manager do to help you provide excellent service?", a common response from participants was that a manager should support staff professional development. While a number of supportive manager actions were cited and coded, this single category was represented in all staff groups and was in fact one of the major content categories in the data collected.

Exhaustive refers to the notion that sufficient categories need to be assigned to cover any item among the data collected (Sedlack & Stanley, 1992). The success of this characteristic is really a function of how painstaking the

researcher is prepared to be. In this study 91 separate categories were identified from the staff data and 56 categories were identified from the client data.

Mutual exclusivity of categories requires the analyst not to allocate any given piece of content data to more than one category (Sedlack & Stanley, 1992). This requirement is linked to that of *independence*, which means that allocating a category to a piece of data will not affect the allocation of any other data to that category. This requirement is best met by a precise definition of categories (Sedlack & Stanley, 1992). These two requirements are again likely to make coding a time-consuming task; the researcher was faced with numerous decisions about both category allocation and definition.

Unidimensionality requires that each category is derived from one classification principle, that is, a conceptual dimension can only translate into one empirical variable (Sedlack & Stanley, 1992). In a sense, the idea of unidimensionality is akin to that of mutual exclusivity but at a higher level and the term "theme" could be substituted for "dimension". The coder has to be aware that a piece of data that contains two separate dimensions or themes cannot be evaluated as one dimension. In the client focus groups, for example, two separate but closely related themes that emerged were the *teacher as classroom professional* and *the English lesson*. The researcher's perception was that these were expressed as separate dimensions by participants in the focus groups and both could be shown to be linked to the perceived quality of the client's experience. But according to the principal of unidimensionality, they cannot be evaluated as a single dimension. What is not clear is what the coder is to do in such a situation – desist from coding the piece at all? In this case, the researcher made a decision based on the perceived emphasis. If the emphasis was on the person of the teacher, the former dimension was chosen. If the emphasis was on the classroom *milieu*, the latter was chosen. This particular decision became important later when the content data was

translated into questionnaire dimensions: *the teacher* and *the lessons* were placed in separate categories.

Units of analysis can be either a single word, a phrase, a sentence or a paragraph (Krueger, 1994; Vaughn et al., 1996) or can extend to the overall theme or purpose of a document or even the item itself (Sedlack & Stanley, 1992). In this study, the most common units chosen were phrases and sentences with single words; whole paragraphs were less common. While a number of paragraphs were indeed categorised, the main problem with such a long piece of data is that there is a risk that a number of different categories and even dimensions could be identified (Sedlack & Stanley, 1992).

The nature of the data also determines what form of unitisation is used and this in turn is determined by the nature of the participants and the questioning style of the researcher. There was, for example, a clear difference in the discourse styles of the client participants and the staff participants. The former were using a foreign language and their utterances therefore tended to be brief. At the same time, the researcher was obliged to use a more probing technique than with the staff and the transcripts of these client focus groups are visually fragmented. Single words and phrases were therefore the most common units of analysis here. The staff groups on the other hand were different, as one would expect. As the researcher slipped into more of a facilitator role, participant contributions tended to be longer and there were therefore more instances of whole paragraphs being taken as units of analysis. The group dynamic played a role too, and there were clear differences in the discourse style of the staff groups, depending on such factors as the degree of cohesion of the group or the level of inhibition.

The question of whether to count codes is a controversial issue but doing so does not necessarily violate statistical laws (Morgan, 1997). Although commonly used when numbers are required as part of a larger analytic

framework, this approach allows the researcher to understand what the concepts are but not why they occur, and a grounded approach may be preferable in certain cases (Easterby-Smith et al., 1991). Quantitative uses of coding are both useful and obvious in the analysis of focus group transcripts and some researchers may feel uncomfortable about answering their research questions without recourse to this methodology (Morgan, 1997). Particularly in studies like this one where the importance of issues and themes had to be ascertained from the data collected in order to construct the quantitative instrument, quantifying these themes seemed an obvious thing to do.

The researcher has a choice of four basic enumeration systems: *presence or absence*, *space and time*, *frequency of occurrence*, and *intensity of feeling* (Sedlack & Stanley, 1992). The selection of one or the other depends to some extent on the type of data source and the practicalities involved. *Frequency of occurrence* is popular among focus group researchers, having the advantages of being relatively fast, straightforward and, at least compared to the *intensity* system, objective. This system was therefore the researcher's choice.

When it came to totalling the code frequencies and ranking the codes in terms of frequency, the researcher differentiated between codes that had an absolute top ranking and those that had a top ranking *across all or most groups*. The reason for this was that a number of issues had a high frequency but were actually discussed in only two or three out of the five groups in each respondent grouping. It was therefore important to record those issues that had an airing across all five groups in each case and particularly those that had had a high frequency across all groups.

■ **Coding Procedure**

Approaches to coding vary between researchers who have a preconceived template which they apply to the material to be coded and those who develop the codes through an emergent encounter with the data (Miles & Huberman,

1994; Morgan, 1997). In this study, the researcher took the second course. Based on the research experience up to this point he expected certain themes to emerge. However, he had no preconceived *schema* and therefore took what was essentially a "grounded" approach (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) to this part of the research. The procedure used roughly approximated to that recommended by Krueger (1994) and Vaughn et al. (1996) and it was applied to both separate sets of five client and five staff focus group transcripts.

First, each transcript was read once right through to get the "big picture" and identify broad themes and issues, then examined more carefully, units of information being identified and initial codes assigned. Most of the items could be assigned *descriptive* codes requiring little interpretation. However, segments that did not have such a clear meaning were assigned *interpretative* codes (Miles & Huberman, 1994). As the work progressed, codes were further refined or broadened by reformulation to capture item connotation more appropriately. Redundant codes were discarded and new formulations made. Once each of the five transcripts had been coded, a master code list was produced of all codes and code frequencies for each of the five focus groups.

The next task was to arrange the codes into categories or themes. Whereas some collocations were obvious and categories appeared quickly, others were not and considerable thought went into the determination of a number of categories and codings. The greater the number of items assigned to a category, the more difficult it is to classify the category. Particular attention was given to the labelling of large categories, that is, with more than six items (Vaughn et al., 1996). Once all items had been assigned, each category was examined for overlap and completeness (Vaughn et al., 1996) and some adjustments were made. A few unassignable items with low frequency counts were discarded as they contributed nothing to a better understanding of the research issues.

There now existed a master code list with frequency information, organised into general themes, coding categories, and specific codes. After a week the whole process was repeated making use of the *Hyperresearch 2.0* qualitative software package to reprocess the data, focusing on the theory underpinning the study as well as the original research questions. This approach paid off. The materials were viewed from a different perspective and some major changes were made to the way the codes were grouped into categories. Some of the categories themselves were renamed and some were redefined to fit into the theoretical framework of the study.

3.4 QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN

The data originating from the focus groups and content analysis were used in combination with insights from the literature as a basis for the development of the two survey instruments. In designing the questionnaires, the following issues had to be acknowledged:

3.4.1 Likert scale issues

Both survey instruments were based on a five-point Likert scale with a *don't know* (DK) option. A Likert scale is a cognitive, summated-rating scale based on a bipolar continuum with positive and negative ends. Respondents choose between response categories which purport to measure both *direction* (by *agree/disagree*) and *intensity* (by *strongly* or not) of their attitude towards the survey items. Each item is assigned a score and the respondent's attitude can then be measured by calculating a total score (Albaum, 1997; Hayes, 1998; Moser & Kalton, 1971; Sproull, 1995).

The assumption of interval scale properties and the ease of administration and response explain the Likert scale's popularity as a marketing research tool (Albaum, 1997). A five-item Likert scale appears to have more statistical reliability than a dichotomous scale (Hayes, 1998), owing to the greater range of responses available. Respondents appear to prefer such a format to a simple agree/disagree. It is possible to include items whose manifest content is not obviously related to the attitude in question, enabling subtler and deeper ramifications of an attitude to be explored (Oppenheim, 1992). Findings from a cross-cultural study have also suggested (Albaum, 1997) that the Likert scale format tends to have etic properties, that is, is not culture-specific.

■ **Likert scale: interval or ordinal?**

An *interval* level of measurement assumes an equal distance between scale values. An *ordinal* level of measurement arranges values according to their magnitudes but the scale has no absolute zero point and the distances between values are not necessarily equal (Sproull, 1995; Zikmund, 1997). To which does a Likert scale belong?

Purists argue that Likert scales are actually *ordinal* scales. Unless the assumption of intervality can be confirmed, scores on Likert scales have meaning only relative to the distribution scores from other respondents and data obtained is best regarded as *ordinal* rather than interval (Coolican, 1994; Sproull, 1995), especially when the measurement involves attitudes, opinions or ratings (Searle, 1999). Although there is some evidence that a three-point scale (*strongly agree, neutral, strongly disagree*) might qualify as an interval scale, no evidence was found of intervality in a five-point scale (Schertzer & Kernan, 1985).

However, Likert scales have been found to convey interval characteristics to respondents (Madsen, 1989; Schertzer & Kernan, 1985). Almost all ordinal variables should be treated as interval variables since the amount of potential error is minimal compared to the advantages to the analyst of making this assumption (Labovitz, 1971). Scales containing dimensions made up of a number of different variables (as opposed, say, to only one) can more reasonably be regarded as interval scales because of the large number of categories that can be created (Bryman & Cramer, 2001). The scales used in the survey instruments for this project met this requirement. The climate scale had eleven dimensions while the satisfaction scale had nine. The number of variables in each dimension varied from three to thirteen.

Furthermore, Likert scales are widely regarded as interval scales in the management, marketing, psychology and social sciences literature. A survey of

the literature relevant to this study, for instance, revealed overwhelming numbers of journal articles reporting on *climate research* (e.g. Burke, Borucki, & Hurley, 1992; Sommer et al., 1995; Williamson, Feyer, Cairns, & Biancotti, 1997; Zohar, 2000) and *customer satisfaction research* (e.g. Danaher & Arweiler, 1996; Schmit & Allscheid, 1995; Spreng & Mackoy, 1996; Weekes, Scott, & Tidwell, 1996; White & Schneider, 2000), which clearly relied on the assumption of intervality for the Likert scales that were used in the research.

The decision as to whether to treat the Likert scale as interval or ordinal is important since it determines the appropriate tests to use when examining statistical inference. In addition, means can be calculated only at interval levels of measurement (Searle, 1999; Sproull, 1995; Zikmund, 1997). The rejection of intervality for Likert scales would mean that mean values could not be used during statistical analysis. A number of popular and powerful statistical techniques such as parametric tests and regression analysis could not be used either (de Vaus, 1995; Sproull, 1995).

After consideration of these issues, it was concluded that the assumption of intervality could be made for the Likert scales used in the two surveys.

■ ***Interpretation of Likert scale means***

The study used two questionnaires based on five-point Likert scales. For each questionnaire item, a mean score on the Likert scale was calculated. The questions then arose, what were the parameters for each of the five categories and thus how were means to be interpreted? Despite a widespread search in the literature, no advice seemed forthcoming on this question. In theory, the five categories might be delimited as in Table 3.3 (next page).

Table 3.3

Likert Scale Interpretation – 1

SCALES	SERVICE CLIMATE CATEGORIES	CLIENT SATISFACTION CATEGORIES
1.0 - 1.9	strongly disagree	far worse than I expected
2.0 - 2.9	disagree	worse than I expected
3.0 - 3.9	neither agree nor disagree	about what I expected
4.0 - 4.9	agree	better than I expected
5.0	strongly agree	far better than I expected

However, when means were compared with percentage responses in each category, this did not seem a viable scheme. An example can be seen from one of the staff questionnaire items. The mean of 3.85, according to this scheme, translates to "neither agree nor disagree". But in terms of the actual responses for the item, 73.2% of staff actually agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. After further investigation and comparison of a number of sample means with category responses, the following solution (Table 3.4) was adopted:

Table 3.4

Likert Scale Interpretation – 2

SCALES	SERVICE CLIMATE CATEGORIES	CLIENT SATISFACTION CATEGORIES
1.0 - 1.7	strongly disagree	far worse than I expected
1.8 - 2.5	disagree	worse than I expected
2.6 - 3.4	neither agree nor disagree	about what I expected
3.5 - 4.2	agree	better than I expected
4.3 - 5.0	strongly agree	far better than I expected

For the broad purposes of referring to means in relation to response categories, therefore, the above correspondences were used in the quantitative analysis portions of the study.

■ **Midpoint and DK options**

Another issue concerns the significance of midpoint categories such as "neutral" or "neither agree nor disagree". Consumers are reluctant to make extreme judgements and tend to avoid making use of extreme endpoints in surveys (Schertzer & Kernan, 1985). But overall scores central to the distribution could be ambiguous since they either reflect many midpoint attitudes or a balance of a large number of strongly for and strongly against attitudes (Coolican, 1994). There may also be confusion between the meaning of midpoint categories and that of the DK option. It may not be clear, for example, if the choice of a DK option means that the respondent has no opinion or has adopted a position midway between the two opposing viewpoints (Coolican, 1994).

Some researchers argue for omission of the DK option, thereby making use of *forced response* to deal with respondents who want to avoid thinking or do not wish to commit themselves. However, forced responses may be meaningless if the respondent *truly does not know*. Also, the state of not knowing may actually be an important piece of information for the researcher (Oppenheim, 1992). While retaining the DK option, researchers can discourage its use by placing it last in the sequence of Likert scale options. This final position also diminishes the impression that DK is a middle or average position (Sedlack & Stanley, 1992).

The strongest correlate with a DK response is a low level of education reflecting a lack of knowledge of the issues in the survey, although low general attitude strength and whether the question form encourages or discourages the DK response may also play a role. In fact, forcing respondents with no opinion to provide one may make respondents receptive to specific response sets and introduce error into the survey data. Respondents therefore should not only be allowed but encouraged to provide DK as a legitimate response (Schuman & Presser, 1996). In terms of this study, there was potential for genuine absence of perceptions on the part of staff respondents and client respondents with

regard to service climate and expectations/satisfaction, respectively. Both sets of scales therefore included the DK option.

3.4.2 Negative and positive item formulation

The conventional view is that both positive and negative items should appear on an attitude scale in order to measure the entire range of feelings or behaviours. But since negatives like "no" "not" and "never" are easily misread, negative items should be formulated carefully. An equivalent number of negative and positive items should be included in order to avoid a *response acquiescence*, that is, a tendency of respondents to consistently demonstrate one type of response, either negative or positive, to a set of responses (Sedlack & Stanley, 1992; Sproull, 1995).

However, although there is little actual understanding of how acquiescence works, it seems that the degree of acquiescence can be influenced by variables such as the education level of the respondent, the level of respondent involvement in the issue under inquiry, as well as the survey format (Schuman & Presser, 1996). Respondents displaying low involvement tend to agree more with positively than with negatively worded statements, whereas highly involved respondents display more unbiased, normative, and balanced attitudes (Chaiken, 1980; Garg, 1996; Petty & Cacioppo, 1983).

The initial climate scale developed by the researcher contained an approximate balance of negative and positive statements. However the negative formulations were stilted and semantic difficulties meant that they did not always represent a pure "reversing" of the positive item. In addition, the reiterated alternation of negative and positive appeared irritating and confusing, likely to create practical choice difficulties for respondents in continually being forced to reverse their cognitive-attitudinal direction. The intended respondents, that is, TESOL professionals, were very likely to be highly involved in the issues covered by the survey. If the above research was

to be credible, a balanced response could be expected even with a scale containing only positive items. Finally, the researcher was dependent on the ELC managers for access to the respondents. The impression created by a series of negative statements could alarm managers to the extent that they might refuse to cooperate further in the research. For these reasons, it was decided to reformulate all scale items as positive statements.

3.4.3 Question and response order

The conventional advice is to follow a funnel design by going from the general to the specific, to use filter questions early on and to leave respondent classification questions to the end. This was roughly the format used in each of the questionnaires used in this study. However, context effects may occur, that is, other questionnaire items may impact on the interpretation of specific questions by respondents. Thus question order may be an issue if a preceding item influences the response to a later item. Experiments have shown that responses to specific items will vary significantly depending on the inclusion or exclusion of another item or the order of two separate items in an index. Context effects may also come into play when items dealing with aspects of the same issue are grouped together as commonly done in some questionnaire designs. Question-order effects are unpredictable (Schuman & Presser, 1996). However, respondent self-administered questionnaires, as was the case here, provide no control over the order in which the respondent reads and answers the questions, thus obscuring the possible extent to which question-order effects actually occur (de Vaus, 1995).

3.4.4 Questionnaire length

The common view is that questionnaires should be brief but the more specialised the population and the more relevant the topic is to the respondents, the longer questionnaires can be and the less important length becomes (de Vaus, 2002) and this seems the case in this study. Dillman (2000, cited in de Vaus, 2002) found that for general surveys mailed to the public the

optimal length was around 125 items or twelve pages, at which point an increase in length led to a drop in response rates. In both surveys reported here, the maximum number of items was 82.

3.4.5 Statistical issues

Since the major findings of this research project were derived from quantitative surveys of large numbers of respondents, it is important to discuss key statistical issues influencing the design of the survey instruments and the analysis of the data. Since both instruments were essentially measuring tools, the potential for measurement error has to be acknowledged. Measurement procedures may be beset by error from a myriad of sources including: the characteristics of the research subjects, for instance gender, ethnic background or knowledge level; the nature of the researchers and even their appearance or dress; the research context; the content of the measuring instrument, for example the quality of the item formulation; the interpretation by subjects of the measuring instrument; or the coding procedures used (de Vaus, 2002; Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 1996). Such errors could render the instrument invalid and/or unreliable. Researchers are therefore wise to take measures to diminish these errors and to ensure the validity and reliability of their research instruments and thus of their findings. While *validity* refers to accuracy, *reliability* refers to consistency (Sproull, 1995).

■ Validity

Validity is the degree to which an instrument does indeed measure what it is supposed to. Validity is the most important aspect of a measure since an instrument is useless if it does not measure what it is supposed to measure (Sproull, 1995).

Construct validity "is established by relating the measuring instrument to a general theoretical framework" through evaluating theories that can serve as a basis for the instrument (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 1996, p. 170). Both

instruments used in this research were based on the theory underpinning the constructs *satisfaction* and *climate* and, specifically, satisfaction measurement and climate measurement, as discussed and evaluated in Chapter 2. Furthermore, "a measure should be more strongly related to variables you would expect, according to the theory" (Sproull, 1995, p. 81). In this study, for instance, logically, one would expect that satisfied clients would be prepared to recommend an ELC. The validity of the satisfaction measure could then be tested by examining the correlations between levels of client satisfaction with ELCs and numbers of clients willing to recommend them. The construct validity of an instrument could be further verified by statistical procedures such as factor analysis (Coolican, 1994).

Criterion validity includes the notions of *concurrent* and *predictive* validity. The former refers to the comparison of the new measure of a concept with existing, well-established measures. If findings are highly correlated, the new measure is assumed to have high validity. The latter refers to the ability of a measure to predict a second, possible future measure with the same sample, again through a high degree of correlation. The only actual difference between these two concepts is the point in time of the relationship (Coolican, 1994; de Vaus, 1995). Since prediction with the same sample was not within the scope of this study and since no existing measures of ELC service climate or client satisfaction existed, criterion validity was irrelevant here.

Content validity determines "the extent to which the content of the [questionnaire] items adequately represents the universe of all relevant items under study" (Cooper & Schindler, 1998, p. 167). Monitoring the validity of a questionnaire involves examining the items to ensure relevance and inclusiveness and drawing on the judgement of people familiar with the domains and the issues covered by the questionnaire. The process therefore includes an initial investigation of the literature, qualitative methods such as focus groups and the piloting of questionnaires with sample respondent groups.

The current study included all of these activities. The existing literature was accessed for evidence of relevant concepts and dimensions of service climate and client satisfaction. The findings from the focus groups provided the basis for much of the content of both questionnaires. Finally, both instruments were pretested with samples from the relevant populations. During the pretest, respondents were given the opportunity to comment on the content and format and some changes were made as a result of this feedback. For the client satisfaction survey, a key means of supporting content validity was having the questionnaire translated into the respondent languages (see Section 3.6.4). Both instruments therefore demonstrated a high degree of content validity.

■ **Reliability**

External reliability refers to the degree of consistency demonstrated by a measuring instrument over time, thus producing the same results on different occasions (Coolican, 1994). Should the research be replicated, it would be important to obtain consistent results, allowing the generalisability of the findings beyond the original study (Searle, 1999). An instrument's reliability can be checked by carrying out a *test-retest* with the same sample at a later date, and by calculating the correlations between the scores. Unfortunately, there are practical, contextual and psychological problems in doing this and findings may not always be valid (Bryman & Cramer, 2001; de Vaus, 1995). The external reliability of the instruments used here may be of future interest but it does not come within the scope of the study at present.

The *internal reliability* or *internal consistency* of an instrument is a more pertinent issue here and more easily evaluated. This refers to "the degree to which the items that make up the [instrument's] scale are all measuring the same underlying attribute" (Pallant, 2001, p. 6). A measured variable is likely to contain chance fluctuations in measurement known as *random error*. Any individual score on a measure will consist of both random error and the true score. Reliability is the proportion that reflects the true score. A measure of

internal consistency therefore checks to see whether the score for the items on a scale correlate with each other and thus actually measure the true score rather than random error (Stangor, 1998). There are several possible methods of computing the internal consistency but the most common and the most suitable for the instruments in this study is Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha for non-dichotomous responses (Cronbach, 1951). This provides an estimate of the average correlation among all of the items on the scale. "Because it reflects the underlying correlational structure of the scale, Coefficient Alpha ranges from $\alpha = 0.00$, indicating that the measure is entirely in error to $\alpha = 1.00$, indicating that the measure has no error" (Stangor, 1998, p. 85). As a rule, Alpha should be at least 0.7 before the scale can be adjudged reliable. For the instruments used in this project the SPSS 10 computer package was used to calculate Coefficient Alpha and the reliability of the scales.

3.4.6 Tests of statistical inference

Much of the analysis of the findings from this study relied on descriptive statistics such as means and totals. However, in order to truly verify hypotheses, it is usually necessary to examine the relationships and differences between variables, requiring the use of *inferential statistics*.

■ Correlation

Looking for relationships between variables is a fundamental step in providing explanations for particular phenomena. *Correlations* are associations between variables, whereby values of one variable differ systematically by values of another variable (de Vaus, 2002). The two common tests of correlational association are *Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient* (Pearson's r) and *Spearman's rho* (Spearman's). The former is regarded as more robust and powerful and is generally used with parametric data (when assumptions are made about the parameters of the population) while the latter is used with non-parametric data (when no assumptions are made). According to Searle (2001), the three conditions for the use of the more powerful Pearson's are:

- interval or ratio-level data,
- a normally-distributed population,
- similar variance between sets of scores.

Since these assumptions were made, Pearson's r was used to test correlational association.

Two key characteristics of correlation coefficients used in their interpretation are *direction* and *strength* or *size* (Sproull, 1995). Direction indicates either a positive or a negative relationship between variables. "A positive correlation indicates that the variables are varying together. A negative correlation indicates that as one variable is increasing, the other is decreasing" (Sproull 1995, p. 290). *Strength* or *size* refers to the magnitude of the correlation coefficient and is indicated by descriptor sets such as *small-medium-large* or *low-moderate-high* (Cohen, 1988; de Vaus, 2002; Sproull, 1995). The interpretation of correlational strength is somewhat controversial since it can depend on factors such as the type of correlation and sample size, and even on the field of study such as the social sciences or the physical sciences (de Vaus, 2002). There is, therefore, some disagreement among researchers about exactly how correlational strength is to be interpreted. Cohen (1988), for instance suggested:

$r = .10$ to $.29$ SMALL

$r = .30$ to $.49$ MEDIUM

$r = .50$ to 1.0 LARGE

Critics of this scheme might point to the fact that a correlation of $.50$ accounts for only 25% of the variance and should not therefore be referred to as "large".

A rather more cautious approach was suggested by Sproull (1995):

$r = 0$ to $.49$ LOW

$r = .50$ to $.84$ MODERATE

$r = .85$ to 1.0 HIGH

From a review of the literature it would appear that most commentators would regard a correlation of less than .50 as "low" or "weak", while nothing less than .70 could be regarded as "high" or "large". The interpretations used in this study take this more conservative approach.

■ **Regression**

Correlational procedures can provide information on the strength and direction of relationships between variables but the findings cannot imply causality. For this reason a more sophisticated correlational technique, *regression analysis*, is used when prediction is required if causality is to be tested. Regression works by attempting to predict the values of a continuous dependent variable (DV) from the specific values of an independent variable (IV) (Zikmund, 1997).

Multiple regression is a type of regression that simultaneously investigates the effect of two or more IVs on a DV (Zikmund, 1997), the IVs being entered into the equation simultaneously (Pallant, 2001). Multiple regression was used in this study to identify the key predictors of overall client satisfaction from the ELC client survey data.

Multiple regression assumes interval scale data. A number of other data conditions should be met before multiple regression can be used (Osborne & Waters, 2002; Pallant, 2001) and the main conditions are:

- **Sample size:** Tabachnick and Fidell (1996, cited in Pallant, 2001, p. 136) suggest this formula for the required sample size: $N > 50 + 8m$, where "N" is the sample size and "m" is the number of independent variables.
- **Multicollinearity:** This occurs when the IVs are too highly correlated with each other, usually above 0.80, which can lead to instability in the regression coefficients (Bryman & Cramer, 2001).
- **Outliers:** A high incidence of extreme values in the data can lead to inaccurate findings.
- **Normality:** The variables have normal distributions (Osborne & Waters, 2002).

• *Linearity and Homoscedasticity*: This refers to *residuals*, that is the differences between the obtained and predicted DV scores and requires the variance of residuals about predicted DV scores to be the same for all predicted scores (Pallant, 2001). These criteria were applied to the data before multiple regression was carried out. The findings are reported in Chapter 5.

Binary regression is a form of logistic regression used when the DV is dichotomous and the IVs use interval level data (de Vaus, 2002). This technique was used to predict clients' willingness to recommend an ELC based on satisfaction variables.

■ **Analysis of variance**

A number of the study's findings were based on differences between groups. Since intervality was assumed and given the nature of the groups and the type of data, *independent samples t-tests* and *one-way analyses of variance* (ANOVAS) were used to produce differential statistics. Independent samples t-tests are used to compare the mean scores of two different groups by comparing the amount of variability between two sets of scores with the overall variability (Searle, 1999). A one-way ANOVA is used to examine differences between groups of three or more on an independent and dependent variable (Pallant, 2001). Both of these techniques assume interval-level data.

η^2 value	Effect Size
.01	small
.06	moderate
.14	large

To obtain an indication of strength of association between variables, η^2 was used. This is "the proportion of variance of the dependent variable that is explained by the independent variable"

(Pallant, 2001, p. 175). In order to interpret the effect size of η^2 , Cohen's (1988) guidelines were followed (inset). However, several cautions are in order regarding the use of η^2 . Cohen (1988) stressed that the interpretation of effect sizes requires personal value judgement on the part of the researcher. It has also been claimed that η^2 is positively biased, leading to an exaggerated notion

of the true effect and that η^2 values can vary according to the number and size of samples (Barnette & Maclean, 2001). Anecdotally, Cohen's guidelines may not have universal acceptance among statisticians and some may feel that the respective values are too low relative to the descriptors. However, η^2 is a fairly easy concept to grasp, given that values range from 0 to 1, like coefficient values. Furthermore, η^2 is included by the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* among the common measures of effect size, the reporting of which in research papers is "almost always necessary" (American Psychological Association, 2001, p. 25).

■ **Tests of Significance**

Tests of significance support inferential statistical procedures by assessing "the probability that a statistical result in a sample could be due to sampling error alone" (de Vaus, 2002, p. 364). A significance level of 0.10 indicates that there is a 10% probability that a result was based on chance, suggesting that no real difference exists between groups. A significance level of 0.01 indicates that there is only a 1% probability that the results stem from a chance effect, thus increasing the likelihood that the differences observed represent real differences in the population (de Vaus, 2002). Conventionally, 0.05 is taken as the cut-off point with small samples and 0.01 for large samples (de Vaus, 1995). Although a Pearson test may provide a correlation between variables, in effect, this is of little use by itself since the significance level must confirm that the correlation would also hold in the general population. So for instance, if a test produced a correlation of 0.35 but a significance level of 0.27, the likelihood would be that a random error has occurred and a zero correlation in the population would have to be assumed (de Vaus, 1995).

■ **Measuring climate consensus**

As discussed in Chapter 2, climate as a concept is linked with the notion of consensus or shared meaning. A key issue, therefore, was to determine how much consensus existed within the climate data for individual ELCs. Although

there appears to be no method universally accepted by all researchers, the r_{wg} index (James et al., 1984, 1993) has been used successfully by a number of researchers to assess climate consensus and appeared to be suitable for use in this study. r_{wg} is an index of interrater agreement (James et al., 1993) which compares within-group variance with a theoretical reference distribution (Lindell & Brandt, 2000). The complete r_{wg} formula is

$$r_{wg} = 1 - (S^2_x / S^2_{EU})$$

S^2_x is the variance of the climate item and $S^2_{EU} = (c^2 - 1) / 12$, where c is the number of response categories (James et al., 1984; Lindell & Brandt, 2000). A measure of climate on the index could vary on the range -1.0 and $+1.0$. Where variance is small, i.e. r_{wg} close to $+0.1$, there is almost certainly one consensual climate, while an r_{wg} close to -1.0 would indicate the presence of at least two subclimates (Lindell & Brandt, 2000). In addition to identifying consensus/dissensus, it is useful to examine the relationships between them and organisational outcomes. This was achieved through correlational analysis.

■ **Overview of statistical procedures**

An overview of the main statistical procedures used in the study is provided in Figure 3.2 (next page.)

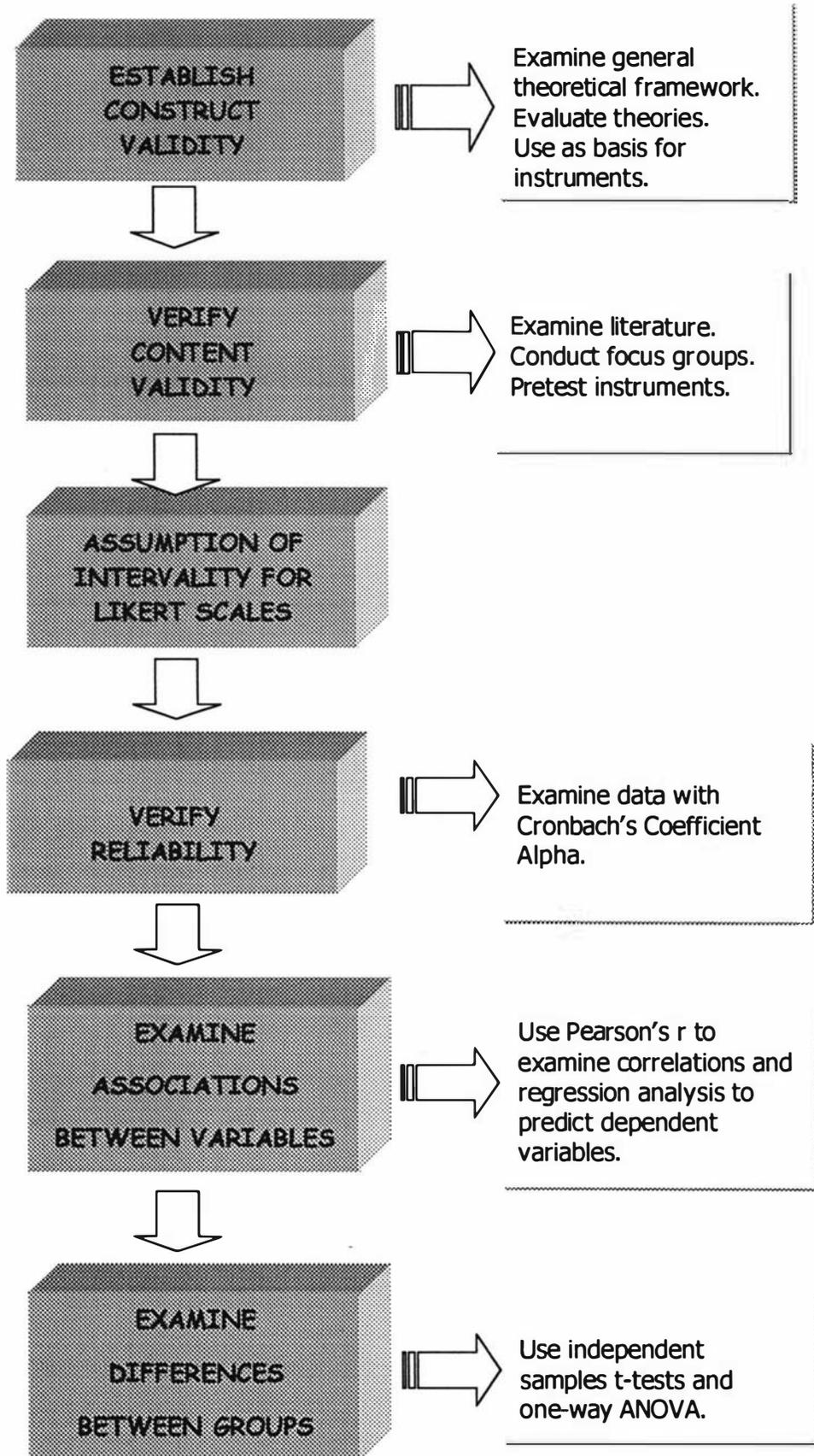


Figure 3.2. Overview of statistical procedures

3.5 THE SERVICE CLIMATE QUESTIONNAIRE

The purpose of the service climate questionnaire was to gather data on the third research question, namely:

What kind of service climate do staff perceive exists in New Zealand ELCs?

Table 3.5

Service Climate Questionnaire – Overview of Sections And Dimensions

QUESTIONNAIRE SECTIONS	SERVICE CLIMATE DIMENSIONS / SECTION CONTENT
ONE	1. Management service practices 2. Management communication 3. Management support
TWO	4. Staff service practices 5. Client focus
THREE	6. Staff service ethos 7. Staff personal attributes 8. Staff concern for clients
FOUR	9. Employment issues
FIVE	10. Resourcing
SIX	11. Estimate of client evaluation of service
SEVEN	Barriers to service (open ended item)
EIGHT	Attributes of superior service (open ended item)
NINE	Classification Data

The questionnaire was developed according to the principles outlined in Section 3.4. According to Sproull (1995, p. 192), "Before beginning to write questionnaire items, the research questions or hypotheses should be specifically stated and the variables operationally defined." A complete list of questionnaire dimensions, items, sources, and descriptors can be found in Appendix G and the complete questionnaire is in Appendix H. Table 3.5 presents an overview of the questionnaire sections.

Key codings from the staff focus groups together with some items from the client focus groups were combined with the climate themes extracted from the literature to develop eleven dimensions of ELC service climate comprising 71 items. Most items were sourced from the literature and the staff focus groups but also the client focus groups. Items in the service orientation scale such as *patience*, *empathy* and *professional attitude* were sourced from the client focus groups where they had been accorded particular emphasis. An additional four dimensions comprising a further 14 items were:

- Staff estimate of client evaluation of service,
- Service barriers,
- Service attributes,
- Classification data.

In sections 1-5, respondents were asked to indicate to what extent they agreed or disagreed with the statements using a five-point Likert scale anchored by *strongly agree* and *strongly disagree*. A DK option was provided. All items were positively worded. Item 55 contained a negative but since a negative adjective was also used, the statement had a positive connotation. In section 6, respondents were asked to estimate how their clients evaluated the service provided by their ELC. The nine items in this scale corresponded to the nine dimensions/sections of the client satisfaction questionnaire and used the same disconfirmation format but in the third person. Sections 7 and 8 contained open-ended questions, asking respondents to name, respectively, barriers to and attributes of superior ELC service. The final section contained classification questions on the respondent's area of responsibility, gender, employment status and length of time in present position. The entire questionnaire covered four pages (eight sides) in landscape format and was printed in two-tone on high grade paper.

3.6 THE CLIENT SATISFACTION QUESTIONNAIRE

The data from the client focus group sessions, after being subjected to content analysis, was used as the basis for the scale items in the client satisfaction survey. The aim of this survey was to measure levels of client satisfaction with the ELCs taking part in the study and to address the fourth research question: *How satisfied are clients with the service provided by New Zealand ELCs?*

The design of the client questionnaire was not as straightforward as that of the staff questionnaire and a number of separate issues had to be resolved. These are discussed in the following sections.

3.6.1 Methodological factors influencing the research design

As discussed in Section 2.3.4, a number of methodological factors can influence the measurement of satisfaction. Several of the factors cited were potentially relevant to the study and precautions were taken to diminish their effect as follows:

A form of *data collection mode bias* could operate if respondents completed questionnaires in groups, with ELC staff supervising and collecting the questionnaires – a common means of collecting client feedback in ELCs. The perceived lack of anonymity leads respondents to avoid making negative comments, as confirmed by some focus group participants. Respondent reluctance to criticise service providers with whom they have worked closely together over a period of time may also operate. For this reason, the researcher arranged to visit each ELC in the survey to collect the data personally. The intention was that respondents would perceive the researcher as an objective, third party and therefore provide a more valid set of responses.

Question Form bias was avoided by rejecting both positive (*satisfied*) and negative (*dissatisfied*) forms in favour of the more neutral phrase *What is your level of satisfaction....?*

Measurement timing was relevant, since practical considerations (e.g. clients' return overseas) precluded being able to contact the student for survey purposes after completion of the course. The only way practically to access the respondents therefore was during their course. However, a client would be assumed to need time to form an opinion on the quality of the service being provided. Surveying clients, for instance, on the first day of their English course would be pointless. However, this issue was more complex than at first thought. Both during the pretesting and the actual survey, clients were encountered who had been at an ELC for several months but declined to participate in the survey because, as they said, they had not formed an opinion. On the other hand, there were instances of clients who had only recently arrived in the ELC but had clearly formed an opinion and specifically asked to take part in the survey. Since the clients seemed to be best judges of their own states of mind, it was left up to them to decide whether to participate or not. However, as a precaution, the questionnaires of clients who had been at the ELC less than one week were discarded.

The *response style* issue is particularly relevant in a cultural sense. It may be that students from particular cultures are likely to suspend critical judgement as a politeness response to the objects of the survey - that is the ELC and its staff - whom they may regard as a type of "host". Although there is no empirical evidence for such a statement, anecdotal evidence would tend to support it. No measures could be taken to counter this issue but it was noted as a limitation of the study.

Given the heavy involvement of the respondents in the service provision, *mood* was a likely issue. ELC managers were asked to inform their clients of the

researcher's planned visit and its purpose. It was hoped that this would prepare the clients mentally and perhaps raise consciousness of some of the issues in the survey.

Cultural issues: As discussed in Chapter 2, customer service evaluations and satisfaction can vary across cultures and nationalities. Such variation is also likely to be found in a culturally and nationally diverse ELC clientele.

There is also a cross-cultural factor in terms of the type of scale used. There is some evidence (Si & Cullen, 1998) that where agree/disagree-type Likert scales are used, Asian respondents are far more likely than their Western counterparts to use a midpoint option if it is offered to them, leading to considerable differences in mean scores on the same instrument. Since the vast majority of potential respondents to the client survey are of Asian origin, this is very likely a significant factor in and a potential limitation of the research reported on here.

3.6.2 Client satisfaction questionnaire – choice of a scale

For the reasons given in Section 2.3.4, an instrument based on the expectations-disconfirmation format appeared an appropriate methodology to use, particularly if some of the precautions discussed in Section 3.6.1 were put into place during implementation. For the 74 service items in Part One of the questionnaire, therefore, respondents were asked to indicate their level of satisfaction with ELC performance on a 5-point Likert scale as shown in Table 3.6 (next page).

Notionally, a score of three would tend to indicate that client expectations had been met and that they are satisfied with the service. However, as discussed in Section 2.3.1, services management best practice holds that such respondents are expressing *mere satisfaction* rather than the *delight* necessary for the spread of word-of-mouth recommendation (Lovelock, et al., 1998). In terms

of data interpretation, therefore, the number of ELC clients in the *better* or *far better than expected* categories is far more important for the maintenance of the satisfaction/word-of-mouth cycle (see Figure 2.3, p. 52).

Table 3.6

Client Satisfaction Rating Scale, Statements, Indications, and Interpretations

RATING	SCALE STATEMENT	INDICATION	INTERPRETATION
1	Far worse than I expected	strong dissatisfaction	DISAPPOINTMENT
2	Worse than I expected	dissatisfaction	
3	About what I expected	satisfaction	MERE SATISFACTION
4	Better than I expected	strong satisfaction	DELIGHT
5	Far better than I expected	very strong satisfaction	

3.6.3 Client satisfaction questionnaire - dimensions and items

Since no precedent for an ELC client satisfaction instrument could be located, most of the items selected for the actual survey instrument derived from the client focus groups, particularly those items that had demonstrated good to high frequency. The final version of the instrument was constructed in two parts (Table 3.7, next page). The first part (Sections 1-9) comprised nine dimensions and 74 items (Appendix I) that asked respondents about their satisfaction with various aspects of the ELC service. Of the 74 items, 49 were sourced from the client focus groups and 25 from the researcher and the literature (Appendix J). The second part of the instrument (Sections 10-11) contained eight further items. The entire questionnaire therefore comprised 11 sections and 82 items. Most of the items consisted of short phrases; complex structures were avoided. During pretesting, completion time varied between ten minutes (for respondents whose language was used on the questionnaire) to twenty minutes (for respondents who had to use the English version).

Table 3.7

Client Satisfaction Questionnaire – Overview of Sections and Dimensions

QUESTIONNAIRE SECTION	CLIENT SATISFACTION DIMENSION / SECTION CONTENT
ONE	The teachers
TWO	The English lessons
THREE	The service procedures
FOUR	Communication
FIVE	The admin staff
SIX	Homestay
SEVEN	Facilities
EIGHT	The activities programme
NINE	General aspects of the service
TEN	Respondent decision to recommend the ELC or not
ELEVEN	Classification data

3.6.4 Translation of client satisfaction questionnaire

The clients of ELC services are unique in that they are all non-native speakers of English. A questionnaire using English only could pose serious comprehension problems for clients with low English language proficiency. This is a common weakness of internally developed feedback questionnaires used by ELCs. Inaccurate comprehension of questionnaire instructions and items could seriously limit the usefulness of the questionnaire and invite criticism of a lack of content validity. To secure content validity, therefore, the questionnaire would ideally have to be translated into the first languages of the respondents. Given the wide range of nationalities represented in New Zealand ELCs, translation into every language was not practicable. However, it was possible to target the major language groups. An analysis of the ELC client language groups, using the 1999 estimates of overseas students studying in New Zealand (Education New Zealand, 2000), showed that out of a total of 15,718 students at ELCs, over 13,000 belonged to only four foreign language groups, namely, Japanese, Mandarin, German and Korean (Figure 3.3, next page).

This assumes that students from Taiwan, Hong Kong and P.R. China, as well as ethnic Chinese (e.g. from Malaysia) while speaking different varieties of Chinese, all comprehend written Mandarin. Similarly, students from Germany and Switzerland, while speaking different varieties of German, can all read and understand standard written German. By translating the questionnaire into only these four languages, 83% of the total New Zealand ELC client population was targeted. The reliance of the remaining 10-15% of respondents on the English version of the questionnaire, it could be argued, was a limitation of the research. However, in reality, this did not appear to be a major issue either during the pretesting sessions or during the actual survey.

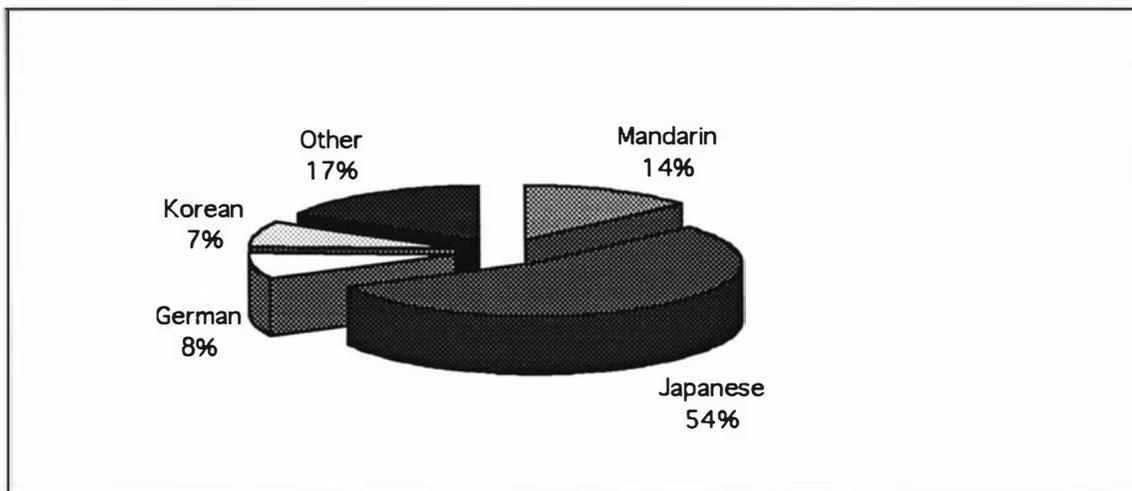


Figure 3.3. Breakdown of first language speaker groupings in New Zealand ELCs, 1999: Percentage of total population (Education New Zealand, 2000)

The final English version of the questionnaire was sent to professional translators to be translated into Japanese, Mandarin, and Korean. The researcher completed the German translation. One multilingual questionnaire was created rather than five different versions. While this was a larger document, it was easier to administer from a practical point of view since there was no way of knowing in advance what nationalities respondents would be. Once completed, the questionnaire was rechecked for accuracy by native speakers of the four languages and then pretested with groups of ELC clients.

3.7 PRETESTING PROCEDURES

A pretest study uses the same research procedures as the main study on a smaller sample drawn from the same population, but a sample which will be excluded from the main study. Pretesting can be used to verify the adequacy of the sampling frame, as well as general organisation and data collection, data processing and data analysis (Babbie, 1998; Moser & Kalton, 1971). A pretest is recommended in the case of an untried survey instrument or unfamiliar research procedures (Sproull, 1995). In addition to checking sampling and validity, pretesting of a questionnaire can be used specifically to evaluate the scale items in terms of

- level of variation between items,
- clarity of meaning,
- redundancy,
- scalability,
- reasons for non-response,
- response acquiescence (de Vaus, 1995).

The question flow, completion timing and respondent interest and attention may also be issues of interest to the pre-tester (de Vaus, 1995) as well as the general layout and clarity of instructions.

Permission was obtained from two ELCs to pretest both instruments. ELC "A" was a tertiary ELC and ELC "B" a private ELC. Two respondent feedback forms were prepared, one for each target group. The staff form requested feedback from respondents on issues such as the clarity of the instructions, layout and question items, the potential omission of key questions and the length of time taken to complete (Appendix K). The client feedback form was similar but in simplified form with an additional question about the accuracy of the foreign language version (Appendix L). In each case, the researcher had the opportunity to explain the research to the target groups, answer questions, and invite them to participate in the pretest.

The client pretest sample (Table 3.8) had a good mix of client respondents in terms of both gender and nationality. Three of the four major language groups were well represented. A total of 64 client responses was received plus completed feedback forms. Analysis of feedback identified no serious problems with the questionnaire. Some inconsistencies in the Mandarin and German translations were rectified and a section that had originally been included was deleted as it was felt that it added nothing to the purpose of the questionnaire.

Table 3.8
Details Of Pretest Client Sample

RESPONDENT COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	ELC "A"	ELC "B"	TOTALS
BRAZIL	0	1	1
CZECH REPUBLIC	0	2	2
GERMANY	1	0	1
HONG KONG	0	1	1
INDONESIA	2	0	2
JAPAN	6	15	21
KOREA	0	6	6
P.R. CHINA	16	3	19
RUSSIA	0	2	2
SWITZERLAND	0	1	1
TAIWAN	1	0	1
THAILAND	1	5	6
VIETNAM	1	0	1
TOTALS	28	36	64

A total of 17 staff responses was obtained plus 15 feedback forms. No serious issues were reported. Ten questions were cited as unclear, but no two respondents cited the same question. It was not always possible from respondent comments to understand the reason for the lack of clarity. Minor word changes were made and the questionnaire was reformatted to improve readability of the items. One question covering full-time/part-time employment was added. The questionnaire instructions were reformulated to emphasise the importance of respondent *perceptions* in answering the questions.

3.8 QUANTITATIVE DATA COLLECTION

3.8.1 Sampling procedures

Sampling is the “process of selecting subgroups from a population of elements such as people, objects or events” (Sproull, 1995, p. 109). The sampling process involves defining the population, determining the sampling unit and the sampling frame, and deciding on a sampling method (Sproull, 1995). The population consists of all members of a defined category of elements (Sproull, 1995) which in this case were, respectively, staff members and clients of ELCs in New Zealand during the period of the study. The sampling unit is the element or object to be sampled and such sampling units would normally be identified from a sampling frame, that is, a list of those elements (Sproull, 1995).

As previously reported, no such list of ELC staff members and clients existed. In the first instance, therefore, the only initially identifiable sampling units were the ELCs that existed on the Education New Zealand and FIELS websites (Education New Zealand, 1996; FIELS, 1998a) at the time the survey was being planned. These websites contained the details of 22 tertiary institutions and 56 private institutions in New Zealand offering English language courses and were therefore taken as the sampling frame. The period of the survey was a time of flux in the ELC sector. New institutions were opening while others were closing down. The number of 78, however, was taken to be close to the actual total of functioning ELCs in New Zealand at the time.

Most of the 78 were thought to be smaller institutions. The average number of staff per institution was estimated to be between 15 and 20. This gave a potential staff population of around 1,200-1,500. Given the fluid nature of the ELC clientele, it was not possible to make an accurate estimate of that population size. According to historical data, around 18,000 clients used ELC services in the year 2000 (Education New Zealand, 2001) but this gives no

indication of how many clients were in ELCs at any one point in time. If one assumed that one-fifth of the population were long-term clients, that would give around 3,600 clients. By dividing the balance by six (to equate to the survey period of two months) a figure of 2,600 is arrived at. The sum of these two figures is 6,200. Although this was a purely theoretical calculation, it provided a rough framework within which to work. The assumption, therefore, was that the client population was around 6,000 at the time of the survey but could range to 10,000 or so, depending on the number of long-term clients.

The researcher was unable to access either staff or clients of ELCs directly and he was obliged, from both a practical and an ethical standpoint, to approach the managers of the organisations as "gatekeepers". This would have an effect on the nature of the sample because, in theory, a manager might be able to influence its make-up.

A random sample is one that ensures that each sampling unit has an equal chance of being selected. Such a sampling method is preferred as being representative of the population and therefore more likely to lead to credible findings (de Vaus, 1995; Sproull, 1995). In practical terms this would involve, for example, the selection of units of the population according to some random process such as the use of a table of random digits (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 1996). In this instance, since there was no access to a sampling frame of clients and staff, random samples of the actual populations could not be created.

From experiences in the initial investigations and the qualitative phase of the research, it was evident that the researcher could not count on the automatic agreement of ELC managers to surveys being conducted in their institutions. Should an attempt be made to derive a random sample of ELCs from the sampling frame, given the expected rejection level, it was unlikely that a sufficient number of organisations and therefore an adequate sample could be

obtained to guarantee a viable response rate. Adequate response numbers, particularly from ELC staff, would be needed to carry out statistical analysis.

With these concerns in mind, it was decided to invite all ELCs on the Education New Zealand and FIELS lists to participate in the surveys, excluding the two ELCs used for pretesting. The hope was that a sufficient number would accept, to produce a large enough client and staff sample and therefore, acceptable response rates; also that a good cross section of ELCs in terms of size, type, and geographical spread would be obtained. Formal letters of invitation were therefore sent to the managers of the 76 ELCs. After a period of negotiation and follow-up, 30 ELCs (40% of the total invited) eventually agreed to participate. In terms of type, eight ELCs belonged to universities and polytechnics, and 22 were privately-owned. These proportions of tertiary and private closely mirrored the national mix (Table 3.9). The geographical spread was also a good reflection of the national spread (Table 3.10, next page. See also Appendix Z for a map showing ELC locations in New Zealand). However, in essence, these 30 organisations represented a self-selected sample and this must be noted as a limitation of the research.

Table 3.9

ELC National Population and ELC Sample Breakdown by Type

ELC TYPE	NATIONAL BREAKDOWN	SAMPLE BREAKDOWN
TERTIARY	28%	27%
PRIVATE	72%	73%

3.8.2 Fieldwork

The programme of visits to individual ELCs in order to collect the client data personally was time-consuming but this fieldwork was a keystone of the methodology for a number of reasons. First, it was very difficult to organise surveys of clients and staff through a third party, namely the owner/manager of the ELC. Also, there was the concern that, organised at a distance, there

could be a loss of control over the client data collection. Should this, for example, be supervised by ELC staff, that is, the very people being evaluated, there was a risk that clients could feel inhibited or even intimidated and thus that their responses could lack validity. There was also the potential for ELC staff to have access to completed client questionnaires and thus to compromise the confidentiality of the respondents. By personally taking charge of the client data collection, the researcher was confident that these potential problems could be avoided. In addition, a personal appearance might help develop trust between management and researcher. Finally, enhanced response rates in both surveys were hoped for.

Table 3.10

ELC National and ELC Sample Breakdown by Location

ELC LOCATION	POPULATION	SAMPLE
AUCKLAND	25	12
CHRISTCHURCH	17	7
DUNEDIN	1	0
GISBORNE	1	1
HAMILTON	4	0
NAPIER	2	1
NELSON	3	2
NEW PLYMOUTH	1	1
PALMERSTON N.	3	0
QUEENSTOWN	4	1
ROTORUA	2	1
TAUPO	1	0
TAURANGA	2	1
TIMARU	2	0
WELLINGTON	7	3
WANGANUI	1	0
WHANGAREI	1	0
WHITIANGA	1	0
TOTAL	78	30

After lengthy negotiations, a programme of visits over a two-month period was worked out. Given the logistics of travelling to ELCs, a half-day was allocated for each visit so that normally a maximum of two ELCs could be surveyed in one day within one town or city. The researcher had to fall in with the requirements of ELC programmes and timetabling, which necessitated, for instance, two separate trips to Auckland of one week each. Visits to groups of ELCs had to be synchronised around the ELCs' programme starts and the tertiary ELC semester breaks. In some cases, a preliminary visit to the ELC was needed to discuss the organisation of the surveys with the management before the actual visit. As a result, the data collection period ran for two months, from 23 August to 18 October, 2001.

Most of the ELC managers had given the researcher access to their organisation on the condition that as little disruption as possible would be caused to the daily operations. In each ELC, the researcher had requested access to a balanced sample of clients but was totally dependent on the manager or designated deputy, as well as on circumstances, which clients and how many actually took part. Not all classes might be present on campus on the day of the visit. Some managers were reluctant to disturb classes that were preparing for examinations. Individual clients might not attend classes on that day for any number of reasons. However, managers were helpful and provided access to a good cross section of clients (see Table 5.1), given time constraints and geographical constraints of multi-campus facilities. In smaller ELCs, it was sometimes possible to address the entire clientele as a group and to carry out the survey fairly efficiently. In larger ELCs, this was not practicable and the survey had to be carried out in class groups or other combinations.

Every effort was made to maintain consistency in the administration of the client surveys. This involved addressing each group of respondents using the same formula, language content and language level. After briefly introducing himself and explaining the purpose of the research, the researcher distributed a

multilingual letter to the respondents (Appendix M). This provided more details of the research, explained the respondents' rights and invited them to participate. After asking for and answering questions, the researcher formally invited the respondents to participate in the survey and questionnaires were distributed to those who wished to do so. Those who did not either left the room or sat until the survey was complete. Seven percent of the sample, or 108 clients, declined to participate in the survey. Clients with low English proficiency and no knowledge of the other questionnaire languages had to be excluded. Similarly, clients who had just arrived in the ELC were asked not to participate. These two categories totalled 19 clients. The researcher personally collected all questionnaires on completion.

ELC staff could not be surveyed during work time for obvious reasons. With the permission of the manager, the researcher was allowed to address staff briefly in a break, explain the research and invite them to participate in the staff survey. The researcher personally distributed 488 questionnaires to staff, each questionnaire with an individual code number to enable the source ELC to be identified after the questionnaire had been mailed back. The questionnaires had covering letters attached outlining the participants' rights (Appendix N), together with return envelopes. Two reminders were sent to ELC managers by letter or email. A further 110 questionnaires were mailed out to replace mislaid questionnaires or for distribution to staff who had been absent during the researcher's visit.

In summary, the decision to take personal charge appears to have been a good one. The data collection went relatively smoothly; the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants was secured; the validity of the client data was enhanced; trust was built up with clients and staff in most organisations; the client response rate was good and the staff response rate, although slightly disappointing, was acceptable.

3.9 LIMITATIONS OF THE METHODOLOGY

3.9.1 Accuracy of focus group data

Limitations of focus group methodology were outlined in Section 3.2.2 and several may have been instrumental in this study. Group process problems and inter-participant conflict may have affected the quality of the data. It is possible that focus group data was influenced by the presence of the researcher. There was potential for invalid respondent opinions and bias on the part of both respondents or researcher (Boulton & Hammersley, 1996). In terms of the staff groups, there may have been inhibitions relating to the status of the participants as colleagues and the fact that the venue for the discussion was the workplace. In terms of the client groups, cultural inhibitions and language proficiency levels may have influenced the quality of the data.

3.9.2 Lack of a random sample

It was not possible to draw random samples of either the organisations or the individual participants in both the qualitative and quantitative phases of the research. In opting to take part in the survey, ELCs in effect "self-selected". There was no way of preventing this given practical and ethical constraints. Despite the fact that the ELC survey sample constituted 40% of invited ELCs (39% of the ELC population) and closely mirrored the spread in terms of type and location, it might not have been truly representative owing to the absence of randomness. The same applies to the survey sample of individual participants. Despite acceptable response rates, the data was not obtained by random sampling and therefore no claims can be made about the representativeness of the samples.

3.9.3 Availability of subjects for surveys

Both surveys were limited by subject availability on the ELC premises on the day of data collection and subject willingness to participate.

3.9.4 Access to respondents

The researcher was almost entirely dependent on the goodwill of the ELC manager/owner as “gatekeeper” for access to respondents in both the qualitative and quantitative phases of the research. Managers issued invitations to clients and staff to attend focus groups and helped the researcher organise client and staff surveys. As far as could be ascertained, a valid cross section of respondents was included in the surveys. However, control over the choice of target respondent groups could not be claimed in every instance.

3.9.5 Client questionnaire languages

A few clients with no knowledge of the translated version of the questionnaire were obliged to use the English version. The likelihood of less adequate comprehension of the questionnaire items must therefore be identified as a possible limitation of the client survey methodology.

3.9.6 Research in a second-language context

Any kind of research that operates in a second-language context will be constrained by the culture and language of both the client respondents and researcher. Although every effort was made to diminish such effects, the potential for misapprehension and misinterpretation must be acknowledged. Likewise, as previously argued, a cultural form of response style could lead clients to suspend critical judgement.

3.9.7 Limitations of research in the workplace

It has been noted that in workplace studies that use volunteer informants, employees who volunteer readily often have different things to say about the organisation than those not interested in participating (Sapsford & Jupp, 1996). The inference is, that there is a possibility that biased or unrepresentative opinions may be given, particularly in the focus groups. Although this issue may be limited to ELCs with very small staff participation or response rates, it should still be recorded as a possible limitation.

3.10 ETHICAL ISSUES

As with all research which includes human subjects, consideration was given to ethical issues. The Massey University Code of Ethical Conduct for researchers (Massey University, 2000) incorporates the following principles:

- Informed consent of the participants
- Confidentiality of the data and the individuals providing it
- Minimising of harm to participants and researchers
- Truthfulness - the avoidance of unnecessary deception
- Social sensitivity to the age, gender, culture, religion, social class of subjects

These principles were upheld as outlined in the following sections:

3.10.1 Informed consent

In both phases of the research, participants were given letters explaining the research, setting out their rights as research participants and inviting them to take part (Appendices C, D, M and N). In the case of the focus groups, participants also signed a consent form acknowledging their understanding of the project and focus group processes and their willingness to take part (Appendices O and P). It was important that ELC clients did not feel under duress to participate in the focus groups. Overseas students in an unfamiliar culture may lack the language proficiency, the knowledge and the maturity to make their wishes known. There was potential for clients to be "told" by ELC management to participate in the study. In all communications with managers and clients, therefore, it was stressed that participation was optional.

3.10.2 Confidentiality and anonymity

Participants were given the standard guarantees regarding anonymity and confidentiality, in particular, that no one in the ELC would have access to the focus group tapes or transcripts. Because some of the staff discussion would inevitably include remarks about the management of the ELC, that is, the employer of the participants, it was vital that participants could be sure that

any comments were treated with the utmost confidence. Similar assurances were given during the survey phase in the form of letters and verbal confirmation explaining the research and the rights of participants. These were particularly important in respect of the clients who were concerned that ELC staff might have access to completed questionnaires. A perceived lack of anonymity by the respondents would be detrimental to the quality of the data they provided. It was, therefore, not only an ethical issue but in the researcher's own interest to provide a clear demonstration of confidentiality. Important aspects of this were the personal data collection and the stress on the researcher's independent status. Furthermore, with the permission of ELC managers, staff were requested to leave the room during the client surveys.

In terms of the staff, it was particularly important to emphasise that no data from individual ELC staff surveys would be given to individual ELC managers. This was again, clearly, a sensitive issue as a number of staff asked for additional verbal assurance. Managers had already been told that they could be provided with aggregated national data only, from the staff survey. There was also an obligation on ELC managers to ensure that individual ELCs were not identified in any way in the subsequent reporting of the findings. A number of managers sought and were given this assurance early in the research.

3.10.3 Minimising of harm

By ensuring confidentiality and anonymity for all participants and organisations, as outlined in the previous section, the possibility of any harm was excluded.

3.10.4 Truthfulness and social sensitivity

Every effort was made to convey accurate information to all participants in the study. Sensitivity was practised as far as possible, particularly in the case of clients who declined to participate in the survey and who were made to feel that their choice was perfectly acceptable. There was also a need to be culturally sensitive during dealings with ELC clients. As a visitor in other organisations, sensitivity to the wishes of the members was also paramount.

3.11 CONCLUSIONS

The study utilised a combination of qualitative and quantitative methodology to identify themes and dimensions of service climate and client satisfaction in ELCs and to use that data to develop survey questionnaires which could more extensively explore these two issues. Different approaches and techniques were used in an effort to enhance the validity and reliability of the findings from both phases of the research. The findings from the qualitative phase are presented in Chapter 4 and the findings from the quantitative phase can be found in Chapter 5.

Chapter Four
ANALYSIS OF QUALITATIVE DATA

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to present and discuss the findings from the first, qualitative stage of the research. The primary aim of this stage was to explore service climate and client satisfaction in ELCs in New Zealand in order to identify issues, themes, and dimensions that could then be used for the development of quantitative survey instruments. The findings would help to answer the first two research questions, namely,

What are the key elements of service climate in New Zealand ELCs?

What criteria do clients use to evaluate the service of New Zealand ELCs?

The data was collected from 10 focus group interviews conducted with ELC staff and clients in eight New Zealand ELCs. Details of the sample were provided in Chapter 3. The focus group themes were:

- For ELC staff, what organisational practices determined the provision of superior service to ELC clients?
- For ELC clients, what did they expect from an ELC in terms of superior service, that is, what aspects of the service were most likely to result in their satisfaction with the service?

The data was subjected to content analysis with assistance from the Hyperresearch 2.0 software package.

4.2 ENGLISH LANGUAGE CENTRE STAFF FOCUS GROUP FINDINGS

4.2.1 Introduction

The findings are represented in two different ways. (The detailed results including frequency counts are presented in Appendix Q.) The first is in terms of the *broad themes* that emerged during content analysis. Six themes were identified and these are shown in Table 4.1, in descending order of frequency:

Table 4.1
Broad Themes From ELC Staff Focus Groups

RANK	THEME	FREQUENCY
1	Service management issues	419
2	Specific staff service roles/behaviours	188
3	Desirable ELC manager attributes	129
4	Barriers to providing excellent service	109
5	Service features	101
6	Workplace/employment issues	67

The second way uses two sets of codes assigned during content analysis and which are subsumed across the themes. The first set (Table 4.2, next page) relates to issues raised in all five groups which recorded medium to high frequencies in four or all five groups. This combination of commonality plus frequency renders these codes significant and they can be regarded as reflecting key service issues for the respondents in this study. The second set of codes (Table 4.3, page after next) relates to five issues raised in four (not always the same four) of the five groups and recorded medium to high frequency in three or four groups. Although of secondary importance in terms of their commonality across the groups, these items are nevertheless significant; the relatively high frequency of the first item, for instance, *staff awareness of ELC/TESOL as a service*, would have placed it in the top five codes, had it occurred in all five groups instead of only four.

Table 4.2

Codes Relating to Issues Raised in All Five Staff Focus Groups

RANK	CODE	FREQUENCY	THEME
1	Existence of supportive, collegial, team environment	76	Service management issues
2	Establishing and maintaining client happiness and satisfaction	52	Service management issues
3	Establishing and maintaining effective service systems	46	Service management issues
4	Managing client expectations	39	Service management issues
5	Managing client individual needs and wants	36	Service management issues
6	Lack of money, resources, equipment, materials as barriers to excellent service	33	Barriers to providing excellent service
7=	Manager support for/encouragement of staff professional development	30	ELC manager role/behaviours
7=	Managing disparity between commercial and educational demands on staff	30	Service management issues
9	Role of ELC staff as marketers of the service/organisation	26	Specific staff roles/behaviours
10	Manager support of staff efforts	23	ELC manager role/behaviours
11	Role of ELC staff as counsellors/pastoral carers	21	Specific staff roles/behaviours
12	ELC managers communicating effectively with/informing staff	20	ELC manager role/behaviours
13=	Role of ELC staff as interface between clients and New Zealand environment	19	Specific staff roles/behaviours
13=	Management of clients as marketers of the service/organisation	19	Service management issues
15	Establishing/maintaining a caring/friendly/comfortable service environment	18	Service management issues

Table 4.3
Codes Relating to Issues Raised in Four out of Five Staff Focus Groups

RANK	CODE	FREQUENCY	THEME
1	Staff awareness of ELC/TESOL as a service	40	Service features
2	Establishing/maintaining rapport with the client	30	Service management issues
3	Nature of the client as a barrier to providing excellent service	17	Barriers to providing excellent service
4	Extension of the ELC service provision beyond the classroom	16	Service features
5	Multidimensional nature of the ELC service	13	Service features

The discussion in the following sections covers the six themes presented in Table 4.1. The focus is on the issues that displayed commonality and frequency across the groups and some items of secondary importance have therefore been omitted. Where categories and codes are presented in tabular form, these are listed in descending order of frequency of occurrence in the transcripts of the focus group discussions, according to the content analysis. The focus is, again, on codes with higher frequency. Some codes with low frequencies, which may be omitted from this discussion, are listed together with frequencies in Appendix Q. Illustrative participant comments are taken verbatim from the focus group discussion transcripts.

4.2.2 Service management issues

Analysis of the data identified *service management issues* as the major theme, with a large number of high frequency codes. This theme describes a series of interlinked activities and behaviours within the service environment, which could be described as the very essence of the ELC service operation. Two categories were identified. The *task environment* (Table 4.4), which had a slightly higher frequency, involves the organisation of work. The *client service environment* (Table 4.5, page after next) addresses contacts between service providers and clients.

Table 4.4
Service Management Issues, Task Environment

RANK	TASK ENVIRONMENT ISSUE
1	Existence of supportive, collegial, team environment
2	Establishing and maintaining effective service systems
3	Managing disparity between commercial and educational demands on staff
4	Managing clients as marketers of the service/organisation
5=	Existence of ongoing staff interaction/communication
5=	Importance of effective management of homestay programme
7	Displaying common/consistent front to clients
8	Managing client feedback

The most frequently raised issue within the task environment was *the need for a supportive, collegial, team environment* as a prerequisite for the provision of excellent ELC service. Both teaching and non-teaching staff reiterated how much they relied on the support of their colleagues. The development of a team ethos was particularly important:

I guess the secret of the school is that team commitment ... we seem to enjoy working together, we share a whole heap of things together ... There's a lot of interaction goes on and I think that the problem solving is done ... through that amicable, collegial respect and cooperation and ... discussion, basically.

This involved regular and continuous interaction with colleagues, the sharing of information about clients and work content - for instance sharing ideas and materials for classes - and a knowledge of what each other was doing. Second in terms of frequency was *the need for effective service systems* which comprised procedures, processes and structures as well as consistency:

We have a lot of administrative procedures and we have to be sure that we are saying the same thing ... and it is not easy because you've got to make sure that communications are good across the programmes. This is...seen as an important part of providing a service.

A feature of ELCs is the existence of professional educators in a commercial context and the third most frequent issue was *the problem of managing the disparity between educational and commercial demands on staff*. As one teacher commented:

For me that is the biggest problem, I think, the business versus teaching and I do think often the students do miss out because business wins, which unfortunately is a fact of life, but from a teaching point view, it can be very frustrating.

Some respondents reported that whereas best practice in TESOL might dictate, for instance, smaller class sizes, commercial constraints might require teachers to work with groups far larger than they regarded effective. The realities of demand fluctuation might dictate a client being placed in a class of students who were at a different proficiency level, simply because it made business sense. This is likely to lead to concern on the part of ESOL teachers that they are being asked to condone practices they do not consider ethical.

A further issue, fourth in terms of frequency, related to respondent management of clients as marketers of the service and the organisation and particularly awareness of *word-of-mouth*. As discussed in Chapter 2, word-of-mouth appears to play a major role in choice of ELC by potential clients. As one respondent commented:

Word-of-mouth is our most potent tool in terms of marketing and obtaining students for the school.

Within the second most frequent category, the client service environment, *client satisfaction* was the major focus group issue (Table 4.5). Respondents appeared well aware that they were dealing with clients who could take their business elsewhere or by word-of-mouth influence future business, so the most popular issue here was that of satisfying clients:

Your results are measured by how happy [clients] are ... We're in an industry where we have to please clients who pay.

Table 4.5

Service Management Issues, Client Service Environment

RANK	CLIENT SERVICE ENVIRONMENT ISSUE
1	Establishing and maintaining client happiness, satisfaction
2	Managing client expectations
3	Managing client individual needs and wants
4	Establishing / maintaining rapport with client
5	Establishing / maintaining caring/friendly/comfortable service environment
6	Maintaining individual contact with clients
7	Managing client diversity
8	Maintaining a harmonious client environment

The second most frequent issue, *the management of client expectations*, could be tricky, particularly when there was disparity between those expectations and the reality of the ELC service context. The stock service *motif* of client involvement in producing the service applies to all educational services including TESOL operations and success will partly rely on the client's own aptitudes, skills and industry. Respondents told of clients' exaggerated

perceptions of their language level and ability and therefore an unrealistic expectation of their rate of progress in terms of language proficiency gain:

Students come along expecting a quantum boost in their level of English proficiency and that is what in fact we spend by far the largest part of our time trying to provide.....There is a very high expectation on what we can do. The students come, thinking that we have a magic pill...

Respondents reported that there was also likely to be a conflict between the client's perceptions of the appropriate learning methodology and the teaching/learning philosophy of the institution. Clients from some cultures, for instance, may prefer to be taught exclusively in a formalised classroom context that emphasises the grammar-translation methodology they are used to, whereas New Zealand ELCs might promote more communicative approaches and learner autonomy:

Their perceived need is that they're going to learn in a classroom with a teacher, whereas our perception of how they are going to cope with their needs is by developing strategies and autonomy... And there is a conflict there. It takes a long time leading a horse to water, to get that across.

The third most frequent issue, that of *customer wants vs. needs*, is a characteristic services management issue particularly in service sectors such as education and health. A frequently-asked question is, who is the best judge of what the customer actually needs? The dilemma, in terms of ELC clients, was neatly expressed by one respondent:

Sometimes I feel compromised through the fact that the students are fee paying and therefore I suppose they perceive that they have the right to dictate what they want, which doesn't...necessarily correspond with what they need...

Although a controversial issue among respondents, *catering to individual wants and needs* might involve *respondents making themselves available to clients on an individual basis*. Another important ELC service provider skill was *the ability to establish early rapport with clients*, leading to the establishment of social bonds and higher levels of commitment on both sides. *Establishing and maintaining a comfortable, caring service environment* was also important.

4.2.3 English language centre staff roles and behaviours

Respondents described four role categories and an associated set of attitudes and behaviours involved in the work of ELC service providers (Table 4.6).

Table 4.6

ELC Staff Roles and Behaviours

RANK	FREQUENCY 1: PASTORAL CARE / COUNSELLING ROLE
1	Providing pastoral care/counselling
2	Providing academic/career counselling
3	As motivators
4	Fostering student personal development
5	Fostering intercultural socialisation
RANK	FREQUENCY 2: CLIENT SUPPORT IN NEW ENVIRONMENT ROLE
1	As interface with New Zealand environment
2	As teachers of life skills for New Zealand environment
3	As a source of knowledge/information about New Zealand environment
RANK	FREQUENCY 3: SERVICE ORIENTATION
1	Displaying professionalism/dedication
2	Having empathy with client situation
3	Commitment to excellent service
4	In loco parentis
RANK	FREQUENCY 4: MARKETING ROLE
1	Marketers of the service/the organisation
2	Marketers of TESOL
RANK	FREQUENCY 5: TEACHING ROLE
1	Responsibility for client success
2	Promoting client language autonomy
3	Training clients to optimally access service

First, respondents most frequently reported a number of roles and activities subsumed under the banner of *pastoral care/counselling*. This could involve providing help with personal problems, academic issues or in motivational contexts. Although some of the larger ELCs might have dedicated counsellors,

many respondents, particularly the teachers, saw this role as a major item in their job description:

Being available to listen to them and be sympathetic to them. If they've got a problem, really, try to help them solve it. And so I look upon it not just as a job for teaching English language as such, but becoming someone that they can talk to freely whenever they want to.

The role could take a practical form, such as taking clients for medical treatment or helping them to deal with New Zealand bureaucracies. In one case, a respondent who suspected a client could not see properly took him to a specialist in Auckland and colour blindness was diagnosed and subsequently treated. Providing motivational support and helping clients with personal development was also part of the role of some respondents:

They [clients] couldn't get a break back home and we're really challenging them and opening them up to possibilities that they never considered back home, you know.

In the second most frequent category, respondents viewed themselves as *supporting clients in their new environment*. This could involve acting as an interface with the New Zealand environment by providing clients with practical assistance on how to go about accessing the New Zealand community, for instance in terms of sports, hobbies or cultural activities or explaining how New Zealand society works and teaching clients appropriate behaviour.

You almost feel like you're... an important link and if they don't relate to you then a big part of their day and their ability to make other relationships with other native Kiwis is quite often seriously affected... you have quite a strong, an important role... like an ambassador in a way...

Teaching students practical life skills such as how to use the telephone, access banking services, or apply for a driving test might also be included in this role, as well as acting as a more general source of knowledge and information about New Zealand.

The next most frequent category is *service orientation*. Respondents did not volunteer the concept *service orientation* by name, but it was inherent in a number of the descriptions they offered of their service provider behaviours and

attitudes. Specifically, they stressed the importance of: *professional dedication* to providing a quality educational service; *empathy* with clients who are struggling to function in a strange environment; *commitment to excellent service* which included perceiving clients as individuals, rather than merely paying clients and fostering trust through honest dealings with clients.

Personality factors also played a part:

You have got to connect with the students and those are the good teachers... You are taught how to be a teacher but you are not taught your personality.

In some cases several respondents perceived of themselves as *in loco parentis*, especially with regard to younger clients:

I think we often feel that we are like their surrogate family, the tutors here and support staff, and when they leave us... it's just like parents and the kids leaving the nest.

A common theme in the services literature is that of *service providers as informal marketers for their organisations* and it was evident in the fourth most frequent category. The significance of the staff marketing role and its link to the client as marketer for the ELC was clearly expressed by this participant:

This is not like a normal school... They pay to come here and for that reason, every person that has any contact with that student is a vital cog in the marketing process. If they screw up, that person will go away unhappy and disgruntled and will probably tell a hundred others. If they go away happy, because each one of us has done our jobs, they might influence ten other students to come to the school. So every student is a potential marketer.

Since the majority of respondents were ESOL teachers, it is not surprising that *teaching* was seen as an integral part of the service provider role. However, it is interesting that this was the least frequently mentioned of the five staff role/behaviour categories and it was almost taken for granted in some focus groups. Key items here were a *feeling of responsibility for the success of the client* but also the importance of *promoting client language autonomy*.

4.2.4 Desirable English language centre manager attributes

Respondents cited a number of desirable ELC manager attributes (Table 4.7). Within a service operation that employs professional teachers, it is not surprising that staff perceived *management support for staff professional development* as especially important. This might take the form of the organisation of regular in-house seminars or training sessions, encouragement for staff to improve teaching or academic qualifications or support in terms of time or money to attend professional conferences. *Support of staff efforts* was the second most frequently mentioned desirable manager attribute, in terms, for instance, of dealing with difficult clients, providing encouragement and feedback and acting swiftly and decisively to defuse potential problems. Another positive manager behaviour was seen to be *communicating effectively with staff and keeping them informed*. A related issue involved *sharing commercial issues with staff*, for instance, the business direction. Some respondents, however, felt that managers withheld commercial information and provided no rationale for commercially-based decisions which ultimately impacted on the quality of the instruction. An effective manager also *monitored staff* on a regular basis, *employed delegation* and also had some *awareness and understanding of TESOL work*.

Table 4.7

Desirable ELC Manager Attributes

RANK	MANAGER ATTRIBUTE
1	Encourages/supports staff professional development
2	Is generally supportive of staff efforts
3	Communicates effectively with staff/keeps staff informed
4	Monitors staff performance
5=	Is aware of/understands TESOL work
5=	Delegates to staff/allows staff flexibility of action
5=	Shares commercial issues with staff
8=	Praises/recognises staff excellence
8=	Is approachable/listens to staff
8=	Has management skills/training

4.2.5 Barriers to providing excellent service

Respondents perceived the greatest barrier to the provision of excellent ELC service to be *the lack of money, resources or equipment*, followed by *a lack of time* (Table 4.8). However, the very *nature of the clients* themselves could also be a factor, particularly if the client was unwilling to cooperate with teachers implementing the learning philosophy of the institution:

There's also the different learning styles... Some of them are used to being lectured to, and they're quite uncomfortable with moving into pairwork or groupwork and they don't think they're learning. So you've got to get them used to the fact that you can learn from others...

Occasionally, a client's cultural norms might make service provision difficult:

With some cultures, there's a different attitude displayed towards female teachers, as opposed to male teachers...

Table 4.8

Barriers to Providing Excellent Service

RANK	BARRIER
1	Lack of money/resources/equipment/appropriate materials
2=	Lack of time
2=	The nature of the client
4	The unpredictable nature of demand vs supply
5	Lack of effective service systems
6	Poor manager understanding of nature of TESOL service

Two standard services management themes presented further barriers. The issue of how their organisations dealt with *demand fluctuation* was a concern to respondents and one which could have a direct influence on the quality of the service provided as it could lead to the sort of commerce vs. education discord previously discussed. The *lack of effective service systems* was also cited by some respondents as a concern, particularly if the ELC staff were not perceived by clients as working consistently to a standard set of procedures.

Finally, some respondents felt that *managers* themselves might represent a barrier if they had no background in TESOL work:

There are people... who have a managerial type role [and] don't understand the constraints of what we're dealing with or the extent that we have to work, because dealing with New Zealand students and dealing with international students is a completely different ball game, so we can't apply the same sort of rules.

4.2.6 Service features

This theme covers some of the additional features of the ELC service provision which arose out of focus group discussion (Table 4.9). The most frequently occurring feature was *respondent awareness of their work as a service*. The question of whether respondents - and particularly the ESOL teachers - actually saw themselves as service providers was not put directly to them. However, the assumption largely went unchallenged and most respondents appeared comfortable using the terminology initiated by the researcher. The relatively high frequency for this code (Table 4.3) is significant as it appears to indicate acceptance on the part of the respondents of the service dimension in their work.

Table 4.9

Service Features

RANK	SERVICE FEATURE
1	Staff awareness of TESOL as a service
2	Service extends beyond classroom
3	Multidimensional nature of service
4	Teachers work independently of each other
5	Key role of links with local community
6	Service extends beyond normal parameters of space and time
7	Client expectation of staff member as friend
8	Key role of homestay in creating client satisfaction

The second most frequent feature was the fact that the *service extended beyond the classroom*. In other words teacher contact with clients did not stop at the conclusion of the lesson but might continue in various forms thereafter within the ELC premises. This feature was linked to a similar, less frequently mentioned feature of the service, namely that *the service extended for all staff beyond the normal parameters of space and time*. Support staff such as administrators and homestay coordinators, but also teachers, reported after-hours, "off-campus" involvement with clients, especially if an emergency arose. For teachers, this could mean that the service was not confined to teaching English since, in addition to materials preparation which often took place outside normal hours, there were other roles:

A lot of the time the service extends well beyond the classroom, the teachers. I mean, I know for the other staff it does too. Often the students will come to my home and we're often involved with weekend sort of activities and things so it's definitely not just, "OK, you're coming here from nine till three and we don't want to see you when we're off". The teaching goes on and on.

Interlinked with these features was the *multidimensional nature of the service* for all staff which might involve people taking on roles and tasks that were not within their normal areas of responsibility, such as taking a client to see a doctor. The *independent nature of teacher work* also arose in discussion, as well as *the importance of maintaining links with the local community* in order to obtain support not only for the organisation but for its clients too.

4.2.7 Workplace / Employment issues

A number of issues relating to the nature of the work environment and contractual matters were subsumed within this theme (Table 4.10, next page). The problems of *obtaining adequate or appropriate resources* have already been cited in the context of barriers to the service (Table 4.8). However the issue of obtaining resources also arose as a feature of the workplace and items discussed included time, funding, teaching materials, teaching space, and equipment. The second most frequent issue was staff awareness of the importance of *taking charge of their own professional development* to improve the quality of the service they were able to provide.

Table 4.10

Workplace/Employment Issues

RANK	WORKPLACE/EMPLOYMENT ISSUE
1	Resourcing issues
2	Staff developing themselves professionally
3=	Teacher security of tenure
3=	Nature of working/contract conditions
5	Harmonious working environment

Two related issues were *teacher security of tenure* and *work/contractual conditions*. ELC work for some teachers in particular is characterized by short-term contracts or even employment on an hourly basis. The lack of job security was clearly a concern for some participants:

It takes quite a while to get a permanent contract as such, as permanent as permanent is...and still you've only got four weeks' notice, so quite often you're doing the best for the students, but you also do have to look after yourself.

For some respondents, the lack of security inhibited their relationship with management. There were also consequences of being employed on hourly rates, in terms of their own commitment to their organisation and thus good arguments for ELCs having permanent staff.

4.3 ENGLISH LANGUAGE CENTRE CLIENT FOCUS GROUP FINDINGS

4.3.1 Introduction

The data is presented, as in the previous section, in terms of broad themes and specific codes. Seven themes pertaining to client expectations of the ELC service are ranked in descending order of frequency of occurrence (Table 4.11). The top ten codes (Table 4.12, next page) recorded medium to high frequency in at least four out of five of the focus groups. The detailed results including frequency counts are presented in Appendix R.

Table 4.11

Broad Themes From ELC Client Focus Groups

RANK	THEME	FREQUENCY
1	ESOL teacher	120
2	ELC milieu	49
3	Homestay	46
4	Client feedback procedures	43
5	Miscellaneous issues	41
6	Facilities and resources	39
7	ELC communication	38
8	Enjoyed most and least	37
9	Placement procedures	22
10	English lessons	18
11	Administrative staff	13

The following discussion focuses on the broad themes presented in Table 4.11. Where categories and codes are presented in tabular form, these are listed in descending order of frequency of occurrence in the transcripts of the focus group discussions, according to the content analysis. Some codes with low frequencies which may be omitted from this discussion are listed together with frequencies in Appendix R. *Miscellaneous issues, most enjoyable and least enjoyable aspects of the service, and the two lowest frequency themes (English lessons and administrative staff),* are dealt with together in Section 4.3.9. Some client comments are quoted verbatim from the transcripts.

Table 4.12
Codes With Medium/High Frequency Across Four Client Focus Groups

RANK	CODE	FREQUENCY	THEME
1	The ELC environment should be friendly, comfortable and relaxed.	25	English language center milieu
2=	The ESOL teacher should be available to individual clients outside the classroom.	17	ESOL teacher
2=	The ELC should have effective client feedback procedures in place.	17	Client feedback procedures
2=	The ELC should communicate effectively and honestly with clients.	17	ELC communication
5=	The teacher should be an effective classroom practitioner.	13	ESOL teacher
5=	The teacher should be professional.	13	ESOL teacher
7	The ELC should be conveniently located.	12	Miscellaneous
8	The ELC should provide access to computers with internet capability.	11	Resources / facilities
9	The ELC should have good audio/video facilities/equipment.	10	Resources / facilities
10	Host families should encourage/participate in English conversation with client.	9	Homestay

4.3.2 The ESOL teacher

The single most frequent theme complex centred on the nature of the ESOL teacher, particularly in terms of desirable attributes. In order of frequency of occurrence, the respondents expected the ESOL teacher to be first, a *classroom professional*, second, *a combination of counsellor, advisor and coach* and third, *a person with specific personal attributes* (Table 4.13, next page).

As a *professional*, the ESOL teacher was expected to be highly qualified, to be knowledgeable about the subject, to be well prepared, to be aware of client goals, and to continue with professional development. In the classroom, the teacher was expected to be a skilled practitioner, for example, by getting everyone involved, teaching lively, interesting, relevant lessons, and being a good time manager, but above all, by being flexible, in terms of, for instance, textbook use and lesson style and content. Rather than imposing a framework on the clients, the teacher was expected to design lessons according to client wishes, focusing on specific areas such as grammar, conversation or vocabulary. Teachers were also expected to acknowledge varying learning styles among clients and adapt their teaching styles accordingly. Actual respondent perceptions in this regard varied widely, as would be expected. Respondents told of excellent teachers who were receptive to client requests and whose sessions were stimulating and effective. However, there were also reports of boring lessons with irrelevant content and an over-reliance on standard, sometimes imported textbooks that reflected neither the needs of the client nor the specific New Zealand context.

The second most frequent category covered the *counsellor/advisor/coach* role. Although language instruction is normally provided in a group context, the respondents in this study felt strongly that *ESOL teachers should assist clients at an individual level* too. More than anything, *the teachers should be available outside normal class time* to do this. This was a recurring theme

across all five focus groups and recorded the second most frequent code, throwing new light on client expectations of the ESOL teacher.

The kind of personal help sometimes... after class, or in the breaks and if you have a question, then you can ask the teacher and he speaks only with you and explains you the reason again maybe, if you didn't understand it before... Not only in the class and then "Have a nice afternoon, see you tomorrow."

Such individual assistance appeared to be available to some respondents but a common perception was that teachers worked hard, were always busy, and that it was basically hard to get to see them outside normal class time.

Table 4.13

Desirable ESOL Teacher Attributes

RANK	FREQUENCY 1: CLASSROOM PROFESSIONAL
1=	Professional
1=	Effective classroom teacher
3	Use good teaching materials
4	Flexible in terms of teaching style / lesson content
5	Good communicator
6=	Correct client errors in spoken English
6=	Know client strengths and weaknesses
RANK	FREQUENCY 2: COUNSELLOR/ADVISOR/COACH
1	Be available to individual clients outside classroom
2	Motivate, encourage, push clients to succeed
3=	Advisor/counsellor
3=	Help clients with problems
RANK	FREQUENCY 3: PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES
1	Friendly
2	Strict, closely direct clients
3=	Interested in clients
3=	Humorous but serious
3=	Patient when clients have difficulties

Respondents also felt that the ESOL teacher had a role beyond mere classroom teaching and should also be a *counsellor, advisor, and coach* to clients. In this capacity, the teacher was expected to encourage, inspire, and instill confidence

at a more personal level, as well as counsel students on academic and personal matters. Practical assistance was similarly valued, as provided by the teacher who helped a student apply for a job and prepare for the interview.

Effective service provision often depends on the personal attributes of the providers and the degree of service orientation. In the third most frequent category, the respondents cited *desirable ESOL teacher attributes* associated with service orientation including *friendliness, humour* and *patience*, but also the ability to take an *active interest in clients* and their welfare and to *provide direction*.

4.3.3 English language centre *milieu*

The concept of *milieu* refers to the *tone* or *atmosphere* of a service organisation (Schneider & Bowen, 1995). Several issues relating to ELC *milieu* arose in the focus groups (Table 4.14). In terms of absolute frequency of individual codes, *the desire that the ELC environment should be friendly, relaxed and psychologically comfortable* ranked in first place (Table 4.12). The popularity of this single issue is an indication of the importance of the nature of the ELC *milieu* to the respondents in this study, as one respondent commented:

[The most important thing is the] atmosphere in the school. If you are happy to come to school, you are happy to study. If the school can provide anything for you but you don't like to come to school, you are not happy to study, you can't be successful in studying English.

Table 4.14

Desirable ELC Milieu Characteristics

RANK	MILIEU CHARACTERISTIC
1	The ELC environment should be friendly, comfortable, and relaxed.
2	The ELC should be like a family home.
3	The language school environment should encourage clients to speak English.
4=	The ELC should have a mix of cultures/nationalities.
4=	It's better if the ELC is small.

Some respondents appeared very happy with this aspect of the *milieu* of their particular ELC which they even characterized, in the second most frequent issue, as a “home” and the staff and students as members of the same “family”. The third most frequent issue was the expectation of an “English-only” zone where students *were encouraged to use English* in a natural setting.

4.3.4 Homestay

English language clients are commonly encouraged by ELCs to live in a homestay for the duration of their studies, in particular to give clients an opportunity to familiarise themselves more rapidly with the spoken language. Although not all respondents had taken this option, those who had, had very clear expectations of this part of the service. Within this theme, two major homestay categories can be identified (Table 4.15).

Table 4.15:

Desirable Homestay Characteristics

RANK	FREQUENCY 1: HOMESTAY MILIEU
1	Host parents should be like substitute parents to clients.
2	Host families should provide clients with a friendly, comfortable home environment.
3	The ELC should be responsible for ensuring the quality of the homestay.
4=	The homestay should, as far as possible, match the client’s wishes.
4=	Host families should provide decent food.
4=	Host families should spend time with clients.
RANK	FREQUENCY 2: CONTEXT FOR DEVELOPMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY
1	Host families should encourage/participate in English conversation with client.
2	Homestay is an important part of ELC service – opportunity to speak English.
3	Host families should be patient/sympathetic towards clients with language difficulties.

The more frequent of the two categories covers the nature of the homestay *milieu*. As with the general ELC *milieu*, respondents desired a *friendly, comfortable atmosphere*, a home from home where they would be looked after by host parents much in the same way as they would in their own homes, but

at the same time learning about the New Zealand way of life. Again, there were positive and negative experiences in this regard. Some younger, long-term clients were clearly very satisfied and had developed close bonds with their host parents, sometimes to the extent of having a better relationship than with their own parents. However, respondents also debated whether a host family could possibly take on the role of a proper family, some admitting that they could not realistically expect this. Respondents further expected ELCs to *ensure homestay quality* and to do a good job of *assigning them to homestay types that matched their wishes*. However, this was not always the case. For instance, a client who had requested a homestay with children was placed with a childless family; a non-smoking client found himself in a family of smokers; a pet-lover got a family without pets, whereas a pet-hater got a family with dogs.

Second, the respondents emphasised that the homestay should not just be a lodging, but also *an opportunity to use English* and thus, a context for the development of English language proficiency. In particular, value was placed on host families taking the trouble to encourage clients to use English by taking part in conversation with them.

[At first], my English was very poor. My host family spoke to me always. They used easy words, slowly and very clearly. I sometimes couldn't explain, but they waited, so when I spoke to them they always encouraged me... That's practising English for me... my homestay experience was good memories for me.

However, not all host families appeared prepared to do this. Some were too busy with their own lives to bother with their guests and did not regard interacting and communicating with them as part of their role. Several respondents perceived their host families as being interested in the homestay income but not in them personally. Whatever their experience, respondents regarded homestay as *an important part of the ELC service* for the reasons cited. There was even a minority view that the homestay experience provided a more effective language learning context than formal lessons.

4.3.5 Client feedback procedures

Effective service organisations typically survey customers in order to obtain feedback on the quality of the service provided. It might be assumed that ELCs solicit client feedback as a matter of course but information on the quality, timeliness, or validity of such surveys is not generally available. The focus group respondents raised three issues:

- ELCs should have effective procedures for obtaining feedback from clients.
- Barriers exist that prevent clients from providing ELCs with useful feedback.
- ELCs should make it possible for clients to give feedback in a variety of ways.

The most frequent set of comments referred to the *effectiveness of procedures*. A number of respondents reported that they were not surveyed at all or not often enough or at inappropriate times, for instance at the end of their course when their comments were not likely to bring about any change to their own situation. There was also a split between European respondents who preferred to provide feedback directly to language centre staff and Asian respondents who preferred to give it anonymously.

The second most frequent issue related to barriers clients experienced to providing feedback. Although giving feedback might come naturally to clients from particular cultures, some respondents described the mere process of having to provide feedback as stressful. The action of volunteering critical comment directly to a "respect person" like a teacher or manager appeared to be culturally inappropriate. Furthermore, a perceived lack of anonymity and a fear of being linked to comments critical of ELC staff might lead clients to provide responses on feedback forms that did not necessarily represent their actual opinions, as this respondent explained:

But I don't think that anybody really tells them the truth... they can see... from your writing that it is your paper so, hey... It's easier to write a positive answer than [a negative one]...

Equal second in terms of frequency was the suggestion that ELCs should have more flexible procedures to allow a choice of feedback channels, for example

discussion with the teacher, suggestion box, questionnaire or interview with the manager. Whatever the systems used, respondents desired a clear signal from management that any critical feedback clients gave was being taken seriously. There were reports of positive experiences in this regard, like the ELC which promptly purchased a second microwave oven for the student lounge in response to a client comment. However, a number of respondents reported that they had no idea how the ELC had acted on the comments they had provided on feedback forms.

4.3.6 Facilities and resources

The *servicescape* can have a range of positive and negative influences on both customers and service providers (Bitner, 1992) and its significance should not be underestimated. The respondents echoed this thought in describing *a range of facilities and resources they felt were essential* in a well-run ELC (Table 4.16). Most of the items were the sorts of requirements one would expect, such as a comfortable student lounge and good study facilities. Respondent perceptions in this regard were generally positive. An unexpected item was the respondents' strong desire for far better access to internet facilities in ELCs, mainly to stay in touch with friends and family. However, not all ELCs were able to meet the respondents' expectations in this regard.

Table 4.16

Desirable ELC Facilities and Resources

RANK	DESIRABLE FACILITY/RESOURCE
1	Access to computers with internet capability
2	Good audio and video facilities and equipment
3=	A good level of physical comfort
3=	Kitchen/client lounge/games
5=	Adequate library and study facilities
5=	Good resources and facilities in general

4.3.7 English language centre communication

The expectation of *effective, honest communication between ELCs and clients* was another common issue in the focus groups. It ranked overall second equal in terms of individual code frequency and was the most frequently cited issue within the general theme of ELC communication. Some respondents criticised their ELCs for poor communication with them before they had left home and often felt uninformed or were given inaccurate information relating to items such as arrival times, host family details, or service offerings. After arrival and commencement of their study they lacked information about what was expected of them both within the ELC and the homestay, what their rights and entitlements were, or what the local norms were; basic information about safety and security was not given; ELCs sometimes did not communicate a clear rationale for the costs of specific activities.

ELC communication about the homestay was a case in point. Information provided to clients could be "dishonest" by omission, by not revealing the true nature of the homestay situation. Nor might information from the ELC about the host family be formulated in a way that clients could understand. For instance, on being told her host mother liked tennis and rugby, a respondent assumed that the host mother played these sports, and was looking forward to participating too. But on arrival she found that the host mother only watched these sports on TV. Such an apparently trivial issue might be put down to cross-cultural miscommunication but it has the potential, nevertheless, to foster distrust of the ELC's motives and disappointment in the homestay situation. The issue of information extended even to client rights and what clients could expect the host family to do for them, as this respondent explained:

I think it's also important to have good information first, because I wasn't really sure about my rights and my family is really nice and that... But I thought, maybe, I can't beg so many things from the family, but now I heard and now I know that's my right to learn with the family. They have to talk with me, they have to learn with me ...

The second most frequent issue covered ELC publicity materials. Overpromising in promotional materials sets up unrealistic expectations and actual encounters may result in customer disappointment (Parasuraman et al., 1988; Zeithaml & Bitner, 1996). Although this was not generally the case, it was the experience of number of respondents who criticised as exaggerated, inaccurate or even dishonest, information about ELC programmes, facilities and services either printed in brochures, posted on websites, or provided by agents.

For instance, activities listed as included in fees actually had to be paid for; an agent's promise of unlimited internet access was false; a respondent was told by an agent that the ELC would arrange local liaison with New Zealand colleagues within her profession, but found on arrival that the ELC could not offer this service. Examples such as these are indicative of practices bordering on the unethical. Customers who perceive they are receiving fair and honest treatment from a service provider are likely to be satisfied with the service encounter, while unethical treatment will lead to dissatisfaction (Thomas, Vitell, Gilbert, & Rose, 2002).

The third most frequent issue related to communication between the ELC and homestay family, which was not always effective. In general, therefore, respondents felt that ELCs could do a much better job of communicating with them.

4.3.8 Placement procedures

When clients first arrive at an ELC, their English proficiency level is usually assessed by means of a written test, interview or combination of methods. They are then placed in a particular class depending on the test/interview results. Accurate initial placement can influence the subsequent service provision in terms of the client's progress and the issue could be a controversial one if clients feel they are incorrectly placed.

The most frequent issue raised by respondents related to their expectation of a *well-organised and effective placement procedure* (Table 4.17). But this was not always the case:

The whole test is like a lottery. You can just check all this OK, and maybe this one or this one, but in your mind you know nothing about this so you just guess and you are also guessing right.

Table 4.17

Desirable Placement Procedures

RANK	PLACEMENT ISSUE
1	The placement procedure should be well organised and effective.
2	The ELC should clarify the client's goals first.
3=	It is important that clients are placed in appropriate class/at appropriate level.
3=	Clients should be able to switch class if they want to.

Another respondent likewise doubted the credibility of a placement test on being promoted to a higher proficiency level after only one week of study. Although some respondents were perceptive enough to realise that existing classes were sometimes broken up and re-formed for commercial reasons (such as demand fluctuation), they expressed scepticism about the language-learning rationales commonly given to them by their teachers for such management actions.

The second most frequent issue related to *clarification of client goals*. Some respondents pointed out that placement procedures were superficial and did not lay enough emphasis on clearly identifying client needs at the start of the language programme. They were given insufficient information about their proficiency level, the nature of the language programme they were enrolled in, or the placement rationale.

Thirdly, respondents not only expected to be placed at the appropriate level, but to be able to switch classes or proficiency levels when *they* felt it was time to do so, which sometimes brought them into conflict with the ELC management.

4.3.9 Other themes

Several themes were identified which do not conveniently fit into any of the other categories or had relatively low overall frequencies. Details of codes and frequencies are provided in Appendix R.

Miscellaneous themes included expectations of a *convenient ELC location, the responsibility of the ELC to ensure client success, to provide value for money, and to be interested in clients as people and not just as a source of income, as well as issues relating to trips and activities.*

There was an expectation among respondents that *English lessons* should be *interesting and taught in small classes.*

The administrative staff were expected to be able to provide clients with the necessary information about the New Zealand Environment and be friendly, helpful, and encouraging.

Respondents said that *they enjoyed most* interaction with other people and cultures and *enjoyed least* poor, ineffective lessons.

4.4 CONCLUSIONS

Chapter 4 presented qualitative data from grounded research into service climate and client satisfaction in New Zealand ELCs. The staff focus groups investigated the elements of service climate that are likely to result in superior service in an ELC context. The client focus groups investigated client satisfaction criteria with the ELC service. The data collected was invaluable for the development of the two survey instruments used in the quantitative phase.

As would be expected from research that dealt with clients and providers of the same service, some thematic overlapping was apparent, for instance, the roles and behaviours of ESOL teachers, the expectation that the teacher role is not limited to the classroom or the importance of a caring, friendly ELC service *milieu*. Such overlaps are of interest but it should be borne in mind that there was no intention to include a comparative study at this stage in the research, the sole purpose being to identify key themes and dimensions. In any case, the small size of both samples would compromise the validity of findings based on comparative/ contrastive data.

Several limitations of this research phase should also be noted. Given the relatively small size of the samples and the nature of the focus group methodology, generalisability cannot be claimed. Data from both private ELCs and tertiary institutions was undifferentiated and was presented in aggregated form.

An analysis of the data collected in the quantitative phase is presented in Chapter 5.

Chapter Five
ANALYSIS OF QUANTITATIVE DATA

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to present and discuss the findings from the quantitative stage of the research. Whereas the primary aim of the first, qualitative stage of the research was *exploration*, the quantitative stage was concerned with *measurement*. Two questionnaires, described in Chapter 3, were developed to measure service climate and client satisfaction in ELCs in New Zealand. The findings from the service climate survey were examined to find answers to the third research question, namely:

What kind of service climate do staff perceive exists in New Zealand ELCs?

The findings from the client satisfaction survey were examined to find answers to the fourth research question, namely:

How satisfied are clients with the service provided by New Zealand ELCs?

Finally, the findings from both surveys were examined and compared in order to determine the validity of the final research question, namely:

Is there a link between the service climate of New Zealand ELCs and levels of client satisfaction with New Zealand ELC service?

The analysis presented here makes use of statistical methods, as detailed in Chapter 3, to describe the data, to determine the reliability and validity of the scales, to examine degrees of association between variables and differences between groups. All tables and figures used are sourced from the survey data. The findings are presented in terms of both *dimensions* – equating to sections or section groupings in the survey questionnaires – and individual *variables*, also referred to as individual *items*, which comprise the dimensions. Table 5.1 (next page) presents client and staff numbers and response rates. Client and staff totals are based on the figures provided by ELC managers for the period mid-August to mid-October 2001.

Table 5.1

ELC Surveys: Client and Staff Numbers, Responses, and Response Rates

ELC SERIAL	CLIENT DATA			STAFF DATA			
	TOTAL CLIENTS ENROLLED	CLIENT SAMPLE SIZE	NUMBER OF USABLE CLIENT RESPONSES	CLIENT RESPONSE RATE (%)	TOTAL STAFF EMPLOYED	NUMBER OF USABLE STAFF RESPONSES	STAFF RESPONSE RATE (%)
01	70	69	64	93	16	7	44
02	200	70	68	97	42	10	24
03	240	103	101	98	25	14	56
04	400	70	70	100	34	14	41
05	130	103	98	95	25	9	36
06	200	61	61	100	26	22	85
07	115	67	66	99	22	13	59
08	85	51	47	92	10	5	50
09	200	44	44	100	45	13	29
10	52	51	50	98	11	10	91
11	65	40	25	63	11	5	46
12	70	60	44	73	11	5	46
13	18	18	15	83	10	3	33
14	172	44	44	100	31	8	26
15	47	40	40	100	12	10	83
16	70	60	51	85	15	6	40
17	70	58	55	95	20	12	60
18	150	52	49	94	28	10	36
19	116	62	60	97	11	5	46
20	152	53	53	100	13	11	85
21	92	45	37	82	12	8	67
22	90	62	62	100	20	10	50
23	250	100	94	94	26	8	31
24	90	58	58	100	18	8	44
25	30	22	22	100	7	6	86
26	140	67	65	97	23	12	52
27	160	160	96	60	16	10	63
28	24	20	20	100	7	2	29
29	140	52	52	100	11	8	73
30	220	73	73	100	29	11	38
Totals	3,858	1,835	1,684		587	275	
Means				91.7%			46.9%

The total number of clients enrolled in the 30 ELCs was 3,858, the range was 18 - 400 and the average per ELC was 128.6. The total of staff employed was 587, the range was 7 – 45 and the average per ELC was 19.6.

From a client sample of 1,835, 1,684 usable questionnaires were obtained for a response rate of 91.7%. The number 1,684 represented 6.4% of the total ELC client population of 26,203 in New Zealand in 2001 (Education New Zealand, 2002). One hundred and eight clients declined to participate in the survey. A further 19 clients were excluded from the survey because of a combination of low English proficiency and no competency in one of the questionnaire languages or because they had just arrived in the ELC. Twenty-four questionnaires were discarded either because they were so incomplete as to be unusable or because respondents had been resident at the ELC for less than one week. The client response rates across ELCs varied from 60% to 100%.

All staff in the 30 ELCs were invited to take part in the survey. From the sample of 587, 275 usable questionnaires were obtained for a response rate of 46.9%. The number 275 represented approximately 18% of the estimated New Zealand ELC staff population of 1529 (based on the average of 19.6 staff per ELC). The staff response rates across ELCs varied from 24% to 91%.

Dillman (1971, cited in Cooper & Schindler, 1998) considered a 30% response rate for mail surveys satisfactory. Research examining response rates in a general population found that face-to-face interviews achieved 70% and postal surveys 61% (Hox & de Leeuw, 1994, cited in de Vaus, 2002; de Leeuw & Collins, 1997, cited in de Vaus, 2002). Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias (1996) claimed a 95% response rate for the personal interview and between 20% and 40% for a mail survey. In this study, the client mean response rate of 91.7% can therefore be regarded as good. The staff response rate of 46.9%, based on a mail return of personally distributed questionnaires, was acceptable.

5.2 CLASSIFICATION DATA

5.2.1 Service climate survey – staff data

■ **Question 74: Main area of responsibility in English language centre**

Three respondents out of the 275 total did not provide data on this question. Teachers made up the bulk of the sample at 83% whereas admin staff made up 12%. Homestay coordinators (3%) and other staff (2%) such as computer advisors, purchasers and marketing consultants made up the remaining 5% (Figure 5.1.).

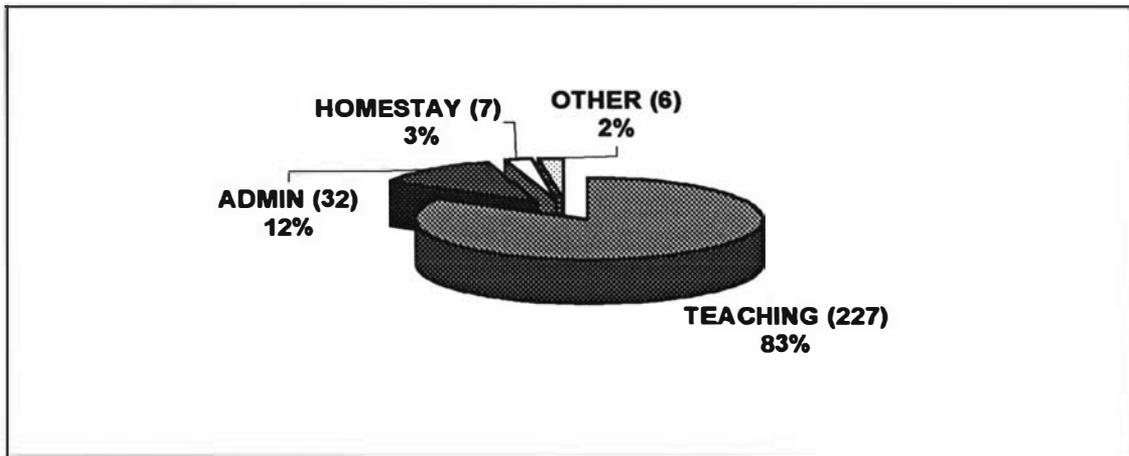


Figure 5.1. ELC staff area of responsibility

■ **Question 75: Gender**

Apart from three non-responses, 218 respondents (80%) were female and 54 (20%) were male (Figure 5.2). This approximated to Haddock's (1998) distribution of 87% female to 13% male ESOL teachers in New Zealand.

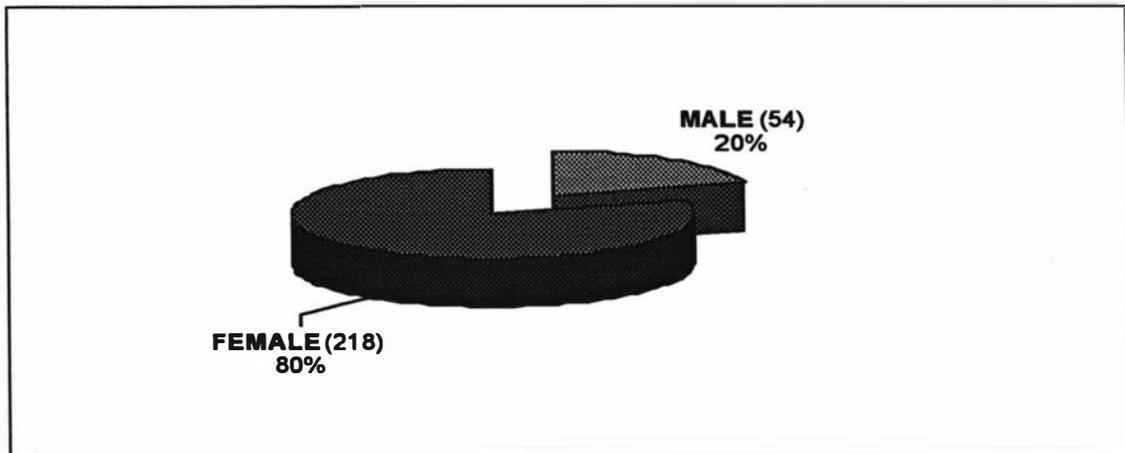


Figure 5.2. ELC staff gender

■ **Question 76: Employment Status**

Approximately three-quarters of respondents said they were full-time employees and approximately one-quarter said they were part-time employees (Table 5.2).

Table 5.2

ELC Staff Employment Status

CATEGORIES	FREQUENCY	VALID PERCENT
Full-time employee	205	75.6
Part-time employee	66	24.4
Total valid	271	100.0
Missing	4	
Total	275	

■ Question 77: Length of time in current position

The length of time staff had been in their current position with the ELC varied from one week to thirteen years. The mean period of employment was approximately 21 months. Table 5.3 provides an overview in months. Of the 269 respondents who answered this question, 115 (42.8%) had been with the ELC up to six months and 55 (20.4%) from seven months to a year. In other words, 63.2% had been in their current position with their ELCs for a year or less. Ninety-nine respondents (36.8%) had held their position more than a year and 60 (22.3%) had been there more than two years. Only 26 respondents (9.7%) had been employed for more than five years.

Table 5.3

ELC Staff Length Of Time In Current Position (Months)

TIME IN ELC (MONTHS)	NUMBER OF STAFF	PERCENTAGE OF STAFF
Up to 6	115	42.8
7 -12	55	20.4
13 - 24	39	14.5
25 - 36	11	4.1
37 - 48	12	4.5
49 - 60	11	4.1
61 - 72	6	2.2
73 - 84	6	2.2
85 - 96	5	1.9
97 - 108	4	1.5
109 - 120	2	0.7
121+	3	1.1
Total valid	269	100.0
Missing	6	

5.2.2 Satisfaction survey – client data

■ *Question 77: Length of time in English language centre*

There was considerable variation in the time clients had spent in the ELC, ranging from one week to two years. The mean period of stay was 12.2 weeks. Table 5.4 provides an overview of respondent time periods in the ELC in weeks. Of the 1,626 respondents who answered this question, 435 (26.8%) had been with the ELC four weeks or less and 858 (52.8%) had been there eight weeks or less, and 1,092 (67.2%) had been there 12 weeks or less. Approximately 91% (1477) had been with the ELC 24 weeks (about six months) or less. Only 13 respondents (0.8 %) had been with the ELC more than a year.

Table 5.4
Client Length of Time in ELC (Weeks)

TIME IN ELC (WEEKS)	NUMBER OF CLIENTS	PERCENTAGE OF CLIENTS
Up to 4	435	26.8
5 - 8	423	26.0
9 - 12	234	14.4
13 - 16	132	8.1
17 - 20	81	5.0
21 - 24	142	8.7
25 - 28	71	4.4
29 - 32	34	2.1
33 - 36	23	1.4
37 - 40	14	0.9
41 - 44	6	0.4
45 - 48	13	0.8
49 - 52	5	0.3
53+	13	0.8
Total valid	1626	100.0 ^a
Missing	58	

^a Rounded to 100%

■ **Question 78: Immigration Status**

Ninety-two respondents (5.5%) did not respond. Of the 1,592 respondents who did, 1,412 (88.6%) classed themselves as *visitors*, 162 (10.2%) as *permanent residents*, and 18 (1.1%) as *New Zealand citizens* (Figure 5.3).

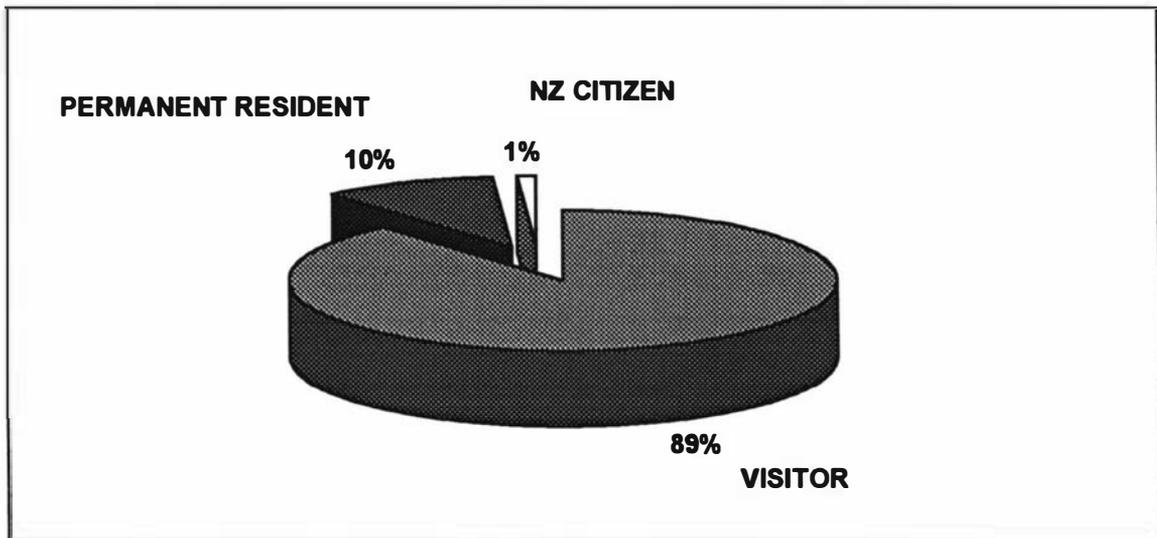


Figure 5.3. ELC client immigration status

■ **Question 79: Country of origin**

Ninety-six respondents or 5.7% of the sample did not provide this data. A total of 41 nationalities were identified. However, 92.6% of the 1588 respondents came from only six countries (Table 5.5, next page). A comparison with the official statistics for the same nationalities in ELCs (Education New Zealand, 2002) reveals considerable differences in some cases (Table 5.5, next page). In particular, clients from P.R. China are overrepresented in the sample, whereas the other nationalities are underrepresented. It is not clear why there should be such differences. One explanation may be the time of year the data was collected. Had it been taken earlier in the year, it is possible that the balance of Chinese and Japanese clients in ELCs would have been different.

Approximately 94% of respondents came from Asian countries. European respondents made up 4% of the sample and the other 2% were from South America and "other" regions such as Africa, the Pacific and the Mideast. (Figure 5.4). A complete list of respondent countries of origin is provided in Appendix S.

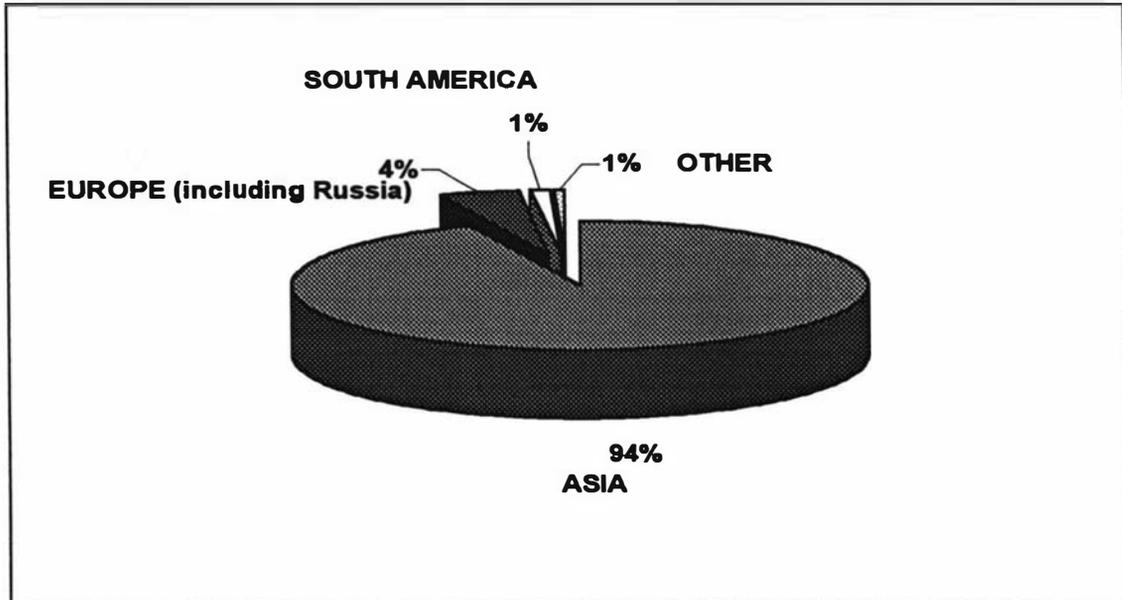


Figure 5.4. ELC client region of origin summary

Table 5.5

Top Six ELC Client Countries of Origin

COUNTRY	N	VALID PERCENT	2001 PERCENT
P.R. China	731	46.0	19.3
Japan	319	20.1	34.4
S. Korea	292	18.4	14.6
Taiwan	59	3.7	5.7
Thailand	37	2.3	5.0
Switzerland	33	2.1	5.1
Total	1471	92.6	84.1

■ **Question 80. Age**

Of the 1,684 respondents, 115 (6.8%) did not provide a response to this question. The bulk of the 1,569 respondents who did were in the 20-29 age group. Younger clients predominated but the thirty-plus group made up nearly 16% of the sample (Figure 5.5).

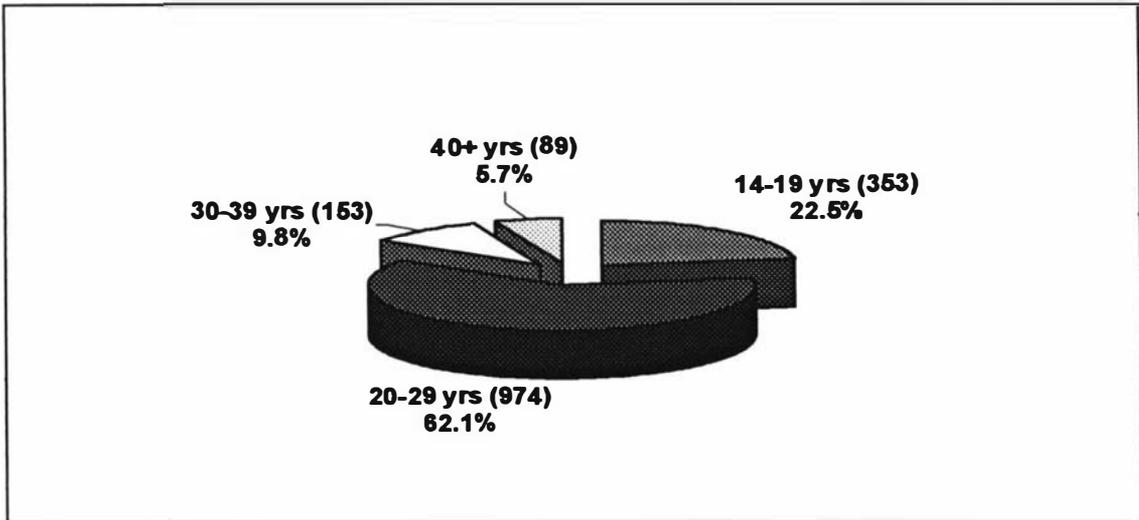


Figure 5.5. Breakdown of ELC client age groups

Note. Due to rounding up, individual values do not total 100%.

■ **Question 81. Gender**

Fifty-four respondents (3.2%) did not respond. The sample was well-balanced with females predominating (Figure 5.6). In the absence of ELC client gender national data, the representativeness of these figures cannot be verified.

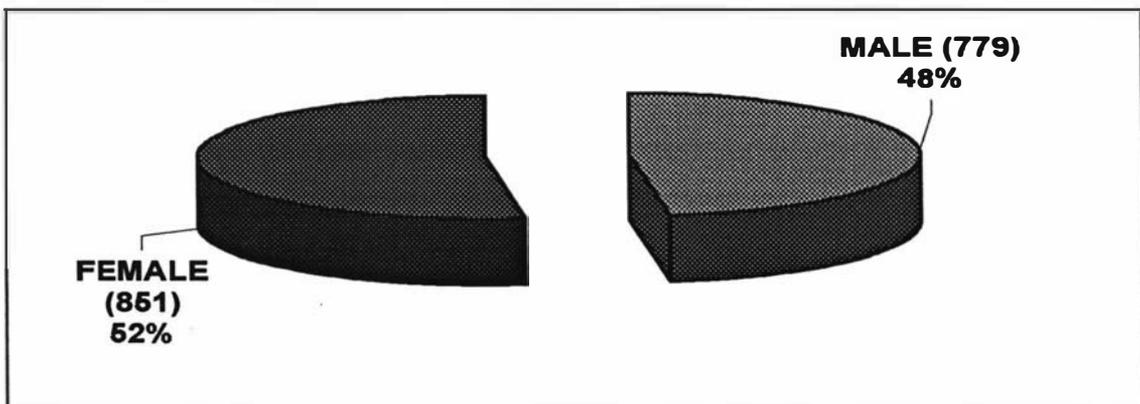


Figure 5.6. ELC client gender

5.3 PRELIMINARY STATISTICAL PROCEDURES

For both the climate scale and the satisfaction scale, once the data had been entered, checks were made for outliers and tests of normality were run using SPSS 10. *Skewness* refers to the extent to which scores are concentrated at either end of a distribution (de Vaus, 1995). The data for each item was examined for evidence of extreme skewness using histograms and QQ plots. Skewness values were calculated. Reliability was checked with Cronbach's Alpha (Cronbach, 1951). Intercorrelations between the dimensions of each scale were determined. For the client satisfaction scale, the criteria for multiple regression were applied to the data.

5.3.1 Service climate scale

With some exceptions, a mild skewness towards positive scores was observed (Appendix T). This skewness reflects a generally positive perception of ELC climate on the part of respondents. A reliability check using Cronbach's Alpha revealed an alpha coefficient of .9841 for the complete climate scale. The coefficient alphas for individual climate dimensions are displayed in Table 5.6.

Table 5.6

Cronbach Alphas for Service Climate Scale Dimensions

ELC SERVICE CLIMATE DIMENSION	α
Management service practices	.91
Management communication	.86
Management support	.91
Staff service practices	.80
Client focus	.95
Staff service ethos	.87
Staff personal attributes	.93
Staff concern for clients	.93
Employment issues	.84
Resourcing	.84
Estimate of client evaluation of service	.90

Table 5.7
Climate Scale Dimensions Intercorrelations

	MGSERPRAC	MGCOMM	MGSUPPT	STSERPRAC	CLIENTFOC	STSERETH	STPERATT	STCNCERN	EMPISSUE	RESOURCG	ESTIMATE
MGSERPRAC	1.00										
MGCOMM	.92**	1.00									
MGSUPPT	.86**	.89**	1.00								
STSERPRAC	.79**	.77**	.75**	1.00							
CLIENTFOC	.83**	.84**	.79**	.89**	1.00						
STSERETH	.62**	.64**	.62**	.87**	.78**	1.00					
STPERATT	.64**	.58**	.58**	.88**	.82**	.80**	1.00				
STCNCERN	.54**	.56**	.51**	.71**	.80**	.69**	.84**	1.00			
EMPISSUE	.75**	.68**	.76**	.78**	.78**	.61**	.69**	.54**	1.00		
RESOURCG	.67**	.61**	.85**	.51**	.58**	.42**	.40**	.33**	.68**	1.00	
ESTIMATE	.81**	.75**	.78**	.72**	.82**	.67**	.65**	.58**	.84**	.75**	1.00

** $p < .01$

Since all these values are well above 0.7, the climate scale can be considered to have good internal consistency. Intercorrelations for the climate scale are presented in Table 5.7 (previous page). (The key to the computer codes can be found in Appendix U) Almost all dimensions demonstrate moderate to large positive correlations at the $p = .01$ significance level.

Findings from factor analysis of the service climate scale are located in Appendix Z/2.

5.3.2 Client satisfaction scale

This scale presented a rather different picture in terms of skewness. As discussed in Chapter 3, customer satisfaction ratings are generally skewed towards the positive (Danaher & Haddrell, 1996). An examination of the item histograms provided no evidence of consistent, extreme skewness toward the positive end of the scale. Although seven items did demonstrate moderate to strong positive or negative skew, this was not an overall trend. Appendix V displays the skewness values for each item and as can be seen, most of these indicate positive opinions. However, the values are generally low and the distribution can be said to be reasonably normal.

Table 5.8

Cronbach Alphas for Client Satisfaction Scale Dimensions

ELC CLIENT SATISFACTION DIMENSION	α
The teachers	.94
The English lessons	.88
The service procedures	.89
The communication	.88
The admin staff	.95
The homestay	.96
The facilities	.93
The activities programme	.95
General	.90

An alpha of .9792 for the complete satisfaction scale was ascertained. The alphas for the individual dimensions are shown in Table 5.8. Since these values are above 0.7, the satisfaction scale appeared to have good internal consistency.

Intercorrelations are presented in Table 5.9 (page after next). (See Appendix U for computer codes key.) Almost all dimensions demonstrate moderate to large positive correlations at the $p = .01$ significance level.

In order to satisfy the assumptions for the use of multiple regression, the criteria discussed in Section 3.4.6 were applied to the client satisfaction data with the following outcomes:

Sample size: The data was entered into the regression equation by dimension, the largest of which contained 13 variables. According to Tabachnick and Fidell's formula (1996, cited in Pallant, 2001), therefore, a minimum sample size of 154 would have been necessary. As the actual sample was more than ten times this size, this requirement was more than met.

Multicollinearity: The SPSS package provides collinearity tolerance values for each variable entered into the regression equation. Values near to zero indicate the possibility of multicollinearity. Since the lowest value was .215 and other values were well above this, it was assumed that multicollinearity had not occurred.

Outliers: Boxplots were created for each variable and examined for multiple outliers. Around 60% of the variables demonstrated only one outlier each and a single variable had four. The other 40% demonstrated no outliers. Given the size of the sample, outliers were therefore unlikely to have had any effect on the accuracy of the regression values.

Normality: As reported above, the skewness values indicated an acceptable level of normality. Histograms created for each variable also indicated that the distribution was reasonably normal.

Linearity and Homoscedasticity: These conditions were indicated by the aforementioned normality checks. In addition, the Normal Q-Q plots demonstrated, generally, a straight line, which supported a linear relation. Standardised residuals scatterplots indicated a roughly rectangular shape with residuals randomly scattered around the centre line. These observations supported the conclusion that the two conditions had been met (Osborne & Waters, 2002; Pallant, 2001).

Findings from factor analysis of the client satisfaction scale are located in Appendix Z/2.

Table 5.9
Client Satisfaction Scale Dimensions Intercorrelations

	TEACHER	ENGLSSN	SERVPRC	COMMUN	ADMSTFF	HMSTAY	FACLTIES	ACTVPRG	GENERAL	RECOMM
TEACHER	1.00									
ENGLSSN	.89**	1.00								
SERVPRC	.79**	.85**	1.00							
COMMUN	.74**	.82**	.84**	1.00						
ADMSTFF	.67**	.64**	.90**	.79**	1.00					
HMSTAY	.54**	.53**	.62**	.64**	.68**	1.00				
FACLTIES	.56**	.52**	.58**	.61**	.51**	.51**	1.00			
ACTVPRG	.42**	.50**	.69**	.70**	.71**	.61**	.50**	1.00		
GENERAL	.70**	.79**	.86**	.89**	.84**	.72**	.67**	.78**	1.00	
RECOMM	.64**	.79**	.81**	.87**	.76**	.70**	.59**	.67**	.92**	1.00

** $p < .01$

5.4 FINDINGS FROM THE STAFF SERVICE CLIMATE SURVEY

5.4.1 Overview

The service climate dimension means for 29 of the 30 ELCs who took part in the survey are shown in Table 5.10. (The staff data for ELC 28 had to be excluded as only two responses were obtained and both were incomplete.) In terms of individual ELC service climate quality, means ranged from 2.93 to 4.34 across the 29 ELCs. The mean climate rating was 3.72. As discussed below, there were considerable differences between individual ELCs and these should be borne in mind in any discussion of the mean climate perceptions.

Table 5.10
Service Climate Dimension Means

DIMENSION	M	RANK	PERCENTAGE DISAGREE/ STRONGLY DISAGREE ^A	PERCENTAGE NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE ^A	PERCENTAGE AGREE/ STRONGLY AGREE ^A
1 Management service practices	3.56	6	18.53	19.63	61.85
2 Management communication	3.40	9	22.68	20.16	57.22
3 Management support	3.54	7	19.92	19.30	60.77
4 Staff service practices	3.69	5	14.7	17.78	67.55
5 Client focus	3.97	4	7.68	16.62	75.68
6 Staff service ethos	4.19	3	3.70	10.60	85.70
7 Staff personal attributes	4.49	1	1.18	3.98	94.84
8 Staff concern for clients	4.20	2	2.64	11.52	85.84
9 Employment issues	3.09	11	32.88	22.10	44.98
10 Resourcing	3.45	8	27.63	12.27	60.10
11 Estimate of client evaluation	3.33	10	13.30	44.62	42.10

^aDue to rounding, category percentages do not total 100%

In the following sections, the findings from the individual dimensions of the climate questionnaire are presented in abbreviated tabular form. The complete question formulations along with detailed descriptive statistics are in Appendix T. The dimension means for individual ELCs are presented in Appendix W.

5.4.2 Detailed findings from service climate survey

■ Dimensions 1 – 3: Management practices

Dimension 1, *management service practices*, ranked sixth overall ($M = 3.56$), presenting a positive picture of service climate. Almost 62% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statements (Figure 5.7) and the Likert scale means are fairly closely clustered (Table 5.11). However, there was considerable variation between individual ELC means, with a range of 2.24 to 4.37. The item which staff endorsed most (70.6%) was *Management has a sound grasp of TESOL aspects of the service*.

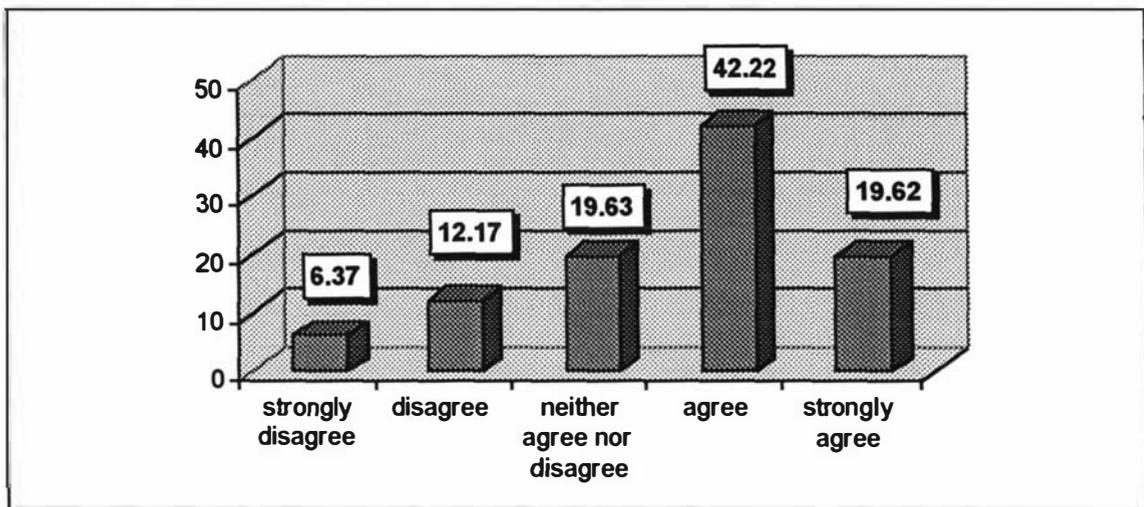


Figure 5.7. ELC management service practices: Response category percentage overview

Table 5.11

ELC Management Service Practices: Descriptive Data

MANAGEMENT SERVICE PRACTICE	N	M	SE	SD
In this English language centre, management...				
1 ensures that staff familiar with service goals.	263	3.59	.067	1.08
2 ensures staff familiar with service policies/procedures.	267	3.59	.066	1.07
3 ensures staff know how to deliver superior service.	269	3.41	.064	1.05
4 regularly monitors service standards.	264	3.42	.068	1.10
5 leads by example in providing superior service.	262	3.55	.074	1.20
6 has sound grasp of the TESOL aspects of the service.	255	3.84	.075	1.20

Although ranked ninth ($M = 3.40$), the *management communication* dimension presents a similar picture in terms of percentage of responses (Figure 5.8) in each category and the pattern of the means (Table 5.12). Respondents appeared to have a positive view of the way that management communicated with them. However, there was considerable variation between individual ELCs on this dimension. The staff of two ELCs, for instance, rated this dimension at 2.04 in contrast with a high of 4.18 for one ELC. The weakest item related to management provision of feedback on staff performance.

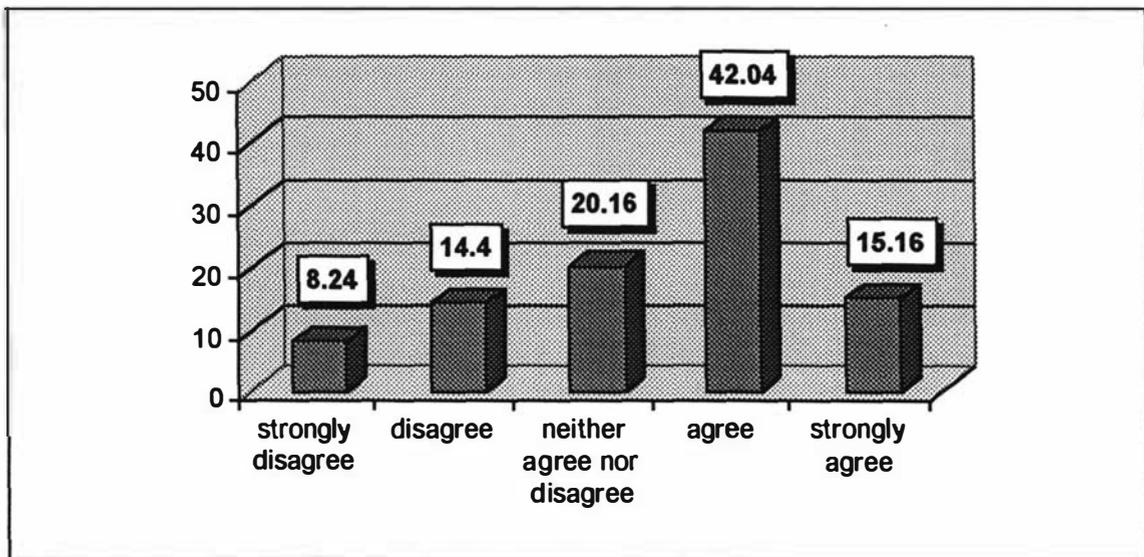


Figure 5.8. ELC management communication: Response category percentage overview

Table 5.12

ELC Management Communication: Descriptive Data

MANAGEMENT COMMUNICATION	N	M	SE	SD
In this English language centre, management...				
7 talks to staff about importance of superior service.	270	3.42	.072	1.18
8 consults with staff on ways to improve service.	270	3.39	.073	1.19
9 provides staff with feedback on their performance.	269	3.30	.067	1.09
10 shares with staff client feedback on service quality.	266	3.47	.069	1.13
11 keeps staff informed about organisational issues.	271	3.49	.071	1.17

The *management support* dimension ranked seventh overall ($M = 3.54$). Almost 61% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed and 20% disagreed or strongly disagreed with the items (Figure 5.9). The range among individual ELCs was 2.33 to 4.36. Whereas the means of five of the six variables in this dimension are closely grouped together, the sixth, *management recognition of staff efforts*, is conspicuously low, within a midpoint range of the Likert scale (Table 5.13).

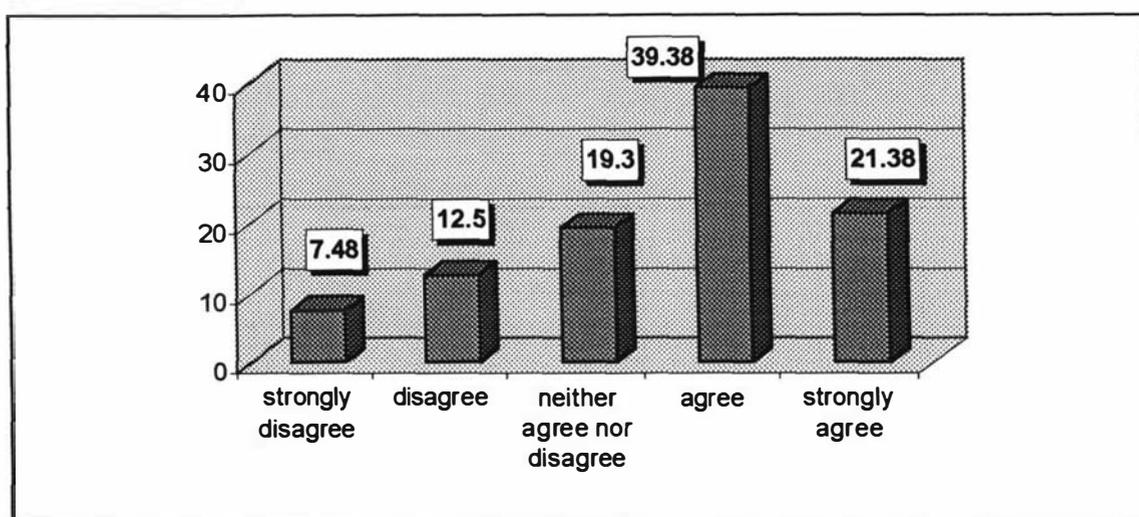


Figure 5.9. ELC management support: Response category percentage overview

Table 5.13

ELC Management Support: Descriptive Data

MANAGEMENT SUPPORT	N	M	SE	SD
In this English language centre, management...				
12 encourages staff in efforts to provide superior service.	271	3.69	.064	1.05
13 ensures staff have resources for superior service.	274	3.60	.077	1.27
14 makes effort to remove obstacles to superior service.	270	3.50	.071	1.17
15 fosters mutual cooperation and support among staff.	273	3.68	.068	1.13
16 supports professional development for staff.	265	3.68	.070	1.13
17 recognises efforts of staff who provide superior service.	260	3.14	.074	1.19

Dimension 4: Staff service practices

This dimension was rated quite positively, ranking overall fifth ($M = 3.69$). Almost 68% of respondents endorsed the statements and just under 15% did not (Figure 5.10). In only two ELCs did the mean slip below the midpoint of the Likert scale. With one exception, the means for the individual items are squarely within a positive band (Table 5.14). However, the weakest item at 3.07 and the one that has the highest standard deviation, figuring prominently in analyses of group differences (Section 5.4.3), is the staff perception of themselves as marketers of the service.

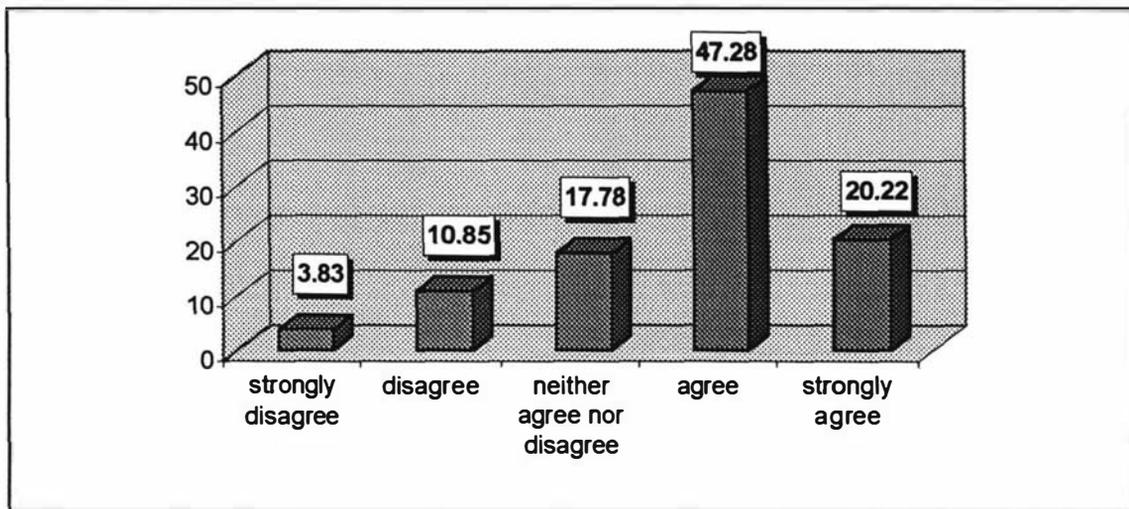


Figure 5.10. ELC staff service practices: Response category percentage overview

Table 5.14

ELC Staff Service Practices: Descriptive data

STAFF SERVICE PRACTICE	N	M	SE	SD
In this English language centre, staff...				
18 have a clear understanding of their service role.	272	3.82	.056	0.92
19 regard marketing organisation as part of service role.	268	3.07	.071	1.17
20 have the necessary skills to provide superior service.	261	3.86	.053	0.86
21 empowered to make decisions that affect quality of work.	269	3.52	.064	1.05
22 actively support one another to provide superior service.	273	4.05	.054	0.88
23 communicate effectively with one another.	273	3.85	.060	0.98

■ Dimension 5: Client Focus

This is a wide-ranging dimension thematically but one that captures much of the essence of good service practice. The dimension ($M = 3.97$) ranked overall fourth and some of the mean scores were conspicuously high (Table 5.15). Almost 76% of respondents endorsed the statements and just under 8% did not (Figure 5.11, next page). This result indicates, overall, a positive perception of client focus. For instance, approximately 90% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that it was easy for a client to access a member of staff for help ($M = 4.34$) and nearly 86% agreed or strongly agreed that the ELC environment was relaxed and friendly ($M = 4.2$). By contrast only 61% felt that the service clients received matched the description in publicity materials ($M = 3.63$).

Table 5.15

ELC Client Focus: Descriptive Data

CLIENT FOCUS	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>SD</i>
In this English language centre...				
24 there is a focus on creating client satisfaction.	274	3.99	.059	0.98
25 service described in publicity material matches that received.	241	3.63	.071	1.10
26 there is effective communication with clients.	263	3.79	.058	0.94
27 clients experience relaxed, friendly service environment.	271	4.20	.052	0.86
28 procedures to ensure delivery of superior service.	258	3.73	.065	1.04
29 clients get information they need to get most out of service.	252	3.77	.060	0.96
30 clients experience high standard of professional instruction.	271	4.01	.053	0.87
31 easy for client to access staff member for individual help	274	4.34	.046	0.75
32 effective procedure for soliciting clients' opinions.	258	3.83	.063	1.01
33 if client makes complaint, taken seriously and acted on.	256	4.21	.054	0.86
34 clients regarded as potential marketers of organisation.	255	4.10	.057	0.90
35 service can be adapted to suit changing client needs.	266	3.84	.056	0.89
36 clients receive ethical treatment.	266	4.20	.053	0.86

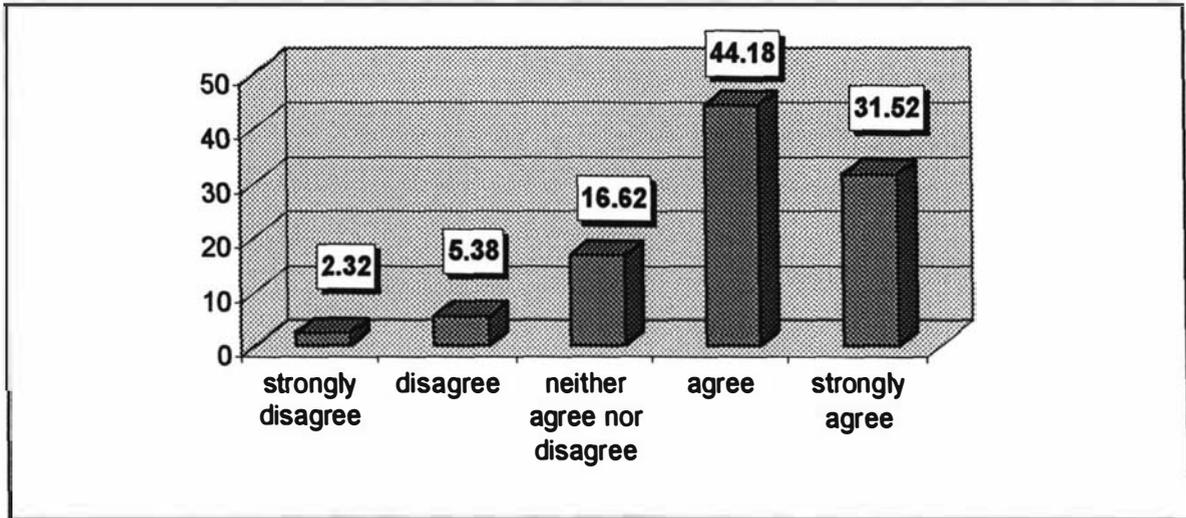


Figure 5.11. ELC client focus: Response category percentage overview

■ Dimensions 6 – 8: Service Orientation

The three service climate dimensions that constitute *service orientation* were the most positively scored in the survey and together registered a mean of 4.29. Respondents had a very positive view of service orientation in their ELCs. *Staff service ethos* (Table 5.16) captures the staff level of commitment and attention to detail. The dimension ranked third ($M = 4.19$), one ELC scoring 4.77. Almost 86% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statements and just under 4% disagreed or strongly disagreed (Figure 5.12, next page). Just over 90% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that staff felt personally responsible for service quality ($M = 4.29$).

Table 5.16

ELC Staff Service Ethos: Descriptive Data

STAFF SERVICE ETHOS	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>SD</i>
In this English language centre, staff...				
37 are committed to providing superior service.	274	4.25	.044	0.73
38 feel personally responsible for the quality of the service.	274	4.29	.045	0.75
39 are painstaking in their work, paying close attention to detail.	267	4.06	.055	0.91

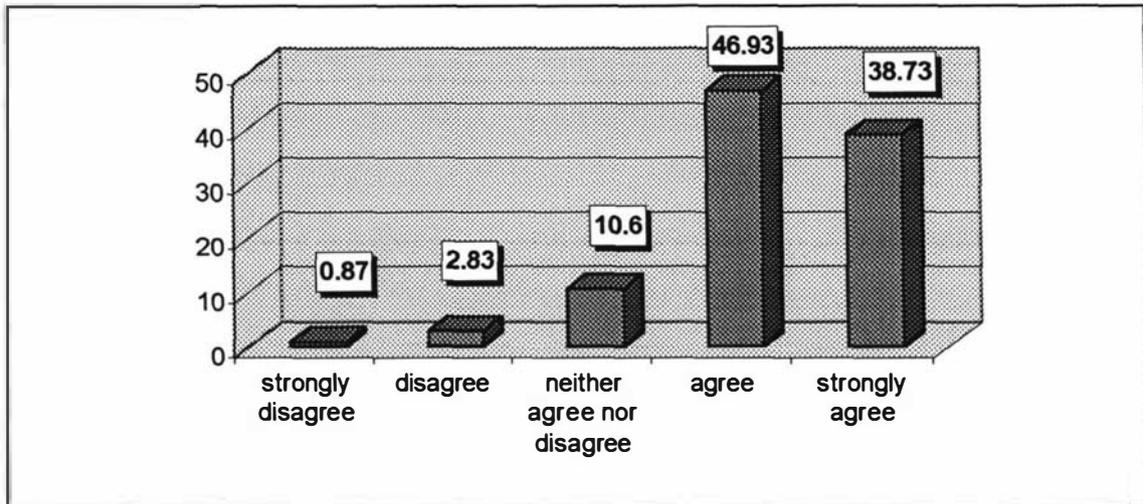


Figure 5.12. ELC staff service ethos: Response category percentage overview

The *staff personal attributes* dimension (Table 5.17) obtained the highest mean of the 11 climate dimensions ($M = 4.49$),. Almost 95% of respondents endorsed the statements, whereas only just over 1% did not (Figure 5.13, next page). Almost 98% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed, furthermore, that staff adopt a friendly manner towards clients ($M = 4.62$), making this the highest rated item in the aggregated findings. This view is strongly supported in the client data, since teacher and admin staff friendliness were among the highest rated individual variables. Items 41, 43 and 42 were, respectively, the second-top, third-top, and fourth-top rated items in the entire survey. Two ELCs scored this dimension at 4.88, a very high rating.

Table 5.17

ELC Staff Personal Attributes: Descriptive Data

STAFF PERSONAL ATTRIBUTE	N	M	SE	SD
In this English language centre, staff...				
40 display a friendly manner towards clients.	275	4.62	.034	0.56
41 adopt a helpful attitude towards clients.	274	4.56	.036	0.60
42 empathise with clients' problems in unfamiliar environment.	275	4.43	.042	0.70
43 exhibit patience when clients have problems communicating.	274	4.47	.038	0.64
44 display professionalism in their dealings with clients.	275	4.36	.044	0.72

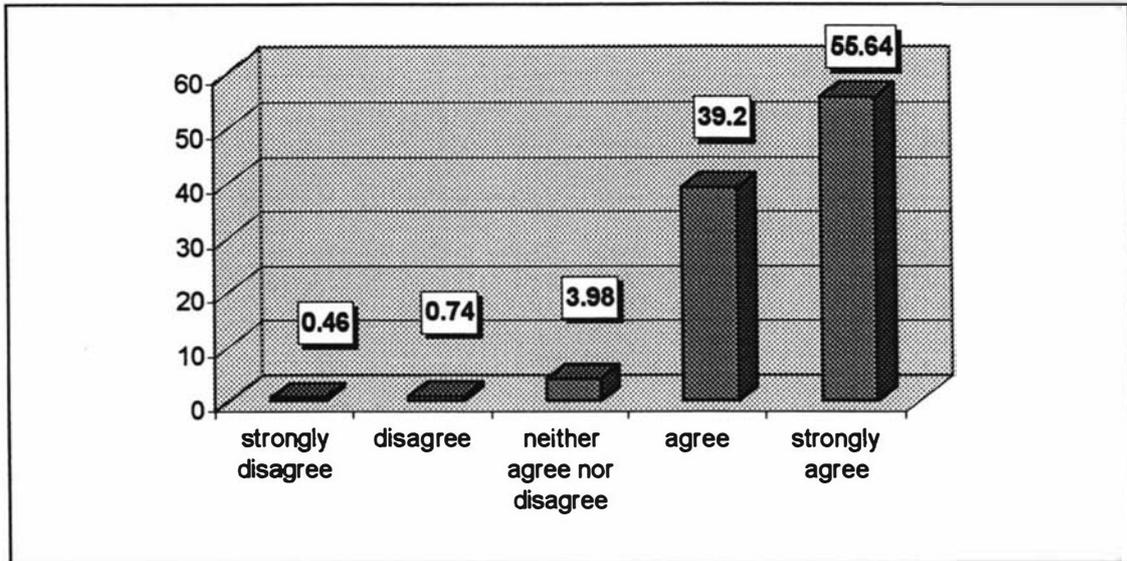


Figure 5.13. ELC staff personal attributes: Response category percentage overview

The dimension *staff concern for clients* obtained the second highest overall mean ($M = 4.20$). Almost 86% of respondents were in agreement with the items in this dimension and just under 3% were not (Figure 5.14, next page). Whereas the most positively viewed item was staff efforts to establish rapport with clients ($M = 4.40$), the weakest item ($M = 3.88$) related to staff willingness to assist clients outside working hours (Table 5.18, next page). This item had the highest standard deviation of the dimension ($SD = 0.89$) which appears to reflect disagreement on this issue between teaching and non-teaching respondents (see Table 5.24).

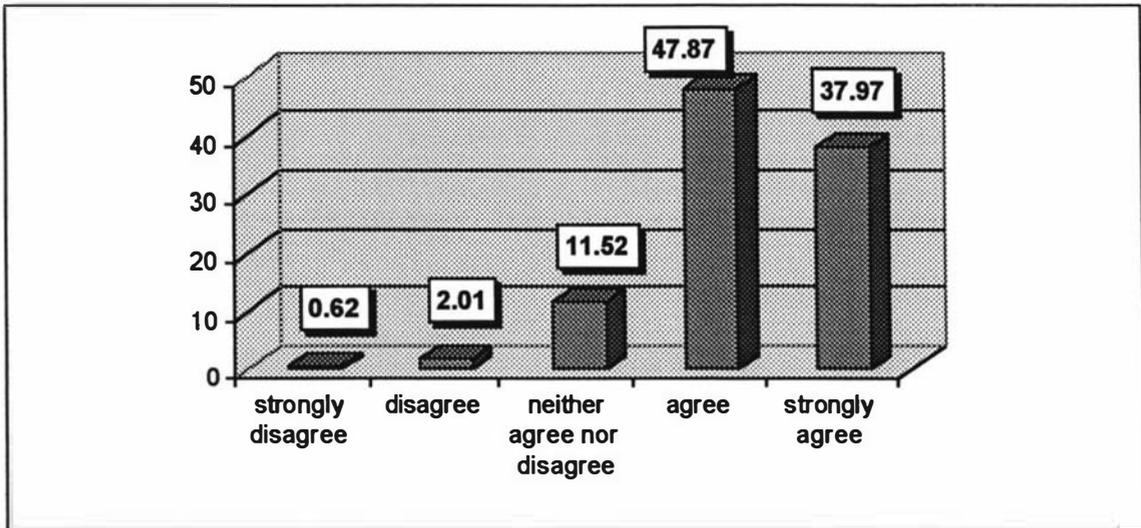


Figure 5.14. ELC staff concern for clients: Response category percentage overview

Table 5.18

ELC Staff Concern For Clients: Descriptive Data

STAFF CONCERN FOR CLIENTS	N	M	SE	SD
In this English language centre, staff...				
45 are willing to assist clients adjust to life in this country.	270	4.20	.043	0.71
46 are sensitive to the needs of clients from other cultures.	273	4.36	.043	0.71
47 are willing to help clients even outside normal working hours.	265	3.88	.055	0.89
48 make an effort to establish rapport with clients.	272	4.40	.041	0.67
49 go out of their way to help a client who has a problem.	274	4.19	.047	0.78
50 actively support clients to achieve English language goals.	273	4.36	.043	0.70
51 cater for individual needs of clients when appropriate.	268	4.19	.045	0.74
52 are willing to counsel clients with personal concerns.	268	4.11	.049	0.79
53 take an active interest in clients' welfare.	269	4.17	.046	0.75

■ **Dimension 9: Employment Issues**

In sharp contrast, this dimension had the lowest overall mean of 3.09 and recorded some of the weakest scores among individual ELCs, the lowest being 1.93. Around one third of ELCs recorded means for the dimension below the midpoint of the Likert scale. Almost 45% of respondents endorsed the statements but 33% did not (Figure 5.15).

It is significant (Table 5.19, next page) that the three least positive aspects of work in the minds of staff respondents were stress ($M = 2.55$), pay ($M = 2.77$), and job security ($M = 2.94$). On the other hand, 72% of respondents perceived the work environment to be harmonious ($M = 3.77$). The responses in this section appear to provide a less encouraging view of ELC service climate, although the higher standard deviation values indicate increased variance across the sample.

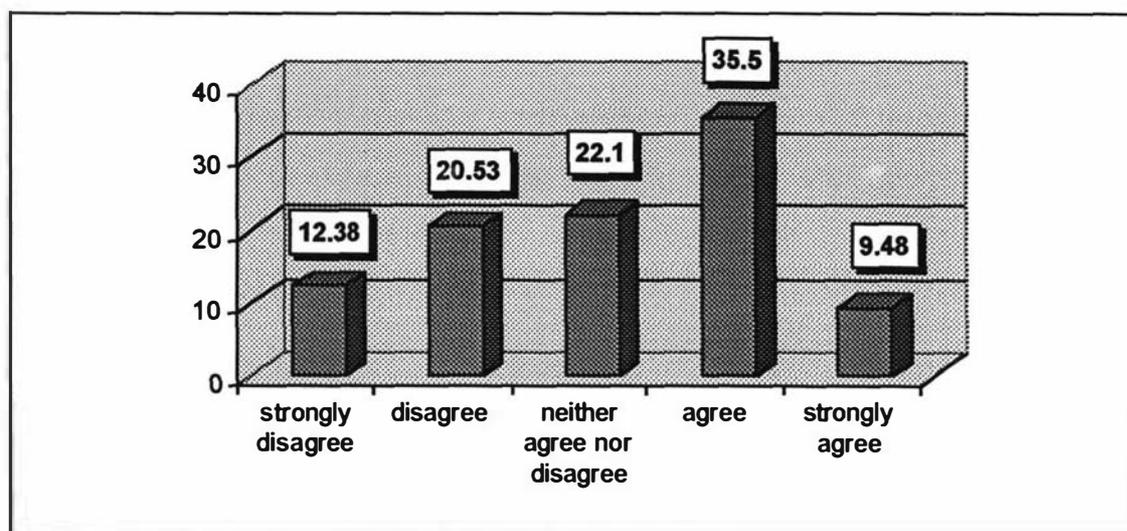


Figure 5.15. ELC employment issues: Response category percentage overview

Table 5.19
ELC Employment Issues: Descriptive Data

EMPLOYMENT ISSUE	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>SD</i>
In this English language centre...				
54 staff have a feeling of job security.	269	2.94	.074	1.22
55 staff do not view their jobs as stressful.	268	2.55	.069	1.13
56 the workload is distributed fairly.	266	3.23	.067	1.09
57 staff receive fair remuneration for their work.	264	2.77	.070	1.14
58 there is a harmonious work environment.	273	3.77	.061	1.01
59 staff enjoy a satisfactory level of physical comfort.	273	3.29	.071	1.17

■ ***Dimension 10: Resourcing***

Although the resourcing dimension had a relatively weak ranking of eighth out of the 11 dimensions (Table 5.10), the mean rating ($M = 3.45$) actually borders on a positive perception of the part of the respondents (Table 5.20, next page). Over 60% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their ELCs were adequately resourced but just under 28% felt they were not (Figure 5.16, next page). Almost 70% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the teaching resources were of a satisfactory standard but just over 21% disagreed or strongly disagreed (Appendix T). *Facilities* received the weakest rating (Table 5.20, next page) in the dimension.

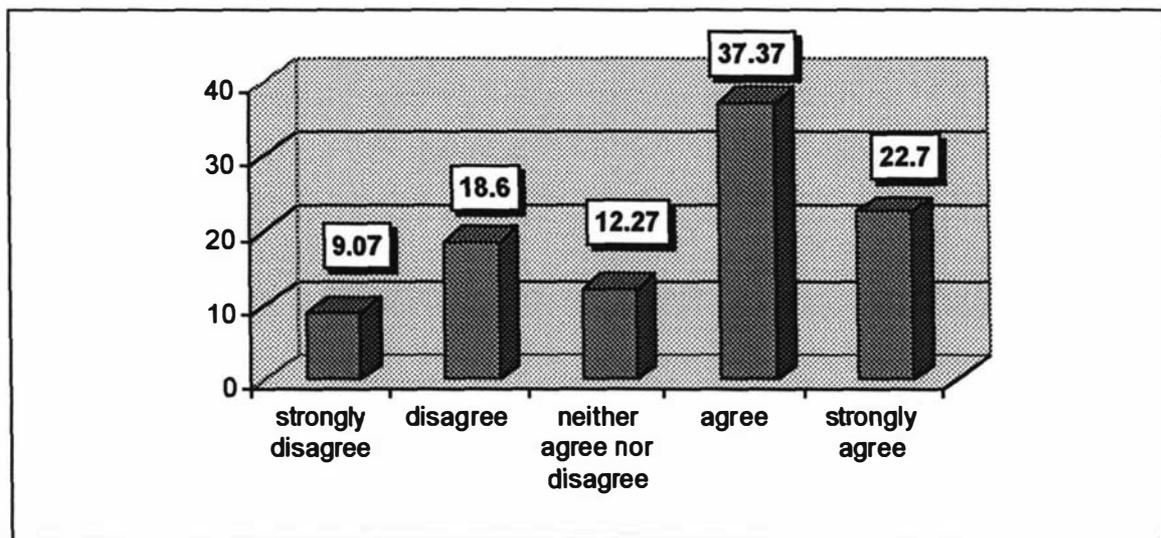


Figure 5.16. ELC resourcing: Response category percentage overview

Table 5.20

ELC Resourcing: Descriptive Data

RESOURCING	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>SD</i>
In this English language centre...				
60 the teaching resources are of a satisfactory standard.	270	3.68	.073	1.20
61 the equipment is of a satisfactory standard.	272	3.43	.076	1.26
62 the facilities are of a satisfactory standard.	274	3.27	.080	1.33

Dimension 11: Staff estimate of client evaluation of service

This dimension is conspicuous for an average 15% drop in the response rate (Table 5.21, next page). Those staff who did respond appeared slightly more pessimistic about their clients' evaluation of them than they were about the overall service climate in their ELCs since the estimate dimension was ranked tenth among the eleven dimensions ($M = 3.34$). However, almost 45% thought their clients found the service as expected, 42% felt that their clients found it better or far better than expected and just over 13% thought they found it worse or far worse than expected (Figure 5.17). Individual ELC means ranged

from 2.58 to 3.93. Noteworthy (Table 5.21) is that *teachers* attracted the highest estimated rating but *facilities* again attracted the lowest.

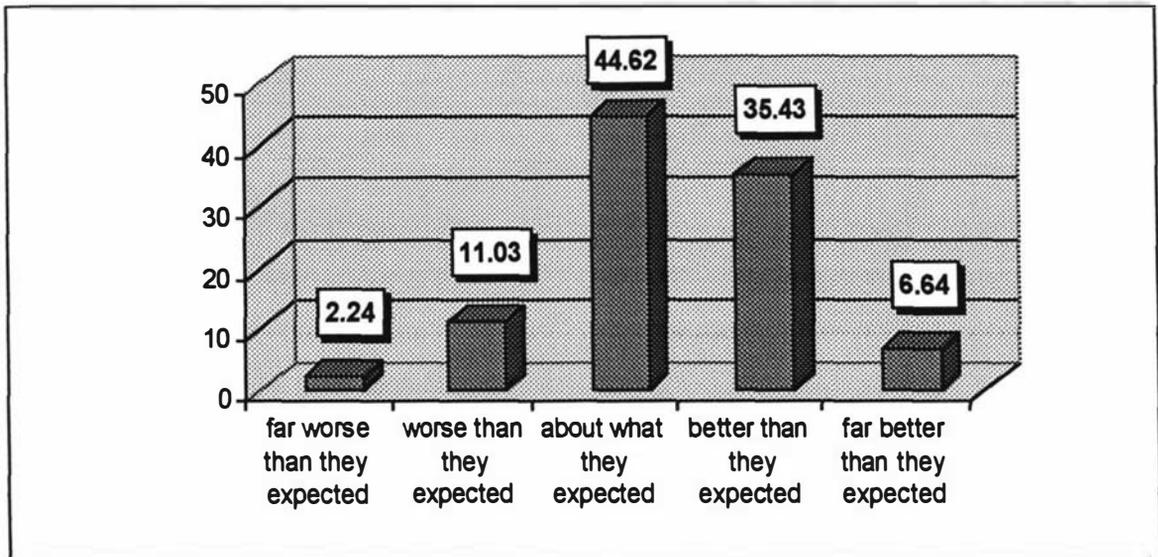


Figure 5.17. ELC staff estimate of client evaluation: Response category percentage overview

Table 5.21

ELC Staff Estimate of Client Evaluation: Descriptive Data

STAFF ESTIMATE OF CLIENT EVALUATION OF SERVICE	N	M	SE	SD
Overall quality of...				
63 the teachers?	251	3.56	.044	0.69
64 the English lessons?	248	3.46	.043	0.68
65 the service procedures?	240	3.23	.051	0.79
66 ELC communication?	238	3.53	.051	0.79
67 the admin staff?	242	3.49	.052	0.81
68 the homestay?	214	3.15	.058	0.85
69 the facilities?	244	2.96	.061	0.94
70 the activities programme?	217	3.18	.069	1.02
71 the ELC service as a whole?	246	3.42	.049	0.76

■ **Question 72 - Barriers to English language centre service provision**

This, the first of two open-ended questions, asked respondents to name up to three barriers to service in their ELCs. The 165 responses obtained equated to a 60% response rate. Content analysis of the data identified five broad themes plus a group of miscellaneous issues. The five broad themes are, in descending order of frequency:

- *The poor quality of the physical work environment*
- *Problems with service delivery*
- *The nature of the ELC management*
- *The employment conditions*
- *Poor communication/lack of communication*

Within these broad areas a number of specific barriers were cited and the top 10 in terms of frequency are presented in Table 5.22, ranked in descending order.

Table 5.22

Question 72 – Barriers to Superior ELC Service (Ranked)

BARRIER TO SUPERIOR SERVICE	RANK
Inadequate/lack of equipment/facilities	1
Poor planning/organisation	2
Inferior/lack of teaching resources	3
Inappropriate staffing practices	4=
Inappropriate management style	4=
Counterproductive management practices	6
Lack of/poor communication	7=
Lack of space/overcrowding	7=
Pay inadequate	9
Lack of professional development	10

The *facilities/equipment* theme comprised issues such as the lack of audiovisual equipment, inferior staff workspace and poor layout. *Poor planning and organisation* included a range of miscellaneous and organisational problems with no single overriding theme. The *teaching resources* issue referred to both general items and textbooks. In some ELCs there were not enough textbooks to go around and some respondents commented that they were forced to illegally mass photocopy. The *inappropriate staffing practices* included the employment of underqualified or inexperienced staff while the *inappropriate management style* referred mainly to unsupportive, autocratic managers.

There were a number of *counterproductive management practices*, including a failure to evaluate staff performance. The *poor communication* referred principally to poor management communication and the *overcrowding* mainly to too-small classrooms. The *pay* issue referred particularly to the lack of paid preparation, marking and meeting time for teachers. The *lack of professional development* was, again, mainly a teacher issue.

■ **Question 73 - Key English language centre attributes of superior service**

Respondents were asked to list up to three key attributes of superior ELC service, in their opinion. There were 223 responses (81% response rate). Seven broad themes emerged. They are, in descending order of frequency:

- *The staff*
- *The service delivery*
- *The physical work environment*
- *The management*
- *Employment conditions*
- *The ELC milieu*
- *Communication*

Within these broad areas a number of specific attributes emerged and the top 10 in terms of frequency are presented in Table 5.23 (next page).

Table 5.23

Question 73 – Attributes of Superior ELC Service(Ranked)

ATTRIBUTE OF SUPERIOR SERVICE	RANK
Desirable teacher attributes	1
Client focus	2
Desirable attributes for all staff	3
Desirable manager attributes	4
Provision of superior teaching/learning resources	5
Superior organisation/administration	6
Provision of superior facilities/equipment	7
Positive, professional, friendly atmosphere	8
Effective communication	9
Provision of professional development	10

The *desirable teacher attributes* were by far the most cited items and referred principally to the need for skilled, experienced, well-qualified teachers. *Client focus* involved meeting client needs, providing personal service, and showing concern for client welfare. The most *desirable attributes for all staff* were teamwork, dedication and professionalism. The two most *desirable manager attributes* were a supportive attitude towards staff and the ability to clarify organisational goals and policies for staff. *Superior organisation/administration* referred mainly to effectiveness and designing/delivering a quality programme. *Effective communication* comprised mainly manager-staff communication.

5.4.3 Service climate data – differences between staff groups

In order to gain a greater understanding of perceptions of service climate in ELCs, statistical tests were run to explore group differences in terms of *gender*, *area of responsibility*, *employment status*, and *length of time in the ELC*.

■ Gender

An independent samples t-test was carried out to compare the male and female scores on the 71 variables in Parts 1 to 6 of the service climate survey. The first noticeable finding was that the female mean was higher than the male mean for 63 out of the 71 variables and identical on one, appearing to indicate a clear trend. However only five of the 71 variable means demonstrated significance at the $p = .05$ level and there was no obvious pattern in terms of variable groupings, apart from the fact that female staff had a significantly stronger perception than male staff of both themselves and their clients as marketers for the organisation. η^2 values were not above .02, indicating a small effect size (Cohen, 1988). There is, therefore, very little evidence to support an overall statistically significant difference between male and female ELC staff in terms of their perceptions of ELC service climate.

■ Area of responsibility

An independent samples t-test explored differences between the 227 teaching and 45 non-teaching staff who responded to this question. The non-teaching staff scored higher than the teachers on 54 of the 71 variables, lower on 16 and identically on one. A comparison of the dimension means (Figure 5.18, next page) revealed that on all but two, the non-teaching staff (NT) variable means were somewhat higher, sometimes significantly so than the teaching staff (T) means. As a general trend, therefore, non-teaching respondents demonstrated a more positive perception of the service climate in their ELCs than their teacher colleagues.

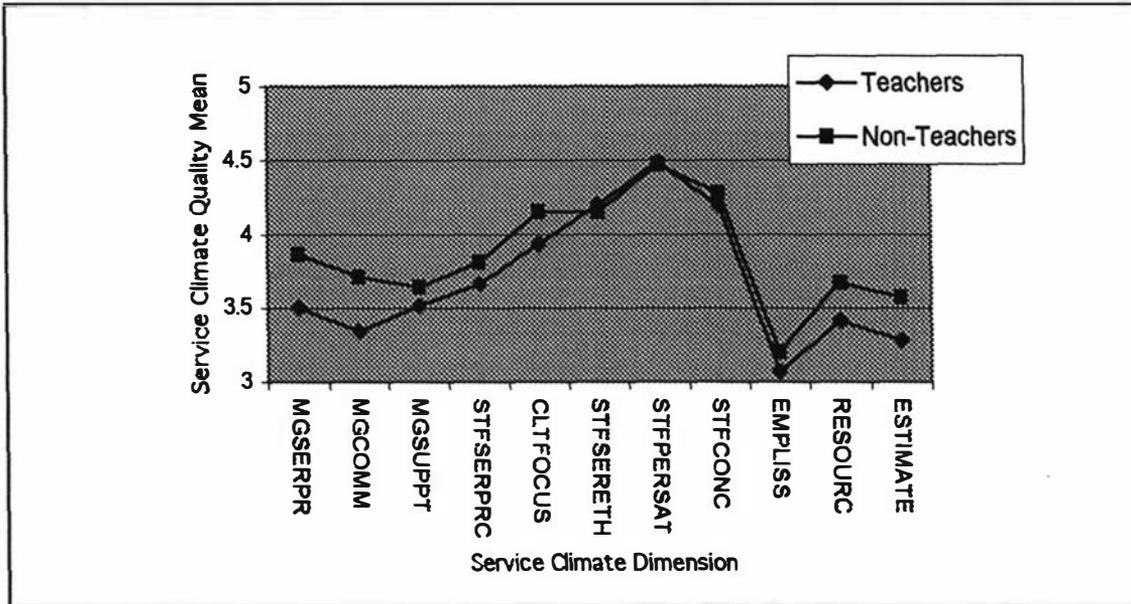


Figure 5.18. Comparison of teacher/non-teacher service climate dimension means

However, in terms of the specific variable means, only 19 (25%) of the 71 items demonstrated a significant difference at the $p = .05$ level (Table 5.24, next page). Most of the effect sizes were small ($\eta^2 = .02 - .04$) with a few verging on the moderate ($\eta^2 = .05$) and large ($\eta^2 = .09$) (Cohen, 1988). As Table 5.24 shows, only two dimensions represent a clear focus of difference between teaching and non-teaching ELC staff means, that is *management service practices* (five out of six items) and *estimate of client evaluation of the service* (four out of nine items). In all cases the non-teacher means are higher. No statistical significance could be demonstrated for the 16 higher-scored teacher ratings. Non-teachers therefore had a more positive view than teachers of management practices and of how their clients evaluated the ELC's service, particularly in terms of the homestay and the admin staff ($p = .01, \eta^2 = .07$). Other items where the differences between teacher and non-teacher perceptions were particularly conspicuous involve management talking to and consulting staff on service issues ($p = .01, \eta^2 = .06$ and $.05$ respectively), the staff marketing role ($p = .01, \eta^2 = .09$) and job security ($p = .01, \eta^2 = .09$).

Table 5.24

Significant Differences Between Teaching (T) and Non-Teaching (NT) Staff Perceptions of ELC Service Climate

VARIABLE	STAFF GROUP	M	SD	SE	SIG. LEVEL	η^2
Management ensures staff familiar with service goals.	T	3.53	1.13	.077	.05	.02
	NT	3.84	0.75	.110		
management ensures staff familiar with policies and procedures.	T	3.53	1.11	.075	.05	.02
	NT	3.89	0.80	.120		
Management regularly monitors service standards.	T	3.35	1.12	.076	.05	.02
	NT	3.74	0.90	.140		
Management leads by example in providing superior service.	T	3.45	1.22	.084	.01	.03
	NT	3.96	1.00	.150		
Management has a sound grasp of TESOL aspects of service.	T	3.76	1.23	.085	.05	.02
	NT	4.15	0.90	.140		
Management routinely talks to staff on the importance of providing superior service.	T	3.30	1.21	.081	.01	.06
	NT	3.91	0.83	.130		
Management routinely consults with staff on ways to improve service delivery.	T	3.27	1.22	.082	.01	.05
	NT	3.82	0.89	.130		
Staff regard marketing the organisation as part of their service role.	T	2.93	1.16	.078	.01	.09
	NT	3.74	0.95	.150		
Staff have the necessary skills to provide superior service.	T	3.81	0.90	.062	.05	.02
	NT	4.07	0.62	.094		
There is a focus on creating client satisfaction.	T	3.91	1.01	.067	.05	.02
	NT	4.31	0.70	.100		
There is effective communication with clients.	T	3.74	0.98	.067	.05	.02
	NT	4.02	0.75	.110		
Clients are regarded as potential marketers of the organisation.	T	4.02	0.93	.064	.01	.04
	NT	4.49	0.66	.099		
Staff empathise with clients having problems in an unfamiliar environment.	T	4.40	0.72	.048	.05	.02
	NT	4.60	0.54	.080		
Staff are willing to help clients even outside normal working hours.	T	3.81	0.88	.060	.01	.03
	NT	4.22	0.79	.120		
Staff have a feeling of job security.	T	2.82	1.22	.082	.01	.09
	NT	3.64	0.92	.140		
What is your estimate of how your clients evaluate the service procedures?	T	3.16	0.78	.056	.01	.03
	NT	3.53	0.77	.120		
What is your estimate of how your clients evaluate the admin staff?	T	3.39	0.79	.056	.01	.07
	NT	3.95	0.79	.120		
What is your estimate of how your clients evaluate the homestay?	T	3.04	0.81	.062	.01	.07
	NT	3.60	0.89	.140		
What is your estimate of how your clients evaluate the ELC service as a whole?	T	3.37	0.74	.052	.05	.02
	NT	3.66	0.79	.120		

■ **Employment Status**

An independent samples t-test was carried out to explore differences between the 205 full-time and 66 part-time staff who provided this information. Again, a clear trend emerged. Of the 71 variables, the full-time staff respondents scored higher than the part-time respondents on 59, lower on nine and the same on three. Overall, full-time respondents seemed to have a more positive view of the ELC service climate than part-time respondents.

However, only seven of the variable means (all from the group of 59 items) demonstrated significance at the $p = .05$ level and there was no discernable trend to these items in terms of dimension grouping. η^2 was around the .02 level which indicated only a small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Although a small difference between full-time and part-time respondents in terms of climate perception was therefore discernable, there was little evidence for any major differences between these two groups.

■ **Length of time in the English language centre**

Group 1	up to 6 months
Group 2	7-12 months
Group 3	13-24 months
Group 4	Over 24 months

A one-way between-groups ANOVA was carried out to explore possible differences in climate perceptions among staff respondents who had been employed at their ELCs for differing lengths of time. The raw data was collapsed into four groups (see inset). When the means of the 11 climate dimensions were plotted for each of the four groups an overall trend became apparent (Figure 5.19, next page). With one exception (*employment issues*) the climate score tended to increase the longer the respondent had been at the ELC. Specifically, the Group 2 (7-12 months) means were generally lower than those of the other three groups, appearing to indicate that this group had the least positive view of the ELC climate.

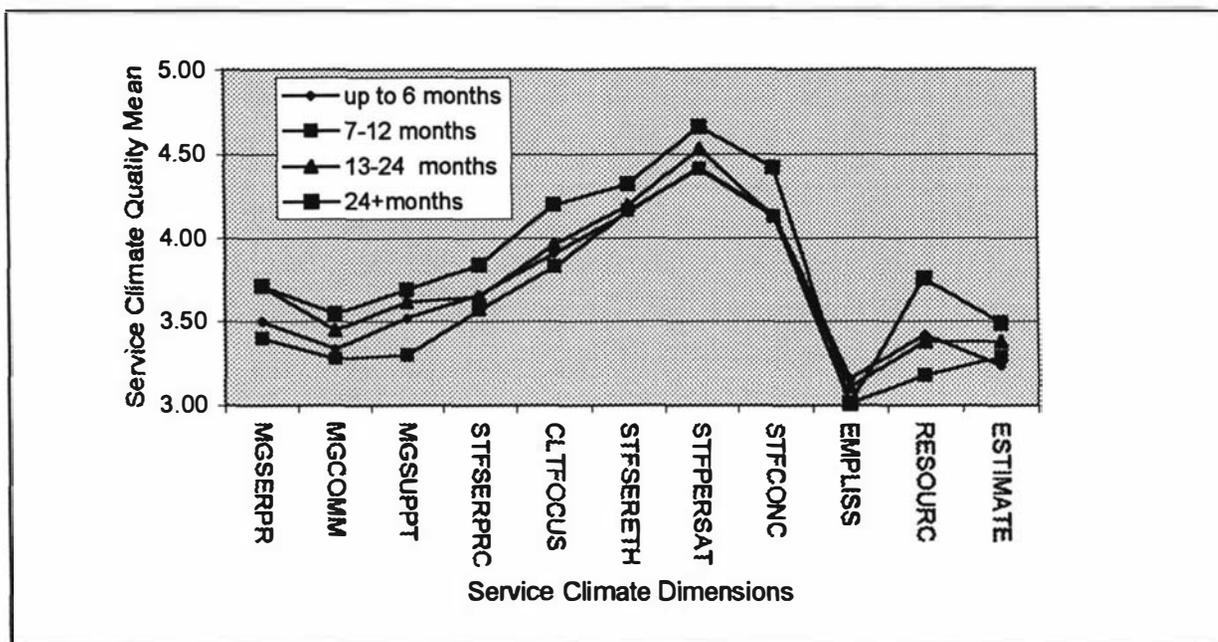


Figure 5.19. Staff length of time in ELCs: Comparison of dimension means

On closer examination of the data from the ANOVA, however, it was found that only 18 of the 71 climate variable means demonstrated significant difference at the $p = .05$ level. The majority of these were grouped in the *client focus*, *concern for clients*, and *staff estimate* dimensions but not in numbers that would designate these dimensions as definite points of difference between the groups. The η^2 values ranged from .03 to .06, with the largest differences in perceptions of teaching resources and of client evaluation of teachers, lessons and communication (all $\eta^2 = .06$). A Tukey HSD test revealed that in 16 of the 18 cases the significant differences were between Group 1 or Group 2 and Group 4. These results appeared to indicate modest but definite differences in perception of particular service climate elements, depending on how long respondents had been employed in their current positions at the ELC. Specifically, respondents who had been there up to a year had a slightly less positive perception than those who had been there longer than two years.

5.4.4 Service climate data – differences between individual English language centres

Although means can give an overview of the overall climate in the 30 ELCs participating in the climate survey, they provide little indication of the extent of climate perception differences between individual ELCs. A one-way between-groups ANOVA was carried out to explore this question.

Of the thirty ELCs there were 15 with at least 10 staff responses. These were selected and differences on the 71 climate variables were plotted. Of the 71 variables, only one did not demonstrate a significant difference. Some 63 variables were significant at the $p = .01$ level and seven at the $p = .05$ level. The η^2 values for individual variables ranged from $\eta^2 = .14$ to $\eta^2 = .55$, indicating a large to very large effect size (Cohen, 1988). This result indicates considerable variation between these ELCs in terms of staff respondent climate perception. The mean η^2 dimension values (Table 5.25) provide an overview of the extent of the differences.

Table 5.25

Differences Between ELCs – Mean η^2 Service Climate Dimension Values

CLIMATE DIMENSION	MEAN η^2
Management service practices	.38
Management communication	.34
Management support	.28
Staff service practices	.24
Client focus	.34
Staff service ethos	.17
Staff personal attributes	.15
Staff concern for clients	.17
Employment issues	.34
Resourcing	.50
Estimate of client evaluation of service	.33

A ranking of the dimensions in terms of effect size (Table 5.26) revealed that the strongest effect sizes related to resourcing and management issues and the weakest related to staff service attributes or attitudes.

Table 5.26

Differences Between ELCs – Service Climate Dimension η^2 Rankings

CLIMATE DIMENSION	RANK
Resourcing	1
Management service practices	2
Management communication	3=
Client focus	3=
Employment issues	3=
Estimate of client evaluation	6
Management support	7
Staff service practices	8
Staff service ethos	9
Staff concern for clients	9=
Staff personal attributes	11

On ranking the individual climate variables in terms of effect size, it was found that the strongest five all related directly or indirectly to *tangibles*, whereas the weakest five were all *intangibles* comprising the entire *staff personal attributes* dimension (Table 5.27).

Table 5.27

Service Climate Variables: Strongest And Weakest Effect Sizes Between ELCs

FIVE STRONGEST DIFFERENCES	η^2
The facilities are of a satisfactory standard.	.55
The equipment is of a satisfactory standard.	.51
The service clients receive closely matches that in publicity materials.	.50
Staff enjoy a satisfactory level of physical comfort.	.46
The teaching resources are of a satisfactory standard.	.44
FIVE WEAKEST DIFFERENCES	η^2
Staff display professionalism in their dealings with clients.	.16
Staff exhibit patience when clients have problems communicating...	.15
Staff adopt a helpful attitude towards clients.	.15
Staff display a friendly manner towards clients.	.15
Staff empathise with clients having problems in unfamiliar environment.	.14

5.4.5 Service climate data – differences in English language centre type and size

■ Differences in English language centre type

Eight of the 30 ELCs in the study belonged to tertiary institutions. In order to explore possible differences between tertiary and privately-operated ELCs in terms of service climate quality, the data from each group was examined using an independent samples t-test. The overview of the means for dimension summary quality questions (Figure 5.20) reveals only minor differences between the two types and the same trends are apparent. At dimension level, no significant differences could be detected in the data.

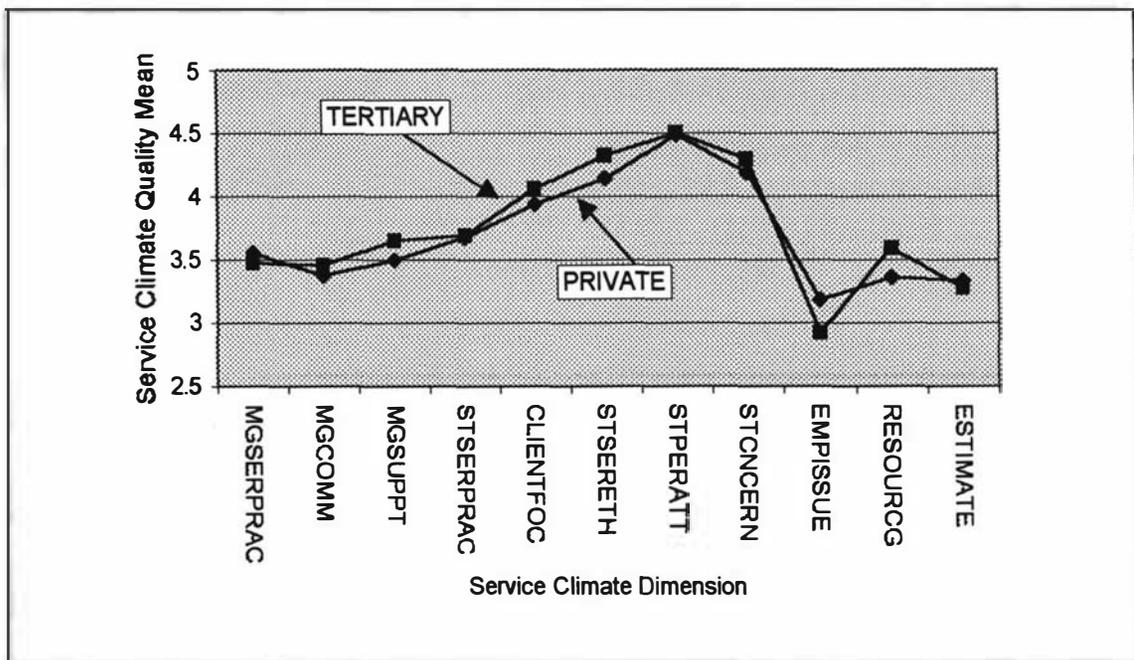


Figure 5.20. Service climate quality: Tertiary and private ELCs compared

However, when the individual variable means were examined, a clearer picture emerged. Of the 71 items in the survey, 23 demonstrated a significant difference at either the $p = .05$ or $p = .01$ level. One dimension in particular, *client focus*, revealed substantial differences between tertiary and private ELCs, as nine out of the 13 items were significantly different. With one exception,

staff do not view their jobs as stressful, all tertiary ELC staff means were significantly higher than those of private ELC staff indicating a more positive tertiary staff perception of these items (Table 5.28).

Table 5.28

Private and Tertiary ELCs: Significant Differences in Staff Climate Perceptions

VARIABLE	ELC TYPE	M	SD	SE	SIG. LEVEL	η^2
Management consults with staff on how to improve service delivery	PRIVATE	3.31	1.23	.083	.01	.03
	TERTIARY	3.72	0.95	.130		
Staff have clear understanding of their service role	PRIVATE	3.76	0.93	.063	.05	.02
	TERTIARY	4.08	0.93	.120		
Staff have necessary skills to provide superior service	PRIVATE	3.79	0.86	.060	.01	.03
	TERTIARY	4.14	0.78	.110		
Staff are empowered to make decisions that affect quality of their work	PRIVATE	3.43	1.09	.074	.01	.04
	TERTIARY	3.88	0.79	.110		
There is a focus on creating client satisfaction.	PRIVATE	3.92	1.02	.068	.05	.02
	TERTIARY	4.25	0.72	.100		
The service clients receive closely matches that in publicity materials.	PRIVATE	3.53	1.13	.081	.01	.06
	TERTIARY	4.09	0.79	.120		
There is effective communication with clients.	PRIVATE	3.71	0.97	.067	.01	.04
	TERTIARY	4.16	0.69	.098		
Clients experience a relaxed, friendly service environment.	PRIVATE	4.15	0.87	.059	.05	.02
	TERTIARY	4.41	0.75	.110		
Clients get the information they need to get the most out of the service.	PRIVATE	3.72	1.00	.070	.05	.02
	TERTIARY	3.98	0.75	.110		
Clients experience a high standard of professional instruction.	PRIVATE	3.92	0.87	.059	.01	.05
	TERTIARY	4.41	0.73	.100		
It is easy for a client to access an individual staff member for help / advice.	PRIVATE	4.28	0.76	.051	.01	.03
	TERTIARY	4.59	0.67	.094		
If a client makes a complaint, it is taken seriously & acted on.	PRIVATE	4.16	0.91	.063	.01	.03
	TERTIARY	4.43	0.54	.079		
Clients receive ethical treatment.	PRIVATE	4.11	0.88	.060	.01	.06
	TERTIARY	4.62	0.60	.085		
Staff are committed to providing superior service.	PRIVATE	4.18	0.74	.050	.01	.04
	TERTIARY	4.55	0.58	.081		

(table continues)

Table 5.28 (continued)

Private and Tertiary ELCs: Significant Differences in Staff Climate Perceptions

VARIABLE	ELC TYPE	M	SD	SE	SIG. LEVEL	η^2
Staff feel personally responsible for the quality of service clients receive.	PRIVATE	4.24	0.77	.052	.05	.02
	TERTIARY	4.51	0.58	.081		
Staff are painstaking in their work, paying close attention to detail.	PRIVATE	3.98	0.92	.063	.01	.03
	TERTIARY	4.40	0.76	.110		
Staff display professionalism in their dealing with clients.	PRIVATE	4.32	0.75	.050	.05	.02
	TERTIARY	4.57	0.54	.075		
Staff are sensitive to the needs of clients from other cultures,	PRIVATE	4.31	0.72	.049	.05	.02
	TERTIARY	4.57	0.64	.090		
Staff go out of their way to help a client who has a problem.	PRIVATE	4.14	0.80	.053	.05	.02
	TERTIARY	4.41	0.64	.089		
Staff actively support clients in their efforts to achieve English language goals	PRIVATE	4.31	0.73	.049	.01	.03
	TERTIARY	4.61	0.49	.069		
Staff do not view their jobs as stressful.	PRIVATE	2.65	1.14	.077	.01	.04
	TERTIARY	2.10	0.96	.140		
The teaching resources are of a satisfactory standard.	PRIVATE	3.58	1.25	.085	.01	.05
	TERTIARY	4.12	0.82	.110		
What is your estimate of how your clients evaluate your service procedures?	PRIVATE	3.19	0.82	.058	.05	.02
	TERTIARY	3.45	0.59	.092		

Table 5.29 displays the four strongest differences in private and tertiary ELC staff perceptions of service climate, all significant at $p < .01$.

Table 5.29

Private and Tertiary ELCs: Strongest Differences in Staff Climate Perceptions

FOUR STRONGEST DIFFERENCES	η^2
The service clients receive closely matches that in publicity materials.	.06**
Clients receive ethical treatment.	.06**
Clients experience a high standard of professional instruction.	.05**
The teaching resources are of a satisfactory standard.	.05**

** $p < .01$

■ **Differences in English language centre size**

ELC size	Client nos.	ELC nos.
Small	Up to 99	14
Medium	100 to 199	9
Large	200 plus	7

In order to explore possible size differences between the ELCs the 30 ELCs were placed into three size categories (see inset) and the data subjected to an ANOVA. Figure 5.21

provides an overview of the climate dimension summary quality question means for the three ELC sizes. There is no appreciable difference in dimension means between the three and the same trends are apparent.

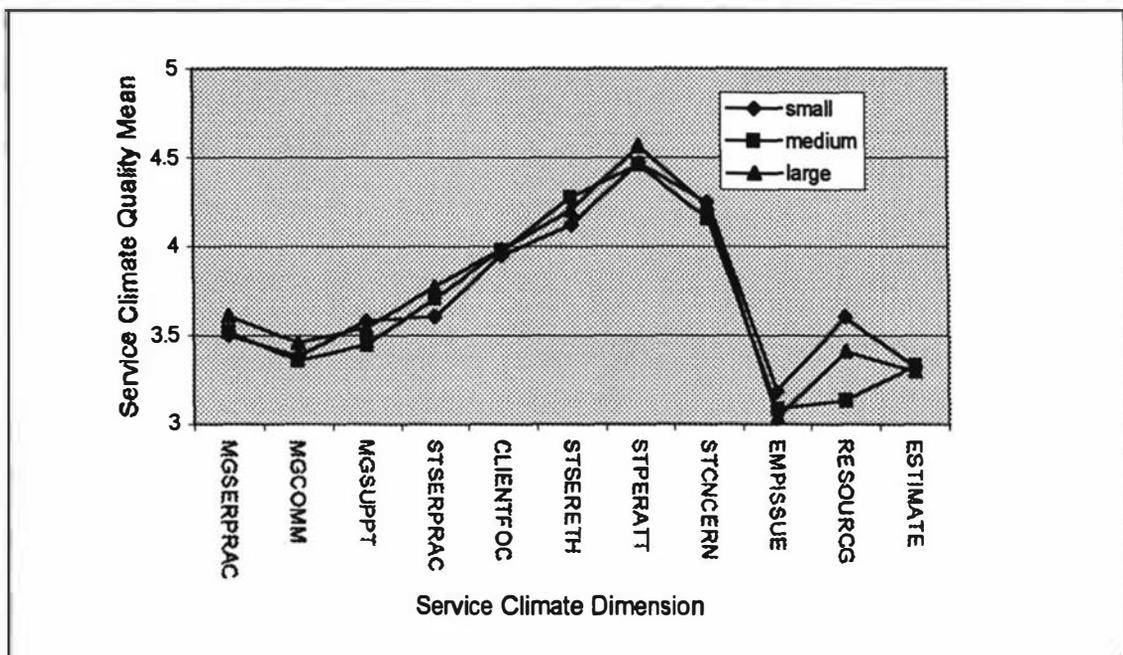


Figure 5.21. Service climate quality: ELCs of varying size compared

The ANOVA of the individual variable means confirmed this pattern: of the 71 items, only five were significant (four at $p = .05$, one at $p = .01$). Effect sizes were in the small to medium range ($\eta^2 = .02 - .06$). The significant means were not focused within any particular dimension. Smaller ELCs scored highest in variables covering fair remuneration, physical comfort and standard of facilities and large and medium ELCs in manager grasp of TESOL and staff skills respectively. These findings therefore provided little evidence to support the existence of significant variation among small, medium, and large ELCs in terms of the way staff respondents viewed the service climate of their organisations.

5.4.6 Assessing service climate consensus within English language centres

The r_{wg} index (James et al., 1984) was used to explore climate consensus within the 19 ELCs for which at least 10 responses, or responses from at least 50% of the population, had been received. The complete r_{wg} values for all 71 items and 19 ELCs are presented in Appendix X. The means all lie within a positive range and vary from +0.38 to +0.80. Three of the ELCs lie between +0.38 and +0.5, 11 lie between +0.50 and +0.69, while the remaining five lie between +0.70 and +0.80. In terms of the r_{wg} parameters of -1.0 and $+1.0$, this result indicates moderate to high levels of staff consensus on the perceived climate quality of their institutions. Notwithstanding this general finding, the r_{wg} means for the 11 climate dimensions (Table 5.30, next page) show that there was some variation in levels of consensus on the various dimensions within ELCs. The weakest consensus within ELCs was apparent in the three management dimensions and the *employment issues* dimension. The strongest consensus was on the *staff personal attributes* and *staff concern* dimensions.

Table 5.30

ELC Service Climate Consensus: r_{wg} Values* for Service Climate Dimensions

ELC	SERVICE CLIMATE DIMENSION										
	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11
02	.64	.41	.12	.70	.65	.67	.76	.73	.57	.78	.80
03	.77	.54	.57	.64	.70	.73	.83	.84	.60	.35	.71
04	.39	.37	.30	.53	.58	.59	.86	.81	.58	.32	.71
06	.80	.72	.79	.77	.83	.89	.91	.81	.62	.74	.80
07	.68	.39	.32	.41	.64	.68	.81	.78	.39	.38	.67
08	.70	.22	.62	.28	.68	.62	.90	.88	.27	.57	.78
09	.64	.35	.29	.50	.76	.81	.87	.82	.40	.40	.69
10	.30	.29	.38	.66	.67	.64	.81	.75	.70	.87	.78
15	.37	.41	.05	.34	.23	.32	.48	.47	.41	.44	.65
17	.44	.44	.38	.47	.52	.33	.38	.44	.66	.23	.69
18	.56	.56	.18	.52	.43	.68	.73	.59	.38	.25	.71
20	.35	.61	.46	.44	.72	.71	.79	.69	.46	.63	.77
21	.82	.64	.88	.83	.78	.87	.94	.88	.59	.87	.78
22	.20	.28	.33	.19	.60	.35	.68	.80	.35	.49	.56
25	.60	.33	.39	.53	.50	.55	.66	.79	.54	.55	.81
26	.60	.56	.40	.63	.78	.87	.88	.79	.55	.51	.73
27	.81	.63	.68	.75	.77	.90	.76	.74	.69	.85	.67
29	.60	.62	.56	.70	.80	.87	.89	.87	.36	.74	.65
<u>30</u>	.74	.68	.65	.71	.80	.82	.89	.73	.69	.72	.74
\bar{x}	.58	.48	.44	.56	.65	.68	.78	.75	.52	.56	.72

Dimensions	
1. Management service practices	7. Staff personal attributes
2. Management communication	8. Staff concern for clients
3. Management support	9. Employment issues
4. Staff service practices	10. Resourcing
5. Client focus	11. Estimate of client evaluation
6. Staff service ethos	

* All r_{wg} values displayed are in a positive range.

5.5 FINDINGS FROM THE CLIENT SATISFACTION SURVEY

5.5.1 Overview

Table 5.31 presents the means, rankings, and respondent percentages for the client evaluation of the nine service dimensions for all 30 ELCs in the study. The overall mean satisfaction rating was 3.08. The dimension means for individual ELCs are in Appendix Y and the complete statistics in Appendix V.

Table 5.31

ELC Client Satisfaction Dimension Means, Rankings, and Category Percentages

DIMENSION	<i>M</i>	RANK	PERCENTAGE WORSE / FAR WORSE THAN EXPECTED ^a	PERCENTAGE ABOUT WHAT EXPECTED ^a	PERCENTAGE BETTER / FAR BETTER THAN EXPECTED ^a
1 Teachers	3.60	1	12.14	34.91	52.96
2 English Lessons	3.03	5	28.20	43.14	28.68
3 Service Procedures	3.04	4	27.24	43.69	29.08
4 Communication	2.93	6	28.70	48.78	22.50
5 Admin Staff	3.40	2	16.17	39.36	44.49
6 Homestay	3.26	3	27.23	30.09	42.69
7 Facilities	2.67	9	42.50	36.60	20.88
8 Activities Programme	2.85	8	31.95	39.15	28.92
9 General	2.97	7	31.31	41.02	27.69

^aDue to rounding, category percentages do not total 100%

The summary data in Table 5.31 gives an indication of the overall trend of respondent attitudes towards the service provided by the ELCs in the study. Out of the nine dimensions, four are placed below the midpoint of the Likert scale and five above. Of those below the midpoint, all are within a midpoint range although *facilities* borders on a *worse than expected* range. Of the five above the midpoint, four are within a midpoint range, of which *admin staff* borders on a *better than expected* range. The dimension *teachers* is in the

better than expected range. In the following sections, the descriptive data for each of the nine scales of the client satisfaction survey is presented in detail.

5.5.2 Findings from the client satisfaction survey in detail

■ **Dimension 1: The teachers**

The data from the *teacher* dimension (Table 5.32, next page) produced the highest set of scores in the satisfaction survey. The mean percentage category responses for the dimension (Figure 5.22) show that almost 53% of respondents regarded the teachers as better or far better than they expected and just over 12% found them worse or far worse than expected. Across the 30 ELCs the means for teacher evaluation ranged from a low of 3.13 to a high of 4.12. This indicates that the respondents were, at the very least, satisfied with teacher performance and in most cases delighted, which represents a positive statement about the teachers.

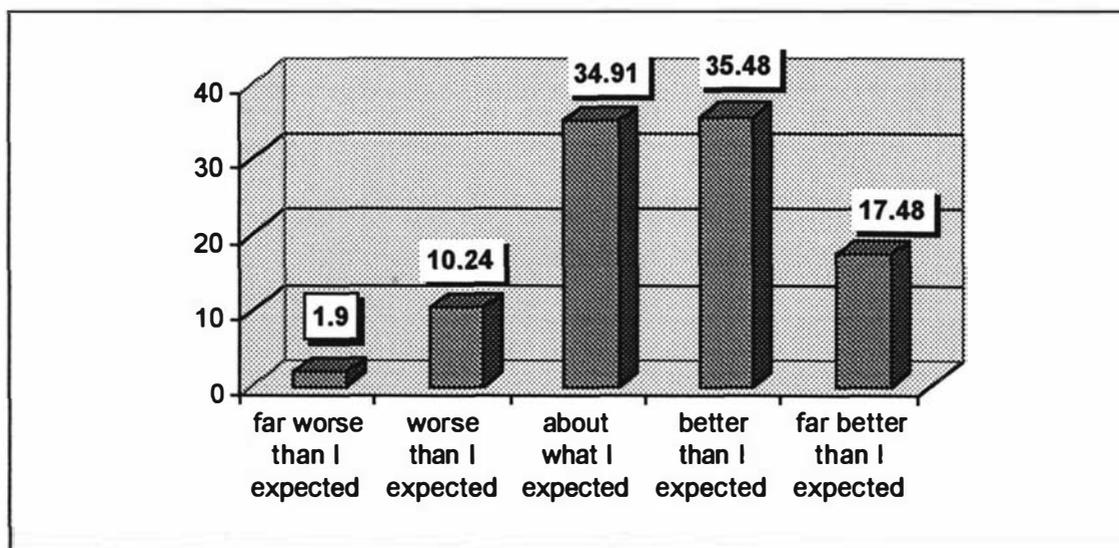


Figure 5.22. ELC client satisfaction with teachers: Response category percentage overview

Table 5.32

ELC Client Satisfaction With Teachers: Descriptive Data

VARIABLE	N	M	SE	SD
1 Professionalism	1668	3.51	.023	0.92
2 Teaching skills	1670	3.33	.023	0.92
3 Knowledge of the subject	1654	3.41	.023	0.92
4 Lesson preparation	1652	3.48	.023	0.94
5 Flexibility	1666	3.51	.024	0.99
6 Ability to teach interesting lessons	1667	3.35	.024	0.98
7 Friendliness	1672	4.04	.022	0.89
8 Communication skills	1672	3.69	.022	0.88
9 Ability to be patient	1664	3.78	.023	0.93
10 Ability to give clear explanations	1669	3.48	.022	0.90
11 Willingness to help in class	1671	3.85	.022	0.90
12 Availability to help out of class	1562	3.38	.027	1.07
13 Overall quality	1635	3.51	.022	0.87

When the individual item scores are ranked (Table 5.33, next page) it can be seen that the higher ranked items tend to be human attributes. The score for *teacher friendliness* ($M = 4.04$), for instance, was actually the highest out of the 74 items in the questionnaire – almost 75% of respondents viewed teacher friendliness as better or far better than they expected. The lower ranked items tend to refer to acquired or taught skills indispensable to good teachers, such as *knowledge of the subject*. Although the differences in means are not large, there would seem to be a trend, namely that respondents rated teachers' ESOL skills lower than their human attributes. It is notable, for instance, that *friendliness* and *teaching skills* are ranked top and bottom respectively.

Table 5.33

ELC Client Satisfaction With Teachers: Comparison of Variable Rankings

TEACHER VARIABLE	RANK	VARIABLE CHARACTERISTIC
Friendliness	1	
Willingness to help in class	2	
Ability to be patient	3	TEND TO BE
Communication skills	4	HUMAN
Professionalism	5	ATTRIBUTES
Flexibility	6	
Overall quality	7	
Lesson preparation	8=	
Ability to give clear explanations	8=	
Knowledge of the subject	10	TEND TO BE
Availability to help out of class	11	TEACHER
Ability to teach interesting lessons	12	SKILLS
Teaching skills	13	

In order to seek support for this finding, the SPSS package was used to carry out a hierarchical cluster analysis of the teacher dimension variables (minus *overall quality*), using the between-groups linkage method and Pearson correlation with absolute values, to establish variable proximity. The summary output from this analysis is presented in the form of a dendrogram (Figure 5.23, next page, numbers after SPSS codes refer to complete variable descriptors in Table 5.32). It can be seen that three groups are identified, the third containing only one variable, *availability*. With three exceptions, the other variables cluster into the two human attributes and teacher skills clusters identified in Table 5.33. This finding appears to support the inference that respondents differentiated between these two sets of characteristics in their evaluation of the teachers.

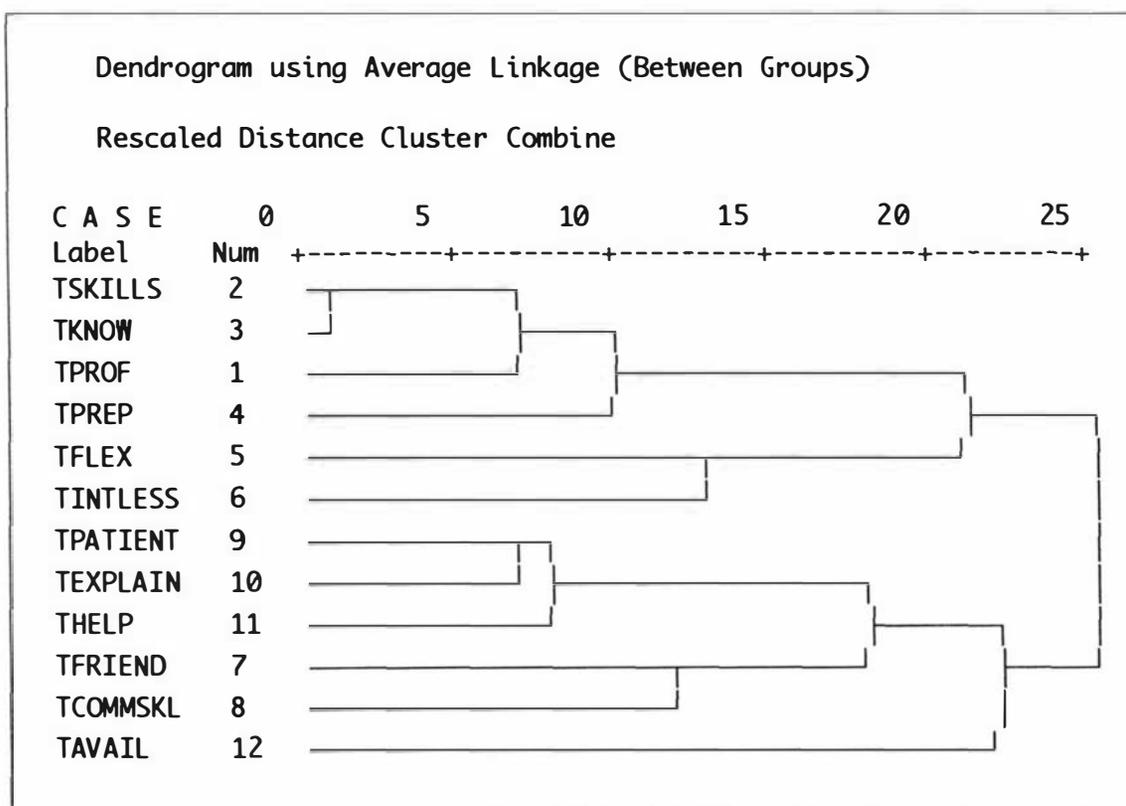


Figure 5.23. Output from hierarchical cluster analysis of teacher dimension variables

■ Dimension 2: The English lessons

Given the high ratings for the teachers, the English lessons did not fare so well, ranking fifth overall among the means of the nine dimensions (Table 5.31) and registering *mere satisfaction*. The category percentage responses (Figure 5.24, next page) show that approximately 43% of respondents found the lessons as expected and those in the “disappointed” and “delighted” categories were virtually identical at around 28-29%. Across the 30 ELCs, the evaluations for the English lessons were not especially complimentary, ranging from a low mean of 2.52 (ELC 05) to a high of 3.54 (ELC 20) on the Likert scale. Only 27% of respondents, for instance, found the learning materials better or far better than they expected and almost 48% rated as worse or far worse than expected the mix of nationalities in class. Table 5.34 (next page) shows the specific item data.

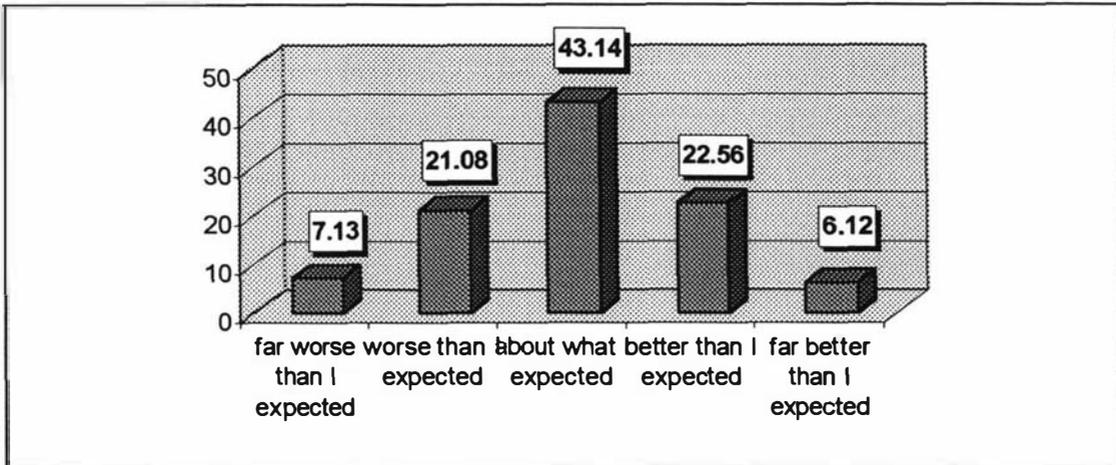


Figure 5.24. ELC client satisfaction with English lessons: response category percentage overview

Table 5.34

ELC Client Satisfaction With English Lessons: Descriptive Data

VARIABLE	N	M	SE	SD
14 Effectiveness	1658	3.08	.023	0.92
15 Interest level	1670	3.17	.022	0.91
16 Content	1669	3.06	.021	0.86
17 Relevance	1656	2.84	.024	0.98
18 Quality of learning materials	1644	2.97	.024	0.96
19 Teaching methods	1665	3.21	.023	0.92
20 Class size	1662	2.92	.027	1.08
21 Mix of nationalities in class	1626	2.61	.030	1.20
22 Overall quality	1659	3.09	.021	0.84

The intent of the items in this scale was to give a picture of the English lessons divorced from the person of the teacher. Although the teacher is a prime influence on the quality of the lessons, a number of factors may be not be entirely within the teacher’s control, such as the quality of the teaching materials or the number of students in the class. A ranking of the item means (Table 5.35, next page) provides a respondent view of this issue. The items ranked above the midpoint of the Likert scale are all items that the teacher

would tend to have more control over, such as the *interest* or the *effectiveness* of the lessons. Of the items below the midpoint, all refer to items which the teacher would tend to have less control over and management more control over, such as *the mix of nationalities in the class* and the *class size*. Even the *relevance* of the lesson might be predetermined in a curriculum which teachers are required by management to follow. The differences in the means are not large but they do reveal an evaluation trend, namely that respondents rated the teacher-controlled aspects of the English lessons more highly than those that tend to be under management control.

Table 5.35

ELC Client Satisfaction with Lessons: Comparison Of Variable Rankings

LESSON VARIABLES	RANK	VARIABLE CHARACTERISTIC
Teaching methods	1	
Interest level	2	
Overall quality	3	TEACHER TENDS TO HAVE
Effectiveness	4	MORE CONTROL OVER.
Content	5	
Quality of learning materials	6	
Class size	7	TEACHER TENDS TO HAVE
Relevance	8	LESS CONTROL OVER.
Mix of nationalities in class	9	

■ Dimension 3: Service Procedures

This dimension ranked fourth overall and produced a similar attitude split as for Dimension 2 at just under 44% as expected, just over 27% worse or far worse and 29% better or far better than expected (Figure 5.25, next page). Across the thirty ELCs the scores ranged from 2.59 to 3.56 and the overall dimension mean was 3.04. The means for the individual items (Table 5.36, next page) are fairly tightly clustered around a mid point range which seems to indicate

that there was, overall, *mere satisfaction* with the service procedures, but that was all. A ranking of these items revealed no particular trend.

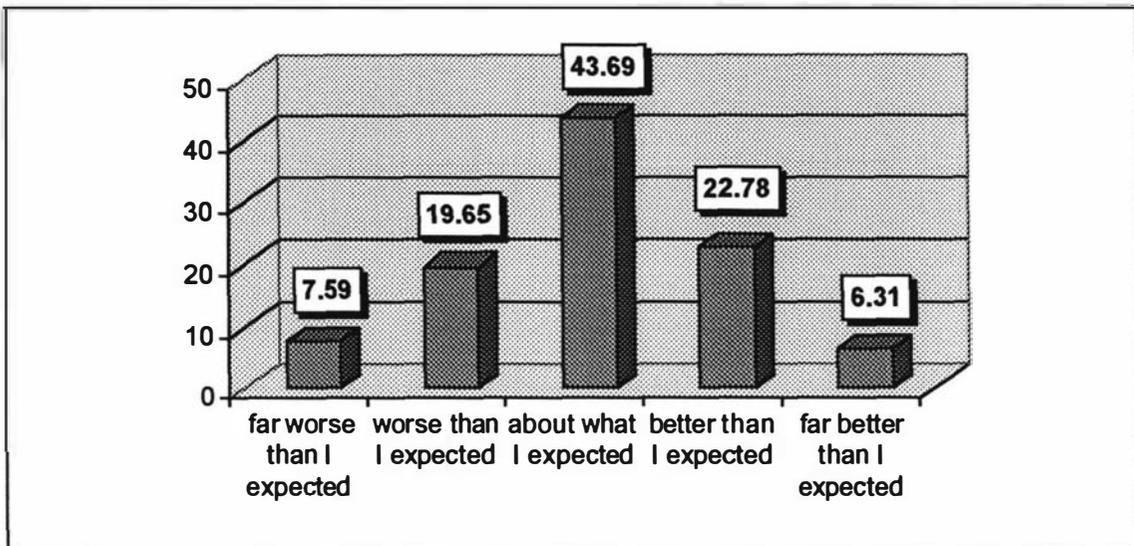


Figure 5.25. ELC client satisfaction with service procedures: Response category percentage overview

Table 5.36

ELC Client Satisfaction With Service Procedures: Descriptive Data

VARIABLE	N	M	SE	SD
23 Enrolment	1579	3.32	.023	0.90
24 Placement	1616	2.93	.025	0.99
25 Keeping you informed	1620	3.02	.025	0.99
26 Complaints	1394	2.81	.027	1.02
27 Homestay administration	1248	2.86	.031	1.09
28 Enquiries	1556	3.15	.025	0.98
29 Student feedback	1457	2.92	.025	0.97
30 Overall quality	1597	3.03	.022	0.87

■ **Dimension 4: Communication**

This dimension had a mean of 2.93 and a ranking of 6. Across the 30 ELCs the range was 2.42 to 3.41. As Figure 5.26 shows, almost 49% of respondents found communication as expected but more expressed disappointment (28.7%) than delight (22.5%). Focus group participant concerns about poor communication between the ELC and the client *before* arrival are supported by the low 2.79 rating that the item received from respondents (Table 5.37). Almost 35% found this item to be worse or far worse than they expected. Although the overall communication score can be interpreted as being within the midpoint range, it does not appear that respondents were over-enthusiastic about the quality of the ELCs' communication with them.

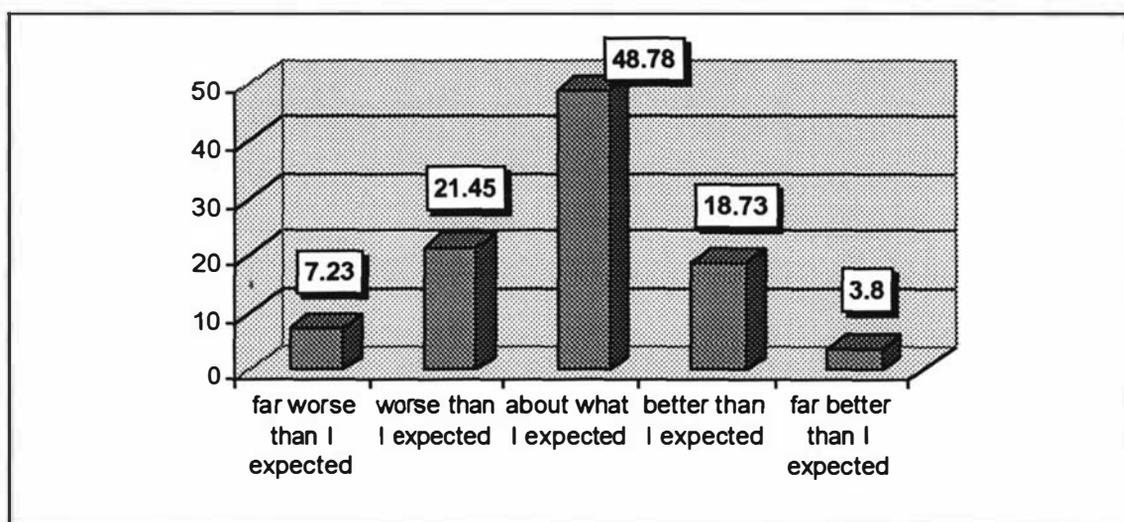


Figure 5.26. ELC client satisfaction with communication: Response category percentage overview

Table 5.37

ELC Client Satisfaction With Communication: Descriptive Data

VARIABLE	N	M	SE	SD
31 Publicity mats - accuracy	1488	2.91	.024	0.91
32 Effectiveness of before arrival	1356	2.79	.026	0.96
33 Effectiveness after arrival	1461	2.98	.023	0.89
34 Overall quality	1511	2.93	.023	0.88

■ Dimension 5: The admin staff

The overall admin staff mean was 3.4 and the dimension was ranked second out of the nine dimensions (Table 5.31). Over 44% of respondents found the admin staff to be better or far better than expected and around 16% found them worse or far worse than expected (Figure 5.27). In only two ELCs did the mean dip below the midpoint and the range was 2.88 to 3.88, which indicates a relatively positive result. As with the teachers, *admin staff friendliness* had the highest rank in this dimension (Table 5.38, next page) and ranked fourth out of all 74 items, over 58% of respondents saying it was better or far better than expected.

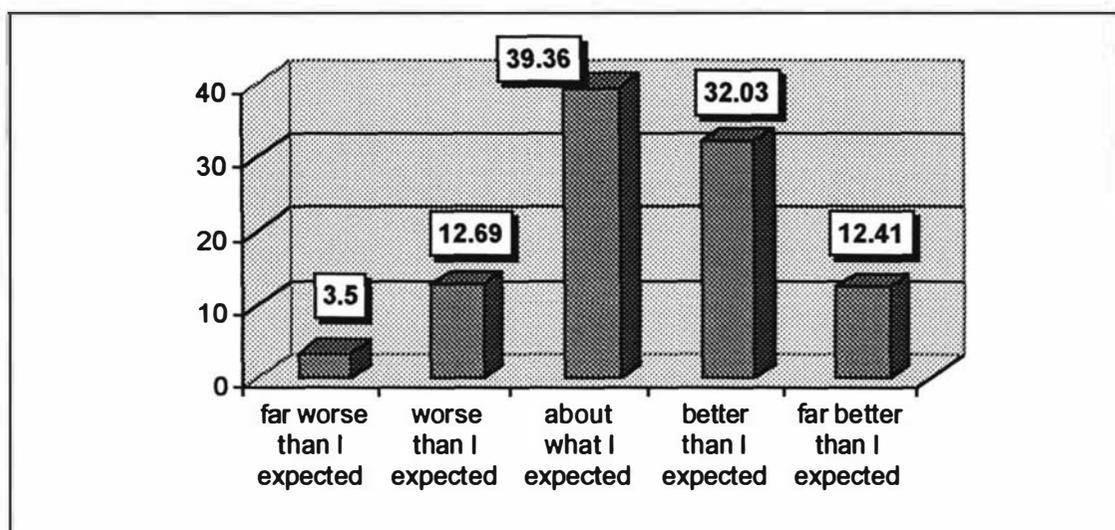


Figure 5.27. ELC client satisfaction with admin staff: Response category percentage overview

The item ranking in Table 5.39 (next page) shows that the two top-ranked items are human attributes whereas the bottom two are technical skills which would be acquired through specific training or gaining knowledge. The differences between these item means are not large but they do reveal a similar trend to that within the *teacher* dimension. Respondents rated admin staff more strongly on their personal attributes than on the technical skills they need for the job. The findings from an SPSS cluster analysis partly supported

this interpretation (Figure 5.28, next page, numbers after SPSS codes refer to complete variable descriptors in Table 5.38).

Table 5.38

ELC Client Satisfaction With Admin Staff: Descriptive Data

VARIABLE	N	M	SE	SD
35 Friendliness	1647	3.66	.024	0.97
36 Willingness to help	1624	3.47	.024	0.97
37 Availability to help	1614	3.35	.024	0.97
38 Ability to understand client needs	1611	3.24	.025	1.00
39 Ability to give right information	1587	3.23	.025	0.99
40 Communication skills	1610	3.33	.022	0.89
41 Overall quality	1619	3.32	.023	0.94

Table 5.39

ELC Client Satisfaction With Admin Staff: Comparison Of Variable Rankings

ADMIN STAFF VARIABLES	RANK	VARIABLE CHARACTERISTIC
Friendliness	1	PERSONAL ATTRIBUTE
Willingness to help	2	PERSONAL ATTRIBUTE
Availability to help	3	
Communication skills	4	JOB SKILL
Overall quality	5	
Ability to understand client needs	6	JOB SKILL
Ability to give right information	7	JOB SKILL

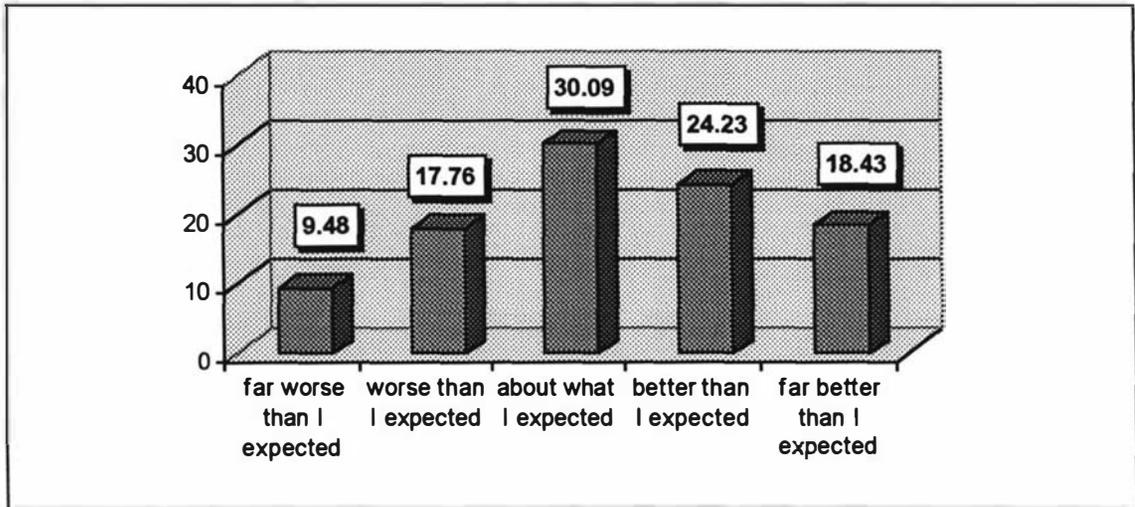


Figure 5.29. ELC client satisfaction with homestay: Response category percentage overview

Table 5.40

ELC Client Satisfaction With Homestay: Descriptive Data

VARIABLE	N	M	SE	SD
42 Match with homestay requested	1035	3.10	.036	1.15
43 Opportunity to speak English	1069	3.16	.037	1.21
44 Host willingness to help with English	1045	3.22	.039	1.24
45 Friendliness of hosts	1060	3.61	.036	1.17
46 Amount of time hosts spend with client	1043	3.02	.039	1.25
47 Atmosphere	1055	3.35	.037	1.21
48 Physical comfort level	1060	3.32	.036	1.18
49 Quality of the food	1051	3.10	.038	1.24
50 Overall quality	1056	3.31	.036	1.18

■ Dimension 7: The Facilities

The bottom ranking of this dimension and the low mean ($M = 2.67$, Table 5.31) indicated an overall result that bordered on *worse than expected*. Almost 43% of respondents were disappointed with the facilities and just under 21% delighted (Figure 5.30). Across the thirty ELCs the range was 1.95 to 3.53 and 12 out of the 30 ELCs rated below 2.5 on the Likert scale, placing them in the *worse than expected* category. Only two ELCs could confidently be placed in the *better than expected* range and both are tertiary institutions.

At percentages in the fifties, some items in this dimension recorded the highest *worse than expected* scores in the entire survey. For instance, approximately 57%, 54% and 51% of respondents respectively found the *audio equipment*, *computers* and *video equipment* worse or far worse than expected. It seems fairly clear that respondents were not at all satisfied with the facilities in the ELCs sampled.

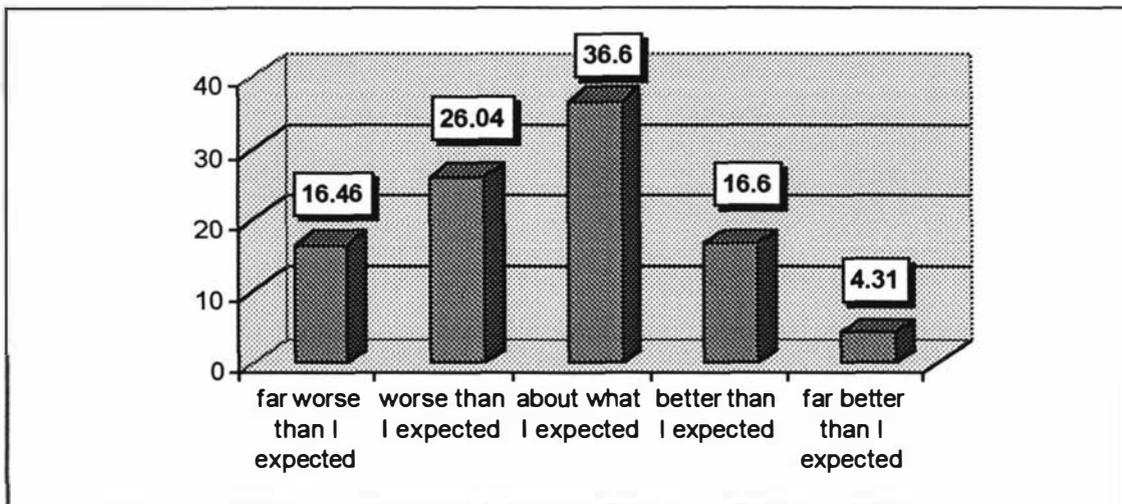


Figure 5.30. ELC client satisfaction with facilities: Response category percentage overview

A prominent feature of the data (Table 5.41) is the approximately 20% drop in response numbers for items 53, *self-access unit*, 55, *library*, 57, *audio equipment*, and 58, *video equipment*. A possible explanation for this is that some respondents may not have been aware of the existence of these items in their ELCs, because several wrote comments on their questionnaires next to an item such as "There isn't one". They therefore gave no response rather than a negative rating.

Table 5.41
ELC Client Satisfaction With Facilities: Descriptive Data

VARIABLE	N	M	SE	SD
51 Classrooms	1669	3.06	.022	0.91
52 Student lounge/cafeteria	1623	2.70	.025	1.02
53 Self-access unit	1376	2.54	.029	1.08
54 Toilets/bathrooms	1656	3.06	.024	0.96
55 Library	1329	2.69	.034	1.24
56 Computers	1525	2.48	.029	1.15
57 Audio equipment	1381	2.30	.028	1.03
58 Video equipment	1388	2.45	.028	1.02
59 Overall quality	1622	2.70	.023	0.91

The rankings for facilities (Table 5.42, next page) provides a clearer picture of how the various groups of facilities compared in terms of client satisfaction. An SPSS cluster analysis using the between-groups linkage method and Pearson correlation but specifying no cluster solution produced two clusters with *classrooms* and *toilets* in the first cluster and the other six variables in the second. The dendrogram (Figure 5.31, next page, numbers after SPSS codes refer to complete variable descriptors in Table 5.41) reflects the ranking above and provides some support for the interpretation of differentiated evaluation of these groups of facilities by respondents.

■ Dimension 8: The activities programme

Approximately one-third of respondents did not provide ratings for this dimension possibly because ELC activities programmes are often optional. The dimension ranked eighth out of the nine ($M = 2.85$, Table 5.31). Just over 39% of respondents found their programme as expected, 32% worse or far worse than expected and almost 29% better or far better than expected (Figure 5.32).

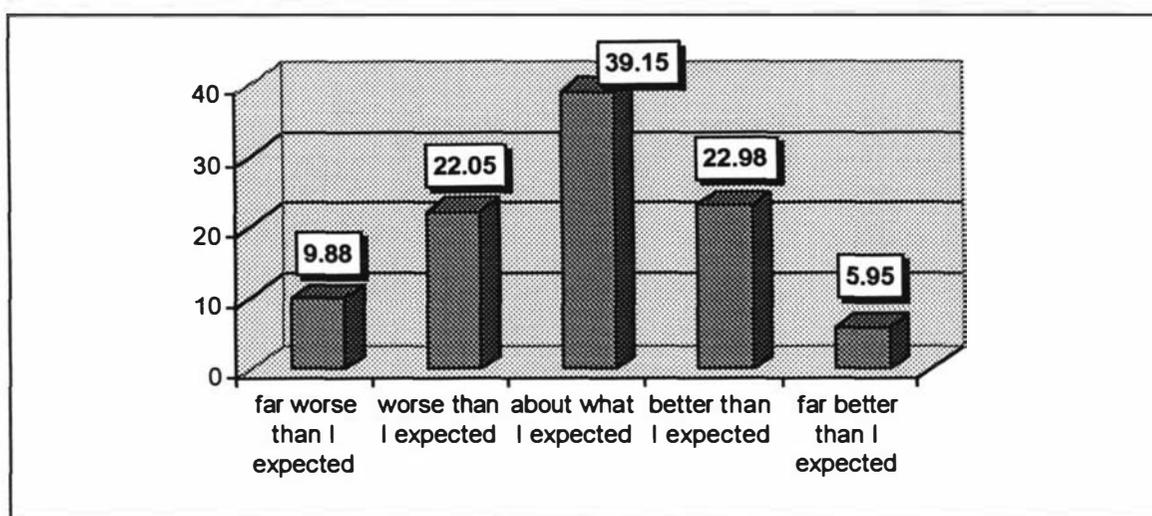


Figure 5.32. ELC client satisfaction with activities: Response category percentage overview

Individual ELC ratings on *activities* ranged from 1.77 (the lowest rating for any dimension) to 3.59. Overall, there appeared to be mere satisfaction as most of the item ratings (Table 5.43, next page) are clustered around the midpoint of the Likert scale. *Value for money* ($M = 2.74$) had the lowest rating, around 39% of respondents finding this item worse or far worse than expected.

Table 5.43

ELC Client Satisfaction With Activities: Descriptive Data

VARIABLE	N	M	SE	SD
60 Information provided by ELC	1177	3.02	.029	0.98
61 Variety of activities	1194	3.03	.032	1.10
62 Interest level of activities	1183	2.97	.031	1.05
63 Value for money	1120	2.74	.032	1.06
63 Organisation of the programme	1111	2.91	.030	1.00
65 Overall quality	1152	2.92	.030	1.01

■ Dimension 9: General

This dimension comprised a number of miscellaneous items which nevertheless reflect key client satisfaction issues, as some of the other findings in the study confirmed. The importance of these items should therefore be acknowledged. At $M = 2.97$, the *general* dimension ranked seventh out of the nine dimensions (Table 5.31). Whereas 41% of respondents found the items in this dimension as expected, just over 31% were disappointed and around 28% delighted (Figure 5.33). Across the ELCs, means ranged from 2.27 to 3.49.

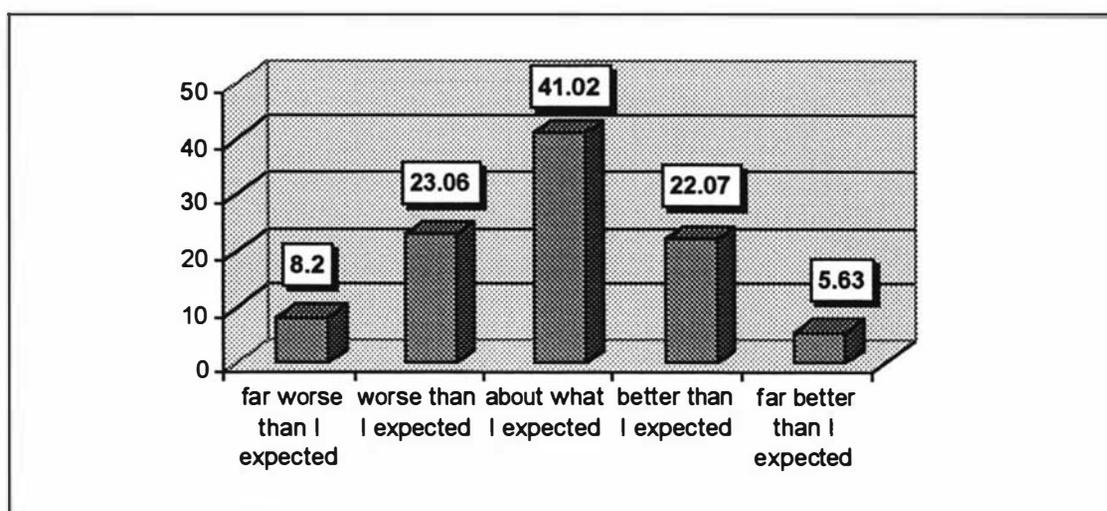


Figure 5.33. ELC client satisfaction with general items: Response category percentage overview

A glance at Table 5.44 shows that with two exceptions, the means cluster around the midpoint of the Likert scale. *Atmosphere* rated top. The two weakest items were *rate of improvement in English in the client's opinion* and *value for money of the ELC programme*. Approximately 39% of respondents perceived their progress to be worse or far worse than they expected ($M = 2.78$). *Value for money* not only ranked bottom of the dimension ($M = 2.44$) but also ranked 73rd out of the 74 individual satisfaction items. Some 52% of respondents found this to be worse or far worse than they expected.

Table 5.44

ELC Client Satisfaction With General Items: Descriptive Data

VARIABLE	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>SD</i>
66 Overall organisation	1572	2.99	.021	0.85
67 Atmosphere	1647	3.13	.023	0.95
68 Physical comfort level	1646	2.96	.023	0.92
69 Encouragement to achieve goals	1615	3.01	.025	0.99
70 Student national mix	1628	3.10	.029	1.17
71 Opportunity to use English	1652	3.11	.025	1.03
72 Rate of improvement in English	1620	2.78	.024	0.98
73 Value for money of programme	1579	2.44	.026	1.03
74 Overall quality	1632	2.94	.022	0.87

■ ***Question 75/76: Client willingness to recommend an English language centre***

On being asked, *Would you recommend this English language centre to your friends?*, over half of the respondents said that *they would*. Just over one third said that *they would not* (Figure 5.34, next page). Approximately 10% gave no response. Converted into valid responses, this means 62% said they would recommend and 38% said they would not. More than 50% of respondents in 20 ELCs said they would recommend. On the other hand, there were eight ELCs where more than 50% of respondents said they would not recommend. Individual ELC recommendation data can be seen in Appendix Y.

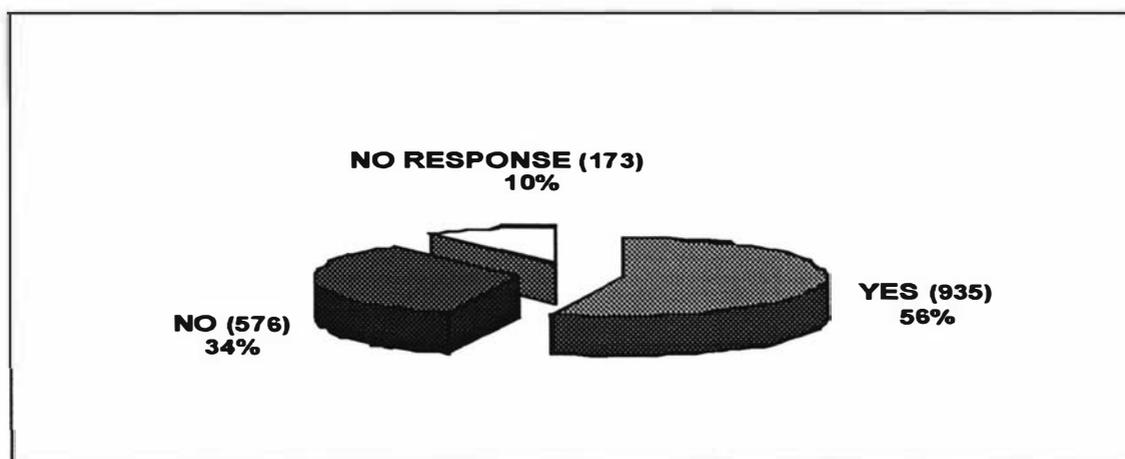


Figure 5.34. Client willingness to recommend an ELC – overview

5.5.3 Client satisfaction data - exploring group differences

In order to get an idea of possible differences between groups in terms of client perceptions of ELC service, client data on age, nationality, gender, and length of time in the ELC was compared and statistically analysed by means of a one way analysis of variance (ANOVA) or an independent samples t-test.

■ Age

Data was collected with respect to the four age groups from Question 80, namely 14-19, 20-29, 30-39, and 40-plus. A comparison was made, first, using the nine summary quality questions from each of the nine sections (dimensions) of the questionnaire plus question 75/76, the willingness to recommend an ELC, to obtain a general trend. The means of these items for each of the age groups are displayed below (Figure 5.35, next page). In seven out of the nine dimensions, the 20-29 age group consistently produced the weakest ratings of ELC service, with the 30-39 age group slightly stronger, then the 14-19 age group, with the strongest ratings coming from the 40-plus age group. A similar pattern is seen with respect to recommendation (Figure 5.36, next page). The 20-29 age group would recommend least (59%), the 40-plus group most (84.5%) and the other two groups switched rankings.

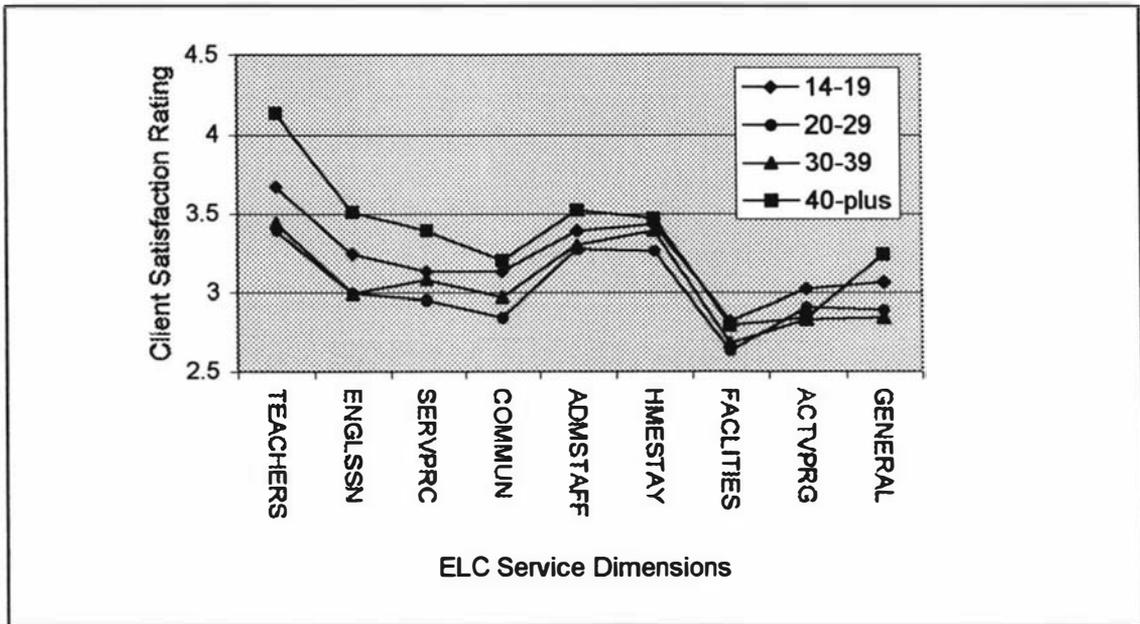


Figure 5.35. Client satisfaction rating of ELC service by age group

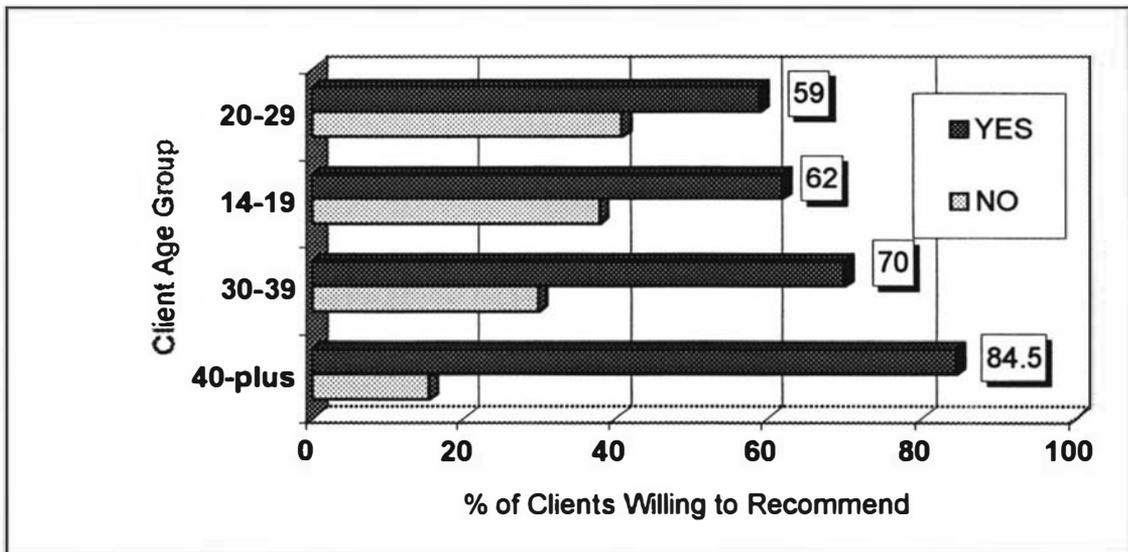


Figure 5.36. Client willingness to recommend an ELC by age group

The ANOVA revealed that of the 74 items in the nine dimensions, 54 were significant, 46 at the $p = .01$ level and eight at the $p = .05$ level. The recommendation findings were significant at $p = .01$ ($\eta^2 = .02$). Of the nine dimensions, little or no significance was evident in the dimensions *admin staff*,

homestay, and *activities programme*. Most of the significant items demonstrated a small effect size ($\eta^2 = .01 - .02$) with a few in the moderate range. The four largest effect sizes were on *teacher skills*, *overall teacher quality*, *class size*, and *mix of nationalities in class* ($\eta^2 = .05$). The dimension with the largest effect size was *teachers* ($\eta^2 = .05$). A Tukey HSD test revealed that most of the differences occurred on the *teachers* and *lessons* items between all groups except between the 20-29 and 30-39 groups. There were fewer differences between the groups on *service processes*, *communication, general*, and *recommendation* but the pattern of no difference between 20-29 and 30-39 was maintained except in the *recommendation*. On *admin staff*, *homestay*, *activities*, and *facilities* no differences or only minimal differences were recorded.

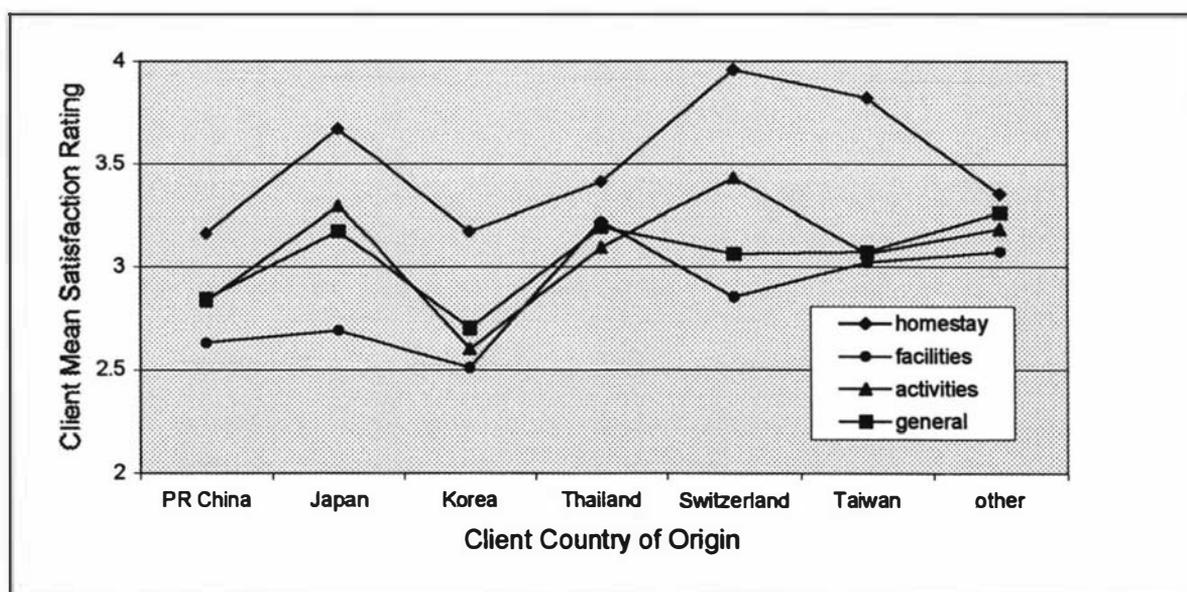
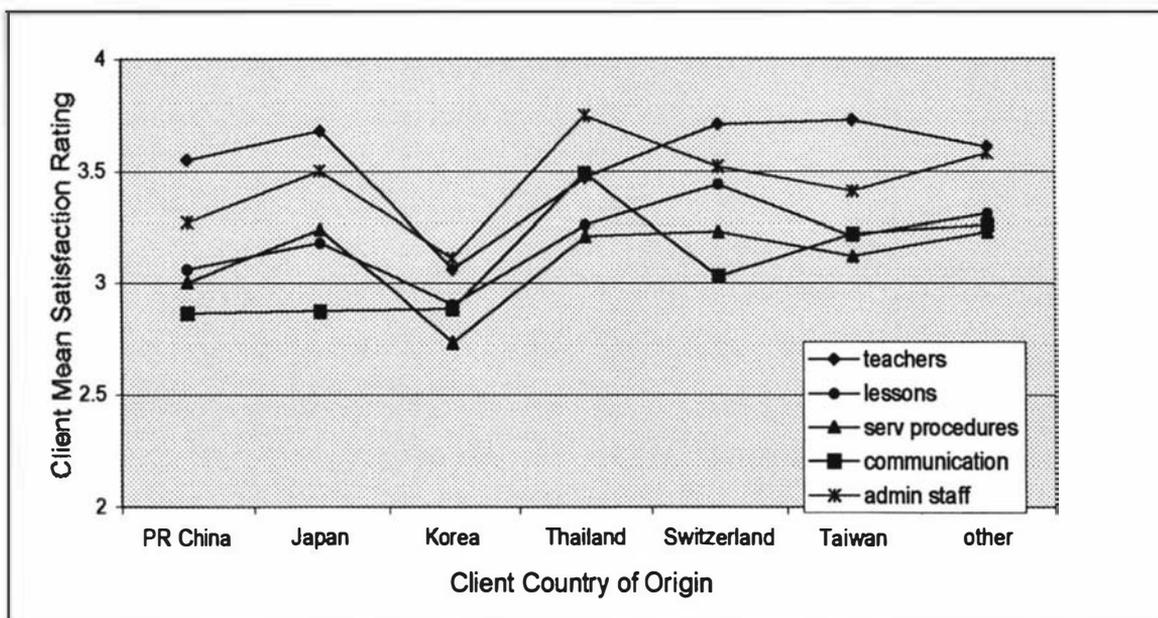
Although the variation is not large, these findings indicate that there were small to moderate differences in the way the different client age groups perceived the standard of service at their ELCs, the strongest differences being in terms of how they viewed *teachers* and *lessons*.

■ **Gender**

An independent samples t-test was used to compare the satisfaction scores of male and female respondents on the 74 satisfaction variables and the *recommendation*. No statistically significant difference in the recommendation means was recorded and only 12 out of the 74 variable means were significant (three at $p = .01$ level and nine at $p = .05$ level). These were focused in the *communication* and *general* dimensions but not in sufficient numbers to indicate a clear trend, and the effect sizes were very small ($\eta^2 = .002 - .01$). The only obvious pattern was that in all 12 variables, male means were higher than female means. These findings indicated that, overall, there was little difference between male and female satisfaction ratings of ELC service.

■ **Nationality**

Forty-one nationalities took part in the survey but only six major national groups furnished sufficient data for statistical analysis. The remaining groups were recoded into one group, *other*. The mean scores for these groups on the nine summary quality questions plus willingness to recommend indicate the overall trend (Figures 5.37a – b, and Figure 5.38, page after next.)



Figures 5.37a - b. Client satisfaction rating of ELC service by nationality

Figures 5.37a-b reveal a clear trend in terms of overall satisfaction. Korean respondents consistently rated ELC service *lower* than any of the other groups on all but two of the 10 items. The overall ranking from the dimension summary question means is shown in Table 5.45.

Table 5.45
Client Satisfaction Ratings Of ELC Service By Nationality (Ranked)

NATIONAL GROUP	RANK	LEVEL OF SATISFACTION
Switzerland	1	MOST SATISFIED
Thailand	2	
Other	3	
Taiwan	4	
Japan	5	
P.R. China	6	
Korea	7	LEAST SATISFIED

Figure 5.38 (next page) shows the percentages of each national group that would/would not recommend the ELC. P.R. China clients would be *least* likely to recommend with Koreans slightly more likely to. The Other group would be *most* likely to recommend, followed by the Swiss.

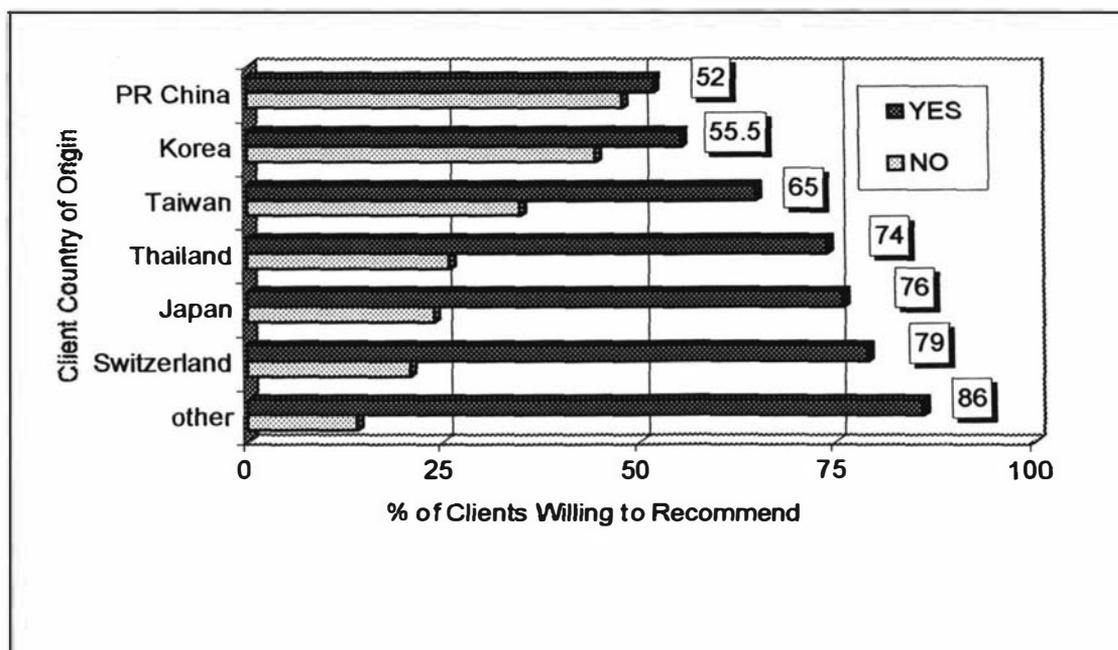


Figure 5.38. Client willingness to recommend an ELC by nationality

The ANOVA revealed that of the 74 individual dimension items, 72, as well as the recommendation, were statistically significant ($p < .01$). The effect sizes of most of these items were in the small to moderate range ($\eta^2 = .01 - .06$) including the recommendation ($\eta^2 = .06$) and four were in the $\eta^2 = .08 - .12$ range, indicating a stronger effect size. The item *value for money of the ELC programme* ($\eta^2 = .12$) proved to be the strongest point of difference between the group means. In terms of dimensions, there was no conspicuous effect size pattern although the *activities programme* dimension and the *general* dimension recorded the highest average effect sizes ($\eta^2 = .06$ and $.05$ respectively). A Tukey HSD test demonstrated significant mean differences on some of the items for all groups but most differences occurred between P.R. China, Korea, and Japan. Overall, therefore, a pattern of significant difference emerged between the national groups in terms of their satisfaction with the ELC service.

■ **Length of time in an English language centre**

Group	No of Weeks in ELC
1	1-2 weeks
2	3-4 weeks
3	5-8 weeks
4	9-12 weeks
5	13-26 weeks
6	27+ weeks

Anecdotally, client satisfaction with ELC service might vary depending on the length of time they remained in the ELC. A one-way between-groups ANOVA was carried out to explore the relationship between groups of clients who had been in the ELC for different periods of time using the responses to Question 77.

The client data was recoded into six time groups (inset). The graph showing the dimension summary quality question group means (Figure 5.39a, and 5.39b, next page) revealed only minimal differences between the groups. The trend was for most values to dip slightly as time went on then to recover partly towards the end of the period. An examination of the individual item data confirmed this general picture. Of the 74 items, only 18 were significant, 11 at the $p = .05$ level and seven at the $p = .01$ level. Most effect sizes were very small ($\eta^2 < .01$) and none were above $\eta^2 = .02$. Nevertheless, a pattern of sorts was evident as the significant means were concentrated in *service procedures* with a secondary concentration in the *teachers* dimension.

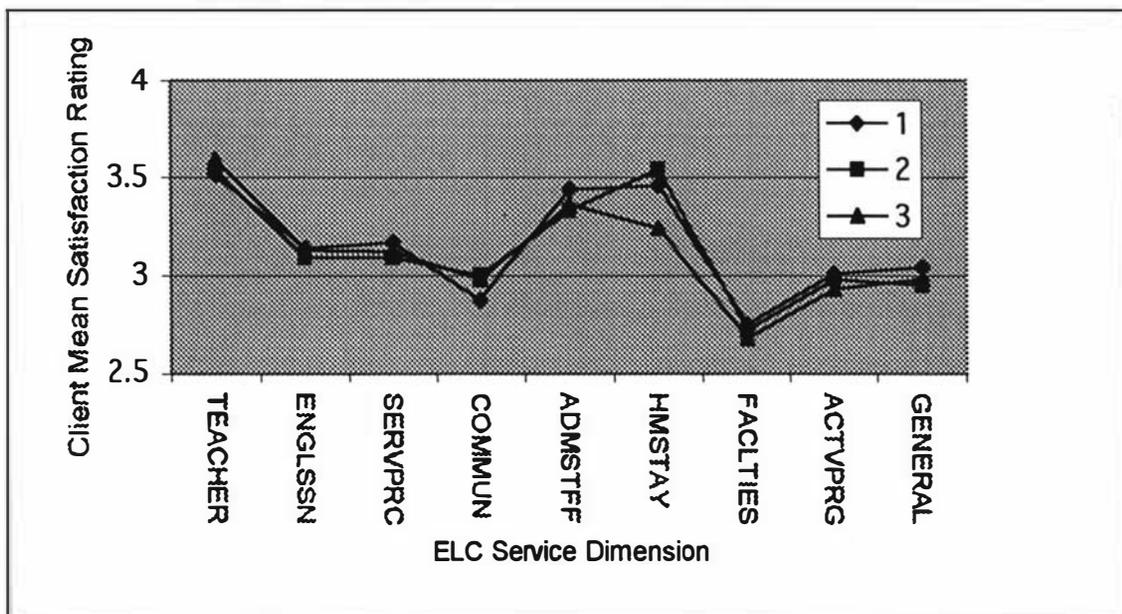


Figure 5.39a. Client time in an ELC: Trends from dimension summary quality questions, groups 1-3

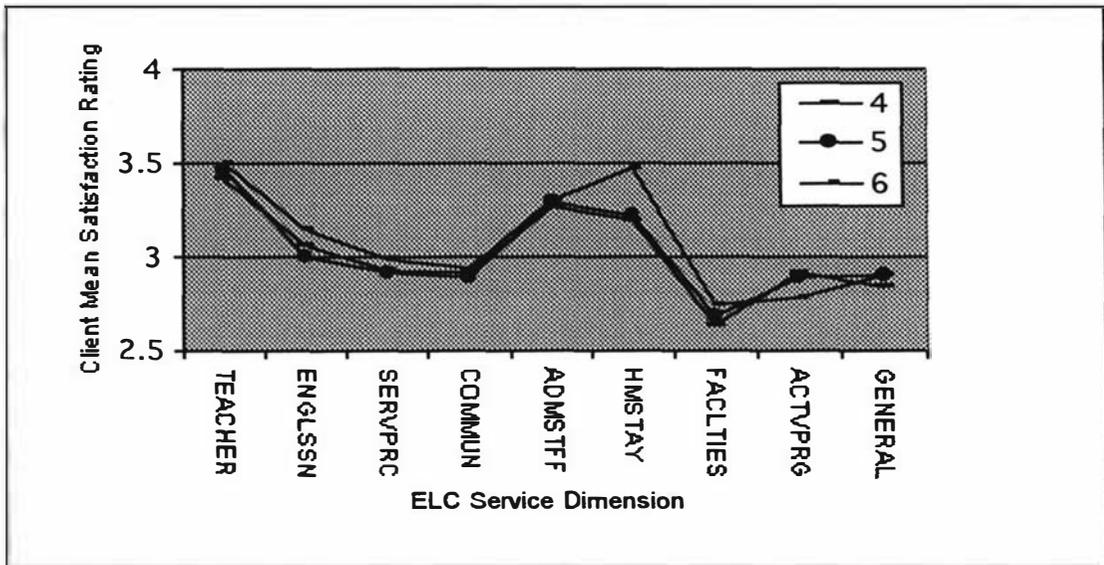


Figure 5.39b. Client time in an ELC: Trends from dimension summary quality questions, groups 4-6

The group means for the item *willingness to recommend the ELC* showed a similar trend (Figure 5.40), with clients who had been in the ELC around three months and around one month *least* likely and *most* likely to recommend, respectively. However, significance could not be demonstrated for the recommendation data. Although service procedures and teacher performance were a significant but modest point of difference between these client groups, there was otherwise little evidence for substantial or statistically significant variation in client satisfaction over the period of client sojourn at the ELC.

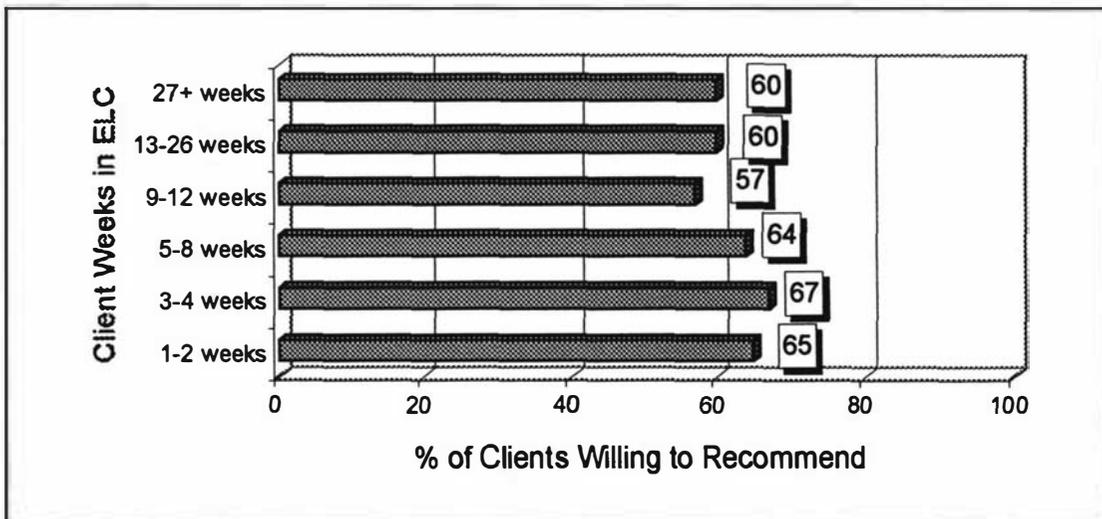


Figure 5.40. Client willingness to recommend an ELC by client time in an ELC

5.5.4 Client satisfaction data - exploring differences between English language centres

■ Tertiary vs Private

Eight of the 30 ELCs in the study were tertiary institutions. Tertiary clients provided 24.6% of total responses. An independent samples t-test was carried out to explore the differences between tertiary and private sector ELCs on all items plus the willingness to recommend. Figure 5.41 shows the overall trend for the dimensions based on the summary quality question data.

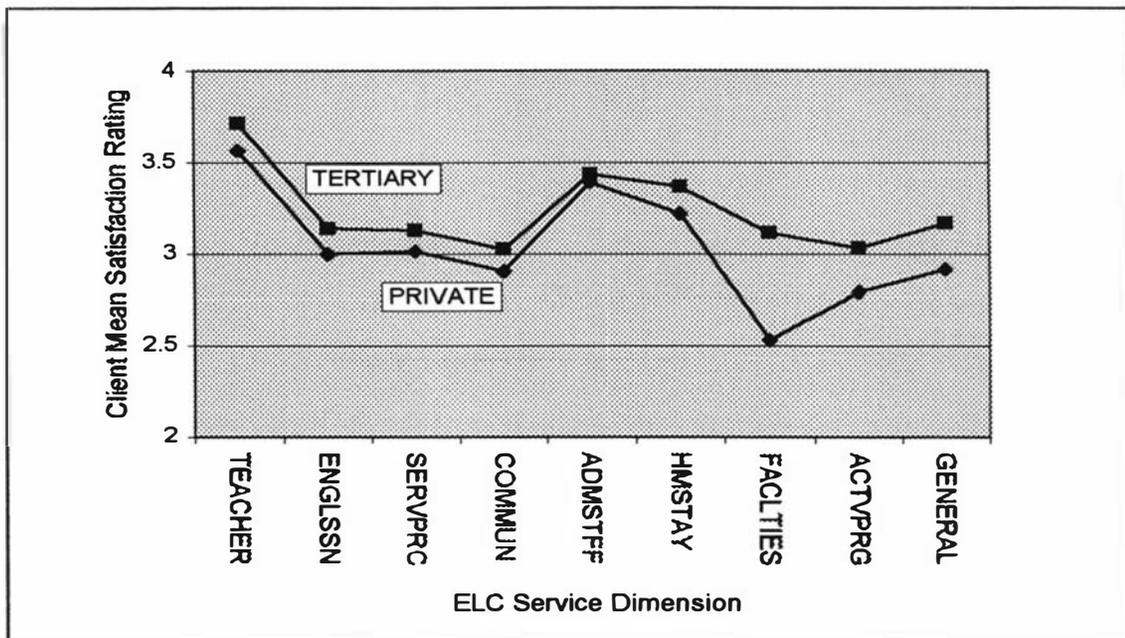


Figure 5.41. Client satisfaction rating of ELC service: Tertiary vs private ELCs

Tertiary ELCs had higher ratings for 62 out of the 74 items. However, only 35 items demonstrated significance at the $p = .01$ or $p = .05$ level and clear patterns of significance were evident in only three dimensions, namely *teachers*, *facilities* and *general*. Tertiary ELC ratings were higher than private ELC ratings for all significant items. Of the three significant dimensions, only *facilities* demonstrated conspicuous effect size differences. The differentiated *facilities* data is displayed in Table 5.46 (next page). It can be seen that there

are some moderate effect sizes in the $\eta^2 = .06$ -.08 range and one, *library*, at a very large effect size of $\eta^2 = 0.3$ (Cohen, 1988).

Table 5.46

Private vs Tertiary ELCs: Significant Differences in Client Perceptions of Facilities

VARIABLE	ELC TYPE	M	SD	SE	SIG. LEVEL	η^2
Classrooms	PRIVATE	3.02	0.93	.026	.01	.01
	TERTIARY	3.20	0.84	.042		
Student lounge / cafeteria	PRIVATE	2.61	1.02	.029	.01	.02
	TERTIARY	2.96	0.97	.048		
Self-access unit	PRIVATE	2.36	1.03	.032	.01	.08
	TERTIARY	3.03	1.06	.055		
Toilets / bathrooms	PRIVATE	2.97	0.95	.027	.01	.02
	TERTIARY	3.32	0.94	.046		
Library	PRIVATE	2.31	1.14	.038	.01	0.3
	TERTIARY	3.57	0.99	.049		
Computers	PRIVATE	2.24	1.07	.032	.01	.02
	TERTIARY	3.17	1.08	.054		
Audio equipment	PRIVATE	2.15	0.98	.030	.01	.07
	TERTIARY	2.75	1.05	.056		
Video equipment	PRIVATE	2.30	0.99	.031	.01	.06
	TERTIARY	2.86	0.99	.052		
Facilities overall quality	PRIVATE	2.56	0.89	.026	.01	.08
	TERTIARY	3.12	0.84	.042		

A similar finding was evident in the recommendation data (Figure 5.42, next page) with 66% of tertiary ELC clients willing to recommend compared to 60% of private ELC clients ($p < .05$). However, the magnitude of differences in the means was very small ($\eta^2 = .001$). The data indicates, therefore, an overall slightly higher level of satisfaction among tertiary ELC clients on about half of the items in the survey.

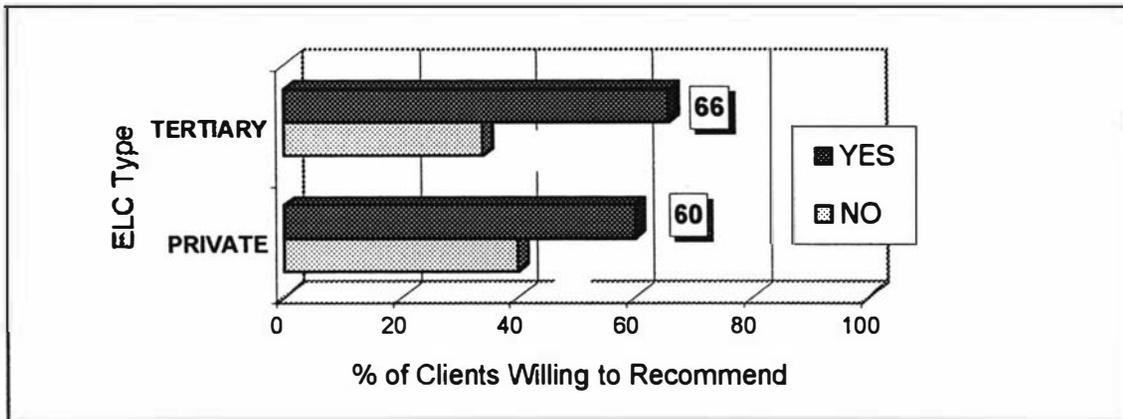


Figure 5.42. Client willingness to recommend an ELC: Tertiary vs private ELCs

■ **English language centre size**

ELC size	Client nos.	ELC nos.
Small	Up to 99	14
Medium	100 to 199	9
Large	200 plus	7

The data was examined to see if ELC size had any impact on levels of client satisfaction.

The sample was split into three size categories (see inset) and a one-way between groups

ANOVA was carried out to compare the client satisfaction data for these three groups. The comparative means of the dimension summary quality questions (Figure 5.43, next page) gives an indication of the general trend. Small ELCs had the highest levels of satisfaction in seven out of the nine dimensions – *teachers* and *activities* were the exceptions, since medium and large ELCs respectively rated slightly higher than small ELCs in these two dimensions.

In terms of individual variables, small ELCs scored the highest rating for 52 out of the 74 items, medium ELCs 17 and large ELCs three, two items being split between small and large ELCs. The ANOVA showed that 66 item differences were significant, 59 at the $p = .01$ level and seven at the $p = .05$ level. However, most effect sizes were small ($\eta^2 = .01 - .02$). The dimension that displayed the largest significant differences ($p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .01 - .05$) was the *general* dimension with *ELC atmosphere* ($\eta^2 = .04$), the *opportunity to meet students from a range of countries* ($\eta^2 = .04$) and the *opportunity to use*

English ($\eta^2 = .05$) approaching a moderate effect size (Cohen, 1988). A similar finding was evident in the recommendation means for the two groups (Figure 5.44), with 70% of clients in small ELCs willing to recommend compared to 57% in medium and large ELCs ($p = .000$, $\eta^2 = .02$). The data indicates, therefore, a small but significant variation in client satisfaction levels between ELCs of different size.

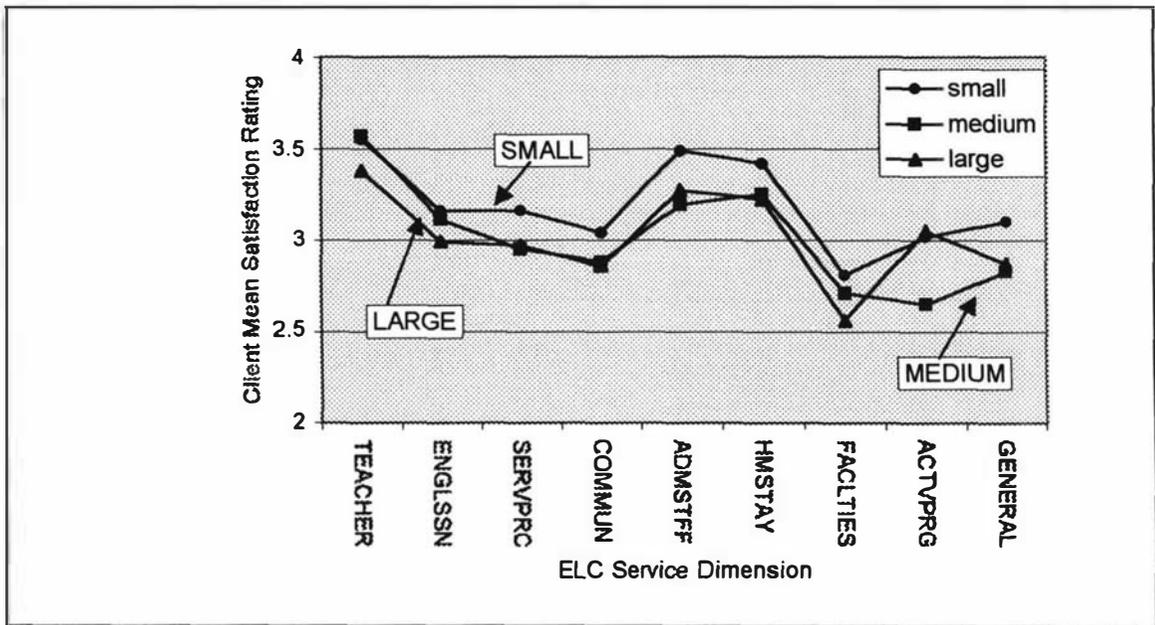


Figure 5.43. Client satisfaction rating of ELC service by ELC size

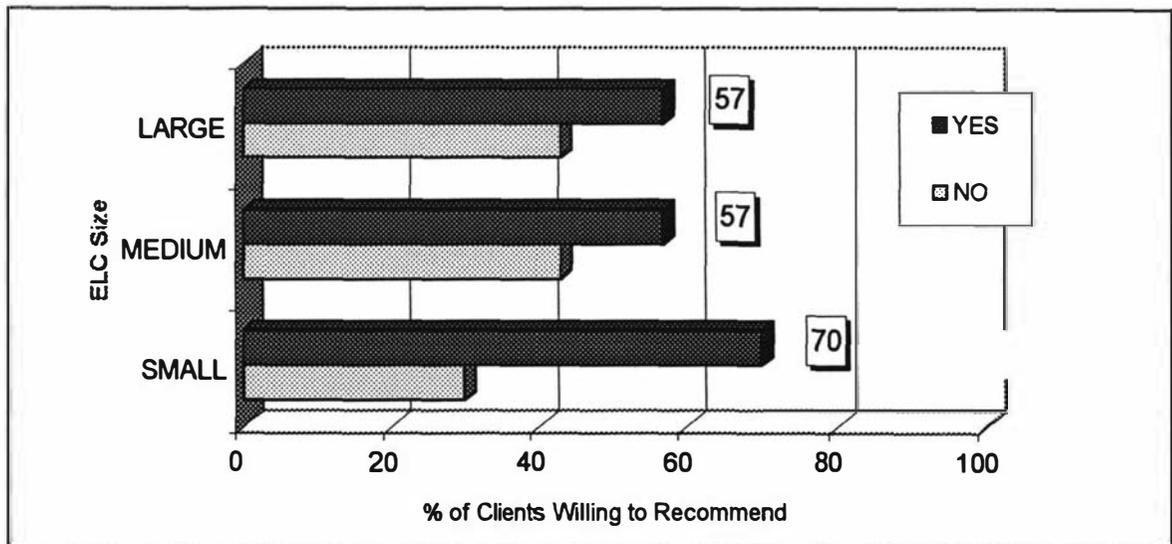


Figure 5.44. Client willingness to recommend an ELC by ELC size

■ **English language centre Location**

ELC Location	ELC nos.
Auckland	12
Christchurch	7
Wellington	3
North Island Provinces	5
South Island Provinces	3

A similar set of procedures was carried out to see if ELC location had any impact on levels of client satisfaction. The 30 ELCs were recoded into five types according to their location (inset). A one-way ANOVA was carried out, first on the data from the dimension summary

quality plus the *willingness to recommend*, questions in order to see the general trend, then on all 74 variables. The group satisfaction means were then ranked to see which locations had the most satisfied clients and which had the least satisfied. Table 5.47 shows the rankings for the summary dimension quality questions and Figure 5.45 (next page) the recommendation findings. It can be seen that the ranking of locations for both the nine dimensions and the recommendation are identical, with Wellington top and Auckland bottom.

Table 5.47
Ranking of Client Satisfaction Dimension Means by Location (1 = Most Satisfied)

DIMENSION/ITEM	AUCKLAND	CHRIST-CHURCH	WELLINGTON	N. ISLAND PROVINCES	S. ISLAND PROVINCES
Teachers	4	3	1	2	5
English lessons	4	3	1	2	5
Service procedures	4	3	1	2	5
Communication	5	4	1	2	3
Admin staff	5	3	2	1	4
Homestay	5	3	1	2	4
Facilities	5	4	1	2	3
Activities	5	3	1	4	2
Overall quality	5	3=	1	2	3=
Overall ranking	5	4	1	2	3

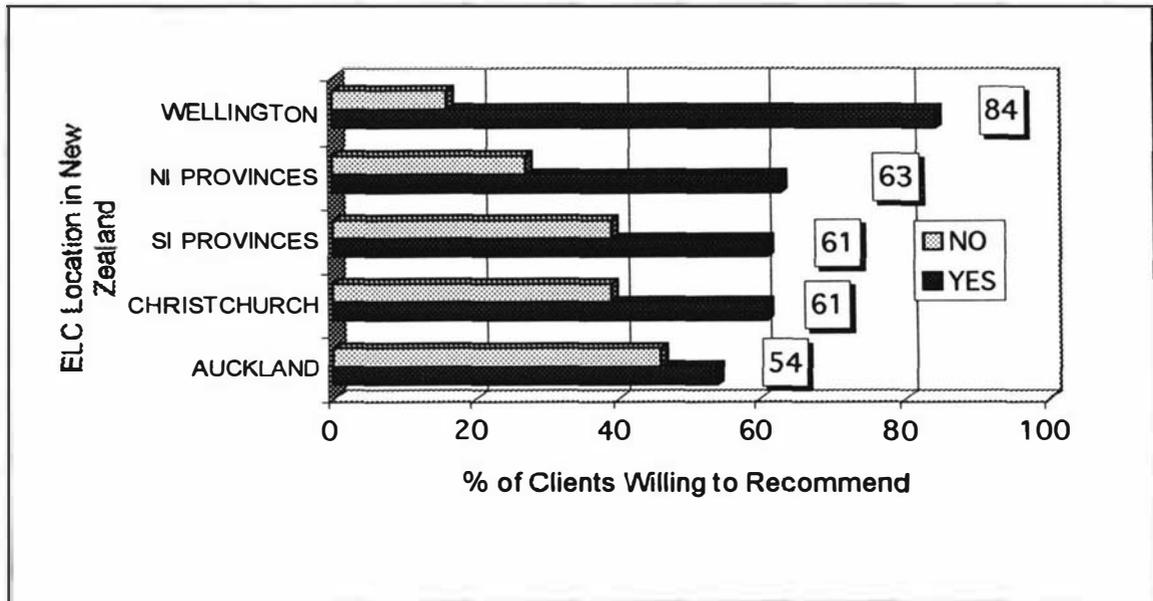


Figure 5.45. Client willingness to recommend an ELC by ELC location

A closer examination of the group means for the individual items showed that all 74 were significant, 70 at the $p = .01$ level and four at the $p = .05$ level, indicating a strong pattern of significant difference in client levels of satisfaction among the different locations. Most effect sizes were in the small range ($\eta^2 = .01 - .04$) but the *facilities* dimension was an exception. Of the nine items in this dimension, five had effect sizes in a moderate to large range ($\eta^2 = .08 - .14$), indicating a sizeable, significant difference in levels of client satisfaction with ELC facilities relative to location. The group means for the recommendation were likewise significant ($p = .000$, $\eta^2 = .04$). The data therefore indicates, overall, modest but widespread variation in client satisfaction levels relation to ELC location in New Zealand.

5.5.5 Exploring predictors of client willingness to recommend an English language centre

The issue of which aspects of ELC service are directly linked to a willingness to recommend an ELC is of interest to ELC managers because a willingness to recommend may lead to an actual recommendation, thus helping to secure future business. The following analyses attempted to identify predictors of client willingness to recommend. In the first stage, a one-tailed Pearson's correlation was carried out to explore the association between the willingness to recommend and the other variables in the questionnaire. All 74 variables correlated positively ($p < .01$) at low to moderate levels. The five strongest correlations with the willingness to recommend are displayed in Table 5.48. A striking feature of these five items is that all originate in the *general* dimension.

Table 5.48
Strongest Correlations With Client Willingness to Recommend an ELC

ITEM	<i>r</i>
Overall quality of ELC service	.54**
Value for money of ELC programme	.50**
Atmosphere in the ELC	.49**
Overall organisation of the ELC	.48**
Encouragement to achieve goals	.47**

** $p < .01$

The findings from the correlation appeared to indicate a positive relationship. The next stage, therefore, was to carry out a binary logistic regression with *willingness to recommend* as the dependent variable, in order to identify the strongest predictors of a willingness to recommend an ELC. The independent variables were loaded by dimension so that the strongest predictor for each dimension could be ascertained. (The summary quality questions were included in the regression but excluded from the ranking because of their indeterminate content.) The primary predictors are presented in Table 5.49 (next page) and

secondary predictors in Table 5.50. β is the standardised regression coefficient with the highest value for the respective dimension.

Table 5.49

Primary Predictors of Client Willingness to Recommend an ELC

PRIMARY PREDICTOR FOR EACH DIMENSION	β
Teacher teaching skills	.326**
Effectiveness of the lessons	.586**
Student feedback procedure	.259*
Accuracy of information in publicity materials	.481**
Admin staff ability to give information asked for	.472**
Opportunity to speak English with host family	.286**
Facilities - classrooms	.534**
Value for money of activities programme	.393**
Value for money of ELC programme	.624**

** $p < .01$

* $p < .05$

Table 5.50

Secondary Predictors of Client Willingness to Recommend an ELC

SECONDARY PREDICTOR FOR EACH DIMENSION	β
Teacher communication skills	.276*
Mix of nationalities in class	.348**
Student complaints procedure	.257*
Admin staff friendliness	.339**
Effectiveness of ELC communication after arrival	.359**
Match between homestay requested and got	.230*
Facilities – self-access unit	.320**
Organisation of activities programme	.333*
Encouragement to achieve goals	.362**

** $p < .01$

* $p < .05$

The variables were loaded by dimension, so it is not appropriate to rank them against each other and the β coefficient values have relevance only within the dimensions (however, see discussion of R^2 below). Each primary predictor therefore ranked first in its dimension and each secondary predictor ranked second. It is striking that Table 5.49 demonstrates a marked absence of the human attributes. Four dimensions contained human attributes but none of them is included in the primary predictors of a willingness to recommend. The emphasis is, rather, on skills, organisational issues, or management-related aspects of the service provision.

Table 5.51 and table 5.52 (next page) show how the predictors were actually ranked in the aggregated survey findings. Of the 18 items only three were ranked top of their dimensions and three nearer to the top than the bottom. On the other hand, six were ranked bottom and six were ranked near the bottom of their dimensions. In other words, respondents gave a relatively low satisfaction rating to some 67% of the ELC service items most likely to predict willingness to recommend.

Table 5.51

Primary Predictors of Client Willingness to Recommend an ELC, Ranked According to the Survey Findings

PRIMARY PREDICTOR FOR EACH DIMENSION	RANK WITHIN DIMENSION
Teacher teaching skills	bottom
Effectiveness of the lessons	4 th /9
Student feedback procedure	6 th /8
Accuracy of information in publicity materials	3 rd /4
Admin staff ability to give information asked for	bottom
Opportunity to speak English with host family	6 th /9
Facilities - classrooms	top
Value for money of activities programme	bottom
Value for money of ELC programme	bottom

Apart from these 18 predictors, only another nine variables out of the 74 were significant at the $p = .05$ level. Three of these were from the *general* dimension, namely, *organisation of the ELC*, *atmosphere in the ELC*, and *improvement in English proficiency* and two of the three (Table 5.48) were moderately correlated with willingness to recommend. This again seemed to confirm the influence of the *general* items on client willingness to recommend an ELC.

Table 5.52

Secondary Predictors of Client Willingness to Recommend an ELC, Ranked According to The Survey Findings

SECONDARY PREDICTOR FOR EIGHT DIMENSIONS	RANK WITHIN DIMENSION
Teacher communication skills	4 th /13
Mix of nationalities in class	bottom
Student complaints procedure	bottom
Effectiveness of ELC communication after arrival	top
Admin staff friendliness	top
Match between homestay requested and got	7 th /9
Facilities – self-access unit	6 th /9
Organisation of activities programme	5 th /6
Encouragement to achieve goals	4 th /9

This observation is supported by the R^2 values for each dimension. R^2 is the proportion of total variance in the dependent variable caused by the regression model, in this case each dimension. The SPSS binary logistic regression programme provides two optional values for R^2 (Table 5.53, next page). These results indicate that the *general* dimension variables accounted for between 35.5% and 48% of the variance in the willingness of a client to recommend and were thus the strongest influence on a recommendation.

Table 5.53

Satisfaction Dimension Levels of Variance in Client Willingness to Recommend

DIMENSION	COX & SNELL R^2	NAGELKERKE R^2	RANK
General	.355	.482	1
Lessons	.263	.358	2
Service procedures	.220	.296	3
Teachers	.218	.296	4
Communication	.206	.276	5
Facilities	.197	.265	6
Activities	.183	.249	7
Admin staff	.170	.232	8
Homestay	.101	.136	9

5.5.6 Exploring predictors of client satisfaction with English language centre service

As in the previous section, a knowledge of which aspects of ELC service influence client satisfaction is of interest to ELC managers. Satisfied clients are likely to spread positive WOM, thus helping to secure future business. Regression analysis was therefore used to identify predictors of client satisfaction with ELC service.

The client survey items minus the general questions were designated as independent variables and the total client rating of all 74 variables was taken as the dependent variable in each case. Only the data from the 395 complete responses could be entered into the regression. The variables (excluding *overall quality*) were entered by dimension in order to identify the primary and secondary predictors from each dimension. The results are presented in Tables 5.54 and 5.55 (next page), where β is the standardised regression coefficient with the highest value for the respective dimension.

Table 5.54
Primary Predictors of Client Satisfaction With ELC service

PRIMARY PREDICTOR FOR EACH DIMENSION	β
Teacher availability to help outside class	.194**
Lesson - mix of nationalities in class	.187**
Enquiries procedure	.275**
Accuracy of information in publicity materials	.438**
Admin staff ability to give information asked for	.206**
Opportunity to speak English with host family	.249**
Facilities - classrooms	.389**
Organisation of activities programme	.352**
Overall organisation of ELC	.327**

** $p < .01$

Table 5.55
Secondary Predictors of Client Satisfaction With ELC service

SECONDARY PREDICTOR FOR EACH DIMENSION	β
Teacher teaching skills	.140**
Lesson – methods used to teach you	.179**
Placement procedure	.163**
Effectiveness of ELC communication after arrival	.372**
Admin staff communication skills	.184**
Match between homestay requested and allocated	.243**
Facilities – self-access unit	.176**
Information about activities programme	.321**
Encouragement to achieve goals	.158**

** $p < .01$

The data shows that, as with the predictors of the willingness to recommend an ELC, the emphasis is on the skills and the organisational and management aspects of the service: few, if any, human attributes are represented. Tables 5.56 and 5.57 (next page) present the actual rankings of the variables within

their dimensions based on the satisfaction survey findings. As was seen with the predictors of the willingness to recommend, these predictors of client satisfaction were not, overall, highly ranked in the survey, some 67% being placed in the lower half of their respective dimensions.

Table 5.56

Primary Predictors of Client Satisfaction With ELC Service, Ranked by Survey Findings

PRIMARY PREDICTOR FOR EACH DIMENSION	RANK WITHIN DIMENSION
Teacher availability to help outside class	11/13
Lesson - mix of nationalities in class	bottom
Enquiries procedure	2 nd /7
Accuracy of information in publicity materials	3 rd /4
Admin staff ability to give information asked for	bottom
Opportunity to speak English with host family	6 th /9
Facilities - classrooms	top
Organisation of activities programme	5 th /6
Overall organisation of ELC	5 th /9

Table 5.57

Secondary Predictors of Client Satisfaction With ELC service, Ranked by Survey Findings

SECONDARY PREDICTOR FOR EACH DIMENSION	RANK WITHIN DIMENSION
Teacher teaching skills	bottom
Lesson – methods used to teach you	top
Placement procedure	4 th /7
Effectiveness of ELC communication after arrival	top
Admin staff communication skills	4 th /7
Match between homestay requested and allocated	7 th /9
Facilities – self-access unit	6 th /9
Information about activities programme	2 nd /6
Encouragement to achieve goals	4 th /9

The R^2 values for the nine dimensions (Table 5.58) show a similar pattern to those for the regression data for the willingness to recommend (Table 5.53). The dimension accounting for the greatest variance in the overall satisfaction rating is again the *general* dimension. The *lessons* dimension is again highly ranked and the *admin staff* and *homestay* dimensions are again ranked bottom. The only major difference is that here, *teachers* have a lower ranking than before. This finding seems to underscore the influence of the *general* dimension on client satisfaction with the ELC service. It also appears to support a link between client satisfaction and the willingness to recommend the ELC.

Table 5.58

Client Satisfaction Dimension Levels of Variance in Satisfaction

CLIENT SATISFACTION DIMENSION	ADJUSTED R^2	RANK
General	.818	1
Service procedures	.706	2
Lessons	.704	3
Facilities	.641	4
Communication	.626	5
Activities	.615	6
Teachers	.614	7
Admin staff	.601	8
Homestay	.467	9

Further evidence was sought for such a link. First, a Pearson one-tailed correlation was carried out between individual ELC satisfaction means and percentages of clients who were willing to recommend their ELCs. This revealed a strong, positive correlation between client satisfaction and client willingness to recommend an ELC ($r = .86, p = .000$). Second, a comparison was made between the primary and secondary predictors of client satisfaction and those of the willingness to recommend an ELC. This comparison revealed widespread correspondences (Table 5.59, next page). For four dimensions the primary predictors in either category were identical. For two dimensions both

predictors were identical. For eight dimensions, either the primary predictors or the primary and secondary predictors or both secondary predictors were identical. *Service procedures* was the only exception. Taken together, these findings suggest the existence of a strong link between client satisfaction and client willingness to recommend an ELC.

Table 5.59
Comparison of Client Satisfaction and Recommendation Predictors

DIMENSION	PREDICTOR OF CLIENT SATISFACTION WITH ELC SERVICE	PREDICTOR OF WILLINGNESS TO RECOMMEND AN ELC
TEACHERS	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Availability to help out of class 2. Teaching skills 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Teaching skills 2. Teacher communication skills
LESSONS	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mix of nationalities in class 2. Methods used to teach you 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Effectiveness of lessons 2. Mix of nationalities in class
SERVICE PROCEDURES	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Enquiries procedure 2. Placement procedure 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Student feedback procedure 2. Complaints procedure
COMMUNICATION	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Accuracy of information in publicity materials 2. Effectiveness of ELC communication after arrival 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Accuracy of information in publicity materials 2. Effectiveness of ELC communication after arrival
ADMIN STAFF	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ability to give information 2. Communication skills 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ability to give information 2. Friendliness
HOMESTAY	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Opportunity to speak English with host family 2. Match between homestay requested and allocated 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Opportunity to speak English with host family 2. Match between homestay requested and allocated
FACILITIES	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Classrooms 2. Self-access unit 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Classrooms 2. Self-access unit
ACTIVITIES PROGRAMME	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Organisation 2. Information about 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Value for money 2. Organisation
GENERAL	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Overall organisation of ELC 2. Encouragement to achieve goals 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Value for money of programme 2. Encouragement to achieve goals

5.5.7 Differences between staff and client perceptions of English language centre service

■ *Comparing staff estimates with client evaluations of service*

Staff were asked to give their estimate of how their clients evaluated the service provided by their ELC, using the same scale and dimensions as those used in the satisfaction questionnaire. In order to assess the accuracy of these estimates, they were compared with the actual client evaluations in two ways.

Table 5.60

Staff Estimates of Client Satisfaction With ELC Service and Client Ratings - Comparison of Rankings

RANK	ACTUAL DIMENSION RANKING ACCORDING TO CLIENT RATING	DIMENSION RANKING ACCORDING TO STAFF ESTIMATE OF CLIENT RATING
1	Teachers	Teachers
2	Admin Staff	Communication
3	Homestay	Admin staff
4	Service procedures	Lessons
5	Lessons	General
6	Communication	Service procedures
7	General	Activities programme
8	Activities programme	Homestay
9	Facilities	Facilities

First, using the aggregated data, the means of the client dimensions were ranked and compared with a ranked list of the same dimensions from Dimension 11 of the staff climate survey (Table 5.60). The ranking of the staff estimates was seen to approximate the ranking of the client ratings. Five of the items are close in each list and only two, *homestay* and *communication*, are not. It is striking that the first and last ranked items are identical. This result appears to indicate that at least in terms of a prioritisation of specific service dimensions, the staff respondents had a reasonably accurate perception of how their clients evaluated their service. The second comparison, which focused on individual ELCs, told a rather different story however.

The actual mean client satisfaction scores for each ELC were compared with the mean estimates made by staff of their clients' evaluations of them. The comparison can be seen in Table 5.61. The estimates of staff in three ELCs approximated their clients' rating and the estimates of staff in five ELCs were low but the estimates of staff in the other 21 ELCs were high.

Table 5.61

Staff Estimates of Client Satisfaction With Individual ELCs and Client Ratings

ELC SERIAL	STAFF ESTIMATE	CLIENT RATING	CONGRUENCE
01	3.06	2.75	↑
02	2.76	2.74	√
03	3.15	2.95	↑
04	2.63	2.79	↓
05	3.01	2.61	↑
06	3.77	3.41	↑
07	3.73	3.15	↑
08	3.28	3.24	√
09	3.58	2.68	↑
10	3.54	3.35	↑
11	3.16	3.31	↓
12	3.27	3.14	↑
13	3.39	3.16	↑
14	2.95	2.66	↑
15	2.81	3.12	↓
16	3.93	3.25	↑
17	2.58	2.88	↓
18	3.07	2.63	↑
19	3.45	2.97	↑
20	3.34	3.48	↓
21	3.84	3.49	↑
22	3.64	3.16	↑
23	3.76	3.28	↑
24	3.43	3.21	↑
25	3.24	3.09	↑
26	3.27	2.74	↑
27	3.85	3.42	↑
29	3.30	3.29	√
30	3.43	3.03	↑

Note. √ = Both ratings approximately the same
 ↑ = Staff estimate higher than client rating
 ↓ = Staff estimate lower than client rating

Although Table 5.61 presents only a rudimentary comparison, it is an illustration of the positive view of staff respondents of the service they provide, compared with the actual assessment by their clients. Some estimates such as those of ELCs 09, 16, and 26 seemed particularly optimistic, given the lower rating their clients gave them.

In order to seek more concrete support for the apparent difference between the two sets of data, an independent samples t-test was carried out. The findings showed that there was a significant ($p = .009$) difference between the scores for staff ($M = 3.32$, $SD = 0.37$) and clients ($M = 3.08$, $SD = 0.30$). η^2 was calculated at 0.115 which according to Cohen's (1988) guidelines is verging on a large effect size. These findings confirmed the sizeable difference between the estimated and actual means for the quality of the ELC service and highlighted a gap between staff perceptions of the service provided and client perceptions of the service received.

■ **Comparing staff and client perceptions of specific service variables**

Although the climate and satisfaction questionnaires used different methodologies and content, 10 items in both questionnaires related to identical variables. A comparison of the staff and client views of these variables is presented in Table 5.62 (next page).

As the questionnaires used different scales, respondent percentages for each category are provided rather than means. In some cases, where the same criterion applied to different facets or people (e.g. friendliness in terms of both teachers and admin staff), the mean of the percentage of responses for each category has been used. Given the differences in the formulation of some of these items and the different scale conceptualisation in either questionnaire, caution is in order when comparing this data. However, an examination of the staff *negative* data and the client *disappointed* data demonstrates, at times, a considerable difference in perceptions.

For instance, only 4% of staff had a negative view of the ELC atmosphere but 23% of clients were disappointed with it; 4% of staff had a negative perception of the client complaints procedure but 37% of clients were disappointed with it. The only variable which demonstrates a degree of correspondence between staff and clients is the *facilities* dimension. This set of data again lends support to the previously noted differences between staff and client perceptions of the ELC service.

Table 5.62

Comparison of Staff and Client Perceptions of Specific Service Variables

VARIABLE	STAFF PERCEPTIONS, PERCENTAGE RESPONSE		CLIENT PERCEPTIONS, PERCENTAGE RESPONSE	
	NEGATIVE (disagree/ strongly disagree)	POSITIVE (agree/ strongly agree)	DISAPPOINTED worse/far worse than expected	DELIGHTED better/far better than expected
Match between service description & service received	17	61	28	22
Atmosphere/milieu in ELC	4	86	23	34
English lessons	7	78	28	29
Staff availability	3	90	19	45
Staff friendliness	0.4	98	8	67
Communication with clients	9	70	17	41
Client complaints procedure	4	84	37	24
Client feedback procedure	10	68	30	26
Facilities	33	53	36	25
Equipment	29	58	54	16

5.6 IS THERE A LINK BETWEEN ENGLISH LANGUAGE CENTRE SERVICE CLIMATE AND CLIENT SATISFACTION?

5.6.1 Comparison of rankings

In order to explore any link between ELC service climate and client satisfaction, both sets of means were ranked in descending order, producing two lists. The first, termed *service climate quality* (Lindell & Brandt, 2000), displays individual ELC climate perception means in descending order (Table 5.63). ELC 28 is excluded as insufficient staff data was received.

Table 5.63

ELCs Ranked by Service Climate Quality Means

RANK	ELC SERIAL	SERVICE CLIMATE QUALITY MEAN	RANK	ELC SERIAL	SERVICE CLIMATE QUALITY MEAN
01	21	4.34	16	29	3.70
02	06	4.29	17	19	3.67
03	16	4.17	18	20	3.63
04	27	4.16	19	14	3.59
05=	10	4.11	20	13	3.55
05=	23	4.11	21	25	3.53
07	24	4.07	22	01	3.50
08	30	4.04	23	11	3.49
09=	07	3.99	24	18	3.45
09=	08	3.99	25	02	3.34
11	22	3.90	26	05	3.10
12	12	3.86	27	17	2.99
13	26	3.80	28	04	2.94
14	03	3.73	29	15	2.93
15	09	3.71			

The second list shows client satisfaction means for individual ELCs, going in descending order from most satisfied to least satisfied (Table 5.64, next page). Both data sets were then compared (Table 5.65, next page). With ELC 28 excluded, the client satisfaction rankings were adjusted. Table 5.65 demonstrates correspondences (shading) between the rankings. Of the 29 ELCs, 12 ranked either identically or closely (within three places) in both lists.

Table 5.64

ELCs Ranked by Client Satisfaction Means

RANK	ELC SERIAL	CLIENT SATISFACTION MEAN	RANK	ELC SERIAL	CLIENT SATISFACTION MEAN
01	28	3.52	16	12	3.14
02	21	3.49	17	15	3.12
03	20	3.48	18	25	3.09
04	27	3.42	19	30	3.03
05	06	3.41	20	19	2.97
06	10	3.35	21	03	2.95
07	11	3.31	22	17	2.88
08	29	3.29	23	04	2.79
09	23	3.28	24	01	2.75
10	16	3.25	25=	02	2.74
11	08	3.24	25=	26	2.74
12	24	3.21	27	09	2.68
13=	13	3.16	28	14	2.66
13=	22	3.16	29	18	2.63
15	07	3.15	30	05	2.61

Table 5.65

ELC Service Climate Quality and Client Satisfaction Means Compared

ELC SERIAL	CLIMATE QUALITY RANK	CLIENT SATISFACTION RANK	ELC SERIAL	CLIMATE QUALITY RANK	CLIENT SATISFACTION RANK
01	22	23	16	03	9
02	25	23	17	27	21
03	14	20	18	24	28
04	28	22	19	17	19
05	26	29	20	18	02
06	02	04	21	01	01
07	09	14	22	11	12
08	10	10	23	06	8
09	15	26	24	07	11
10	05	05	25	21	17
11	23	06	26	13	23
12	12	14	27	04	03
13	20	12	29	16	07
14	19	27	30	08	18
15	29	16			

Table 5.66

Comparison of ELC Service Climate Quality and Client Satisfaction by Thirds

TOP THIRD		MIDDLE THIRD		BOTTOM THIRD	
CLIMATE QUALITY	CLIENT SATISFACTION	CLIMATE QUALITY	CLIENT SATISFACTION	CLIMATE QUALITY	CLIENT SATISFACTION
27	27	22	22	18	18
23	23	19	19	17	17
21	21	13	13	14	14
16	16	12	12	05	05
10	10	09	07	04	04
08	08	03	30	02	02
06	06	29	25	01	01
30	29	26	24	25	26
24	20	20	15	15	09
07	11			11	03

In order to get a clearer picture, the list was split into top, middle, and bottom thirds. The result of this step is displayed in Table 5.66. The shaded areas denote ELCs that are ranked in the same third (the ELC serials are sorted for convenience but this does not indicate ranking within the third). Of the ten ELCs in each of the top and bottom thirds, seven are represented in the same climate quality and client satisfaction thirds. In the middle third, four out of nine ELCs are represented in both the climate quality and the client satisfaction columns.

The findings from the ranking exercise provide encouraging support for the suggestion of a link between ELC service climate quality and client satisfaction with the service provided by ELCs. Specifically, 40% of the ELCs were ranked either identically or in close proximity in terms of both service climate and satisfaction and 73% were ranked in the same third in both categories.

5.6.2 Correlations between service climate and client satisfaction

In order to further explore a possible link between ELC service climate quality and client satisfaction, climate dimension and climate item correlations with client satisfaction were explored. First, the individual ELC means for the 11 climate dimensions and the means for the nine satisfaction dimensions, plus the willingness to recommend (from 29 ELCs, excluding ELC 28), were compared by means of a Pearson's product-moment correlation (Table 5.67, next page). The results showed widespread, low to moderate, positive correlation between most climate and satisfaction dimensions ($p < .05$).

The three service climate dimensions that demonstrated the highest number of significant correlations (nine or 10 out of ten, Table 5.67, next page) with the client satisfaction dimensions were *management support*, *client focus* and *estimate of client evaluation of the service*. Most correlation values were at the low to moderate level, that is around .40 to .50. The two service climate dimensions that demonstrated the lowest number of correlations with satisfaction dimensions were *management service practices* and *management communication*, with only two and three significant correlations.

The satisfaction dimensions that most consistently and significantly correlated with overall climate were *communication*, *admin staff* and *general*, with low to moderate ($r = .40$ to $.60$) correlations. Again, the apparent importance of the *general* dimension should be noted. The two with the lowest number of correlations were *facilities* and *English lessons* (three and five). The climate dimension most highly related to the willingness to recommend was *client focus*. In order to get a clearer picture, the climate dimension means were then compared with the overall client satisfaction mean scores of the 29 ELCs (minus ELC 28). All 11 dimensions revealed low to moderate, positive correlations with the client satisfaction values at the $p = .01$ significance level (Table 5.68, page after next).

Table 5.67

Correlations Between ELC Service Climate Dimensions and ELC Satisfaction Dimensions

	TCHERS	ENGLSN	SRVPRC	COMMUN	ADMSTF	HMSTAY	FACILIT	ACTPRG	GENERAL	RECOMM
MGSERPRAC	.29	.21	.37	.48*	.40*	.30	.25	.38	.43*	.36
MGCOMM	.31	.29	.39	.54*	.36	.35	.24	.45*	.50*	.45*
MGSUPPT	.41*	.39	.48*	.60*	.47*	.48*	.39*	.46*	.62*	.56*
STSERPRAC	.46*	.37	.54*	.54*	.54*	.30	.32	.50*	.50*	.45*
CLIENTFOC	.45*	.42*	.54*	.58*	.49*	.40*	.41*	.52*	.58*	.58*
STSERETH	.58*	.42*	.50*	.55*	.40*	.33	.50*	.32	.43*	.42*
STPERATT	.45*	.38	.55*	.51*	.53*	.25	.36*	.54*	.45*	.37
STCNCERN	.35	.46*	.57*	.56*	.43*	.42*	.31	.56*	.52*	.54*
EMPISSUE	.47*	.43*	.60*	.59*	.66*	.53*	.24	.39	.55*	.52*
RESOURCG	.32	.29	.41*	.49*	.44*	.50*	.37	.30	.53*	.48*
ESTIMATE	.55*	.50*	.58*	.63*	.56*	.60*	.34	.40*	.58*	.53*

* $p < .05$

Table 5.68

Individual ELC Service Climate Dimension Means Correlations With ELC Client Satisfaction Mean Scores

SERVICE CLIMATE DIMENSION	<i>r</i>	RANK
Estimate of client satisfaction	.62**	1
Client focus	.56**	2=
Management support	.56**	2=
Employment issues	.56**	2=
Resourcing	.52**	5
Staff concern for clients	.50**	6
Management communication	.49**	7
Management service practices	.47**	8=
Staff personal attributes	.47**	8=
Staff service practices	.47**	8=
Staff service ethos	.45**	11

** $p < .01$

The data in Table 5.68 replicates that in Table 5.67 and it can be seen that the three climate dimensions that are most strongly correlated with client satisfaction are the same in both tables. Table 5.68, however, allows a ranking of the climate dimensions in terms of their overall level of correlation with client satisfaction and it is clear that the *estimate*, *client focus*, and *management support* dimensions are the top three ranked in that order.

In order to understand which individual climate variables correlated most strongly with satisfaction, the service climate individual variable (rather than dimension) means from the 29 ELCs (minus ELC 28) were correlated with the overall client satisfaction mean scores of the ELCs. For convenience, the nine variable means for the *estimate* dimension were collapsed into one measure – *staff estimate of client satisfaction with ELC service*, making 63 items altogether. Of these 63, 59 correlated positively at a low to moderate level with the client satisfaction mean ratings at the $p = .01$ or $p = .05$ significance level. The top ten correlations are displayed in Table 5.69 (next page).

Table 5.69

Correlations Between ELC Service Climate Variable Means and ELC Client Satisfaction Mean Scores – Top Ten Correlations

SERVICE CLIMATE VARIABLE	<i>r</i>	RANK
Staff estimate of client satisfaction with ELC service.	.62**	1
Staff actively support client efforts to achieve English language goals.^a	.61**	2
The service clients receive closely matches that in publicity materials. •	.60**	3
Mgmt makes effort to remove obstacles to delivery of superior service. •	.56**	4=
Staff are committed to providing superior service.	.56**	4=
Clients get information they need to get most out of the service.	.56**	4=
Clients experience a relaxed, friendly service environment. •	.55**	7
The facilities are of a satisfactory standard.	.54**	8
Mgmt shares with staff client feedback on service quality. •	.53**	9=
Clients experience a high standard of professional instruction.	.53**	9=

** $p < .01$

^a Items in bold also appear in Table 5.71

The 10 items in Table 5.69 represent those aspects of the ELC service climate that are most closely associated with client satisfaction with ELC service.

5.6.3 Correlations between service climate and willingness to recommend

It has been shown that client satisfaction with ELCs is highly correlated with client willingness to recommend an ELC. Client willingness to recommend an institution therefore appears to be a strong indicator of satisfaction. The exploration of a service climate-client satisfaction link was continued by exploring climate dimension and climate item correlations with client willingness to recommend. First, the previous Pearson set of climate and satisfaction correlations (Table 5.67) was examined and the climate dimension correlations with the recommendation means for each ELC were identified and ranked. The results can be seen in Table 5.70 (next page). Of the 11 climate dimensions, nine correlated positively at a low to moderate levels ($p < .01$ or $p < .05$). The three climate dimensions that most strongly correlated were *client focus*, *management support*, and *staff concern for clients*.

Table 5.70

Individual ELC Service Climate Dimension Means Correlations With Client Willingness to Recommend Means

SERVICE CLIMATE DIMENSION	<i>r</i>	RANK
Client focus	.58**	1
Management support	.56**	2
Staff concern for clients	.54**	3
Estimate of client satisfaction	.53**	4
Employment issues	.52**	5
Resourcing	.48*	6
Management communication	.45*	7
Staff service practices	.45*	8
Staff service ethos	.42*	9
Staff personal attributes	.37	10
Management service practices	.36	11

** $p < .01$

* $p < .05$

Next, the service climate individual variable means from the 29 ELCs (minus ELC 28) were correlated with the percentages of respondents who said they would recommend that ELC. As before, the nine variable means for the *estimate* dimension were collapsed into one measure – *staff estimate of client satisfaction with ELC service*, making 63 items. A total of 55 of the 63 climate items correlated positively at a low to moderate level ($p < .05$ and $p < .01$). The top 10 correlations are displayed in Table 5.71 (next page). A comparison of the top 10 climate individual variable correlations with client satisfaction on the one hand, and client willingness to recommend on the other, (Tables 5.69 and 5.71) shows that five of the 10 items are common to both sets. These five items are:

1. Management makes an effort to remove obstacles to the delivery of superior service;
2. Clients experience a relaxed, friendly service environment;
3. The service clients receive closely matches that in publicity materials;

4. Management shares with staff client feedback on service quality;
5. Staff actively support client efforts to achieve English language goals;

These five items therefore appear to be the ELC service climate variables that are most closely associated with both client satisfaction and client willingness to recommend an ELC.

Table 5.71

Correlations Between ELC Service Climate Variable Means and Client Willingness to Recommend – Top Ten Correlations

SERVICE CLIMATE VARIABLE	<i>r</i>	RANK
Mgmt makes effort to remove obstacles to delivery of superior service. ^a	.63**	1
Clients experience a relaxed, friendly service environment. ^a	.61**	2=
The service clients receive closely matches that in publicity materials. ^a	.61**	2=
Management shares with staff client feedback on service quality. ^a	.59**	4
Staff receive fair remuneration for their work.	.57**	5
Mgmt ensures staff have material resources needed for superior service.	.56**	6=
Staff actively support client efforts to achieve English language goals. ^a	.56**	6=
There is effective communication with clients.	.56**	6=
Management ensures staff know how to deliver superior service.	.55**	9
Clients receive ethical treatment.	.54**	10

** $p < 01$

^a Items in bold also appear in Table 5.69.

5.6.4 The link between English language centre service climate and client satisfaction

Taken together with the findings from the rankings, these correlational studies appear to provide strong support for the suggestion that there is a relationship between ELC service climate quality and client satisfaction. Specifically, the more positive the climate quality, the greater the client satisfaction with the service appears to be.

5.7 CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has provided a detailed report on the analysis of the quantitative data from the ELC service climate survey and the ELC client satisfaction survey and has reported on a number of key findings. Classification data for the respondents in both the service climate and the client satisfaction survey was presented. An analysis of the service climate data appeared to show an overall positive service climate in New Zealand ELCs. Analyses of variance pointed to different climate perceptions depending on group affiliation and ELC type. The analysis of the client satisfaction data revealed *mere satisfaction* with the ELC service but little evidence of overall *delight*. Analyses of variance pointed to differentiated satisfaction depending on group affiliation and ELC type. A number of predictors of ELC client satisfaction were identified. Finally, a link was established between ELC service climate quality and levels of client satisfaction with ELC service.

Chapter 6 will present more detailed conclusions about the methodology used, about service climate in New Zealand ELCs, about client satisfaction with the service of New Zealand ELCs and about the link between service climate and client satisfaction. Implications for services management theory, for English language service sector policy, and for ELC management will be stated. Recommendations for future research will be made and limitations of the report will be listed.

Chapter Six
CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

6.1.1 Chapter preview

The research described in this report was conducted on a sample of staff and clients at English language centres in New Zealand. Chapter 1 set the scene, making the point that there is no reported research about service climate or client satisfaction in New Zealand ELCs and stating the five research questions:

- 1. What are the key elements of service climate in New Zealand ELCs?*
- 2. What criteria do clients use to evaluate the service of New Zealand ELCs?*
- 3. What kind of service climate do staff perceive exists in New Zealand ELCs?*
- 4. How satisfied are clients with the service provided by New Zealand ELCs?*
- 5. Is there a link between the service climate of New Zealand ELCs and levels of client satisfaction with New Zealand ELC service?*

Chapter 2 provided an outline of the key issues, focusing on service climate within organisations, ELC-based TESOL as a service, and client satisfaction. Chapter 3 gave an account of the qualitative methodology used to explore research questions 1 and 2 and the quantitative methodology used to explore research questions 3, 4 and 5. Chapter 4 presented an analysis of the data obtained from the qualitative phase of the research. Chapter 5 presented an analysis of the quantitative data collected in the ELC service climate survey and client satisfaction survey. The overall purpose of this chapter is to present conclusions and implications based on the data analysis within the context of the issues presented in Chapter 2. Conclusions are presented with regard to

- employee perceptions of the service climate in ELCs;
- levels of client satisfaction with ELC service;
- the link between ELC service climate and client satisfaction;
- the methodology used.

Implications are stated for services management theory, for English language service sector policy and for ELC management. Recommendations for further research are made and limitations of the study are stated.

6.1.2 Summary of key conclusions

The key conclusions of the study can be summarised as follows:

■ *Conclusions about English language centre service climate*

- ELC staff have an overall positive view of the service climate in their institutions.
- There is moderate to strong consensus among ELC employees about service climate in their institutions.

■ *Conclusions about client satisfaction with English language centre service*

- Overall, clients are satisfied with the service they get from New Zealand ELCs but they are not delighted.
- Clients are most satisfied with ELC service providers and least satisfied with ELC facilities and equipment.
- Just over half of ELC clients would recommend their ELC to a friend.
- Although human aspects of ELC service are highly rated by clients, it is not human aspects that most influence client satisfaction but managerial and professional expertise and effectiveness.
- ELC staff perceive their clients to be more satisfied with the ELC service than their clients actually are.

■ *Conclusion about the link between English language centre service climate and client satisfaction*

- The more positive employees perceive the ELC service climate to be, the greater the client satisfaction with ELC service.

6.2 CONCLUSIONS ABOUT ENGLISH LANGUAGE CENTRE SERVICE CLIMATE

Research Questions One and Three addressed ELC service climate:

What are the key elements of service climate in New Zealand ELCs?

What kind of service climate do staff perceive exists in New Zealand ELCs?

The answers to these questions were evident in the findings from the focus group and survey research presented in Chapters 4 and 5. In the following sections, a series of conclusions is presented, based on these findings.

6.2.1 English language centre staff have a generally positive view of the service climate in their institutions. However, there is considerable variation between ELCs on perceptions of individual service climate dimensions.

Staff have the most positive perceptions of the service climate dimensions comprising *service orientation*, namely *staff personal attributes*, *staff concern for clients*, and *staff service ethos* (Table 5.10). It is also evident that staff have a fairly positive perception of *client focus* and *management support*. Staff have an overall neutral perception of the remaining dimensions with *employment issues* being the least positively perceived (Table 5.10).

This generally positive picture of staff perceptions of ELC service climate is tempered by considerable differences across individual ELCs (Tables 5.26 and 5.27). Of interest is that ELCs differ *most* on dimensions that were *less* positively rated overall, namely the *management* and *resourcing* dimensions, and they differ *least* on the dimensions that were *more* positively rated overall, namely the *service orientation* dimensions (Tables 5.10, 5.26 and 5.27). The fact that the strongly positive perception of service orientation finds agreement across ELCs may imply that service orientation is a common denominator for ELCs in terms of its function as a service provider attribute that ELCs rely on for the generation of client satisfaction. Service orientation is also a feature of

service provision that may be “easy to come by” in a New Zealand context given the numerous anecdotal but also some research-based reports – such as the client satisfaction findings from this study - of friendliness of New Zealanders towards visitors. This issue is further discussed in Section 6.3.10. The fact that the less positively perceived management and resourcing aspects of the service are subject to strong variation across ELCs would only seem to underline apparent considerable differences between ELCs in terms of manager quality, management practices, and levels of investment in resources.

■ **Management practices**

This descriptor covers the three management-focused areas of *management service practices*, *management communication*, and *management support*. ELC staff disagree most in their ratings of these areas of ELC service climate (Table 5.25, Table 5.30 and Section 6.2.5). Nor do they rate these areas highly compared to most other aspects of ELC service climate (Table 5.10). Nevertheless, a majority of staff still think ELC managers are doing a good job.

Management service practices encompass the traditional manager functions *planning, organising, leading, and controlling* (Fayol, 1949) in a service setting and were cited among Schneider’s (1980) original dimensions of service climate as managerial behaviour. The survey findings show that ELC staff perceive their managers to be doing well in this regard (Table 5.11 and Appendix T). Manager understanding of TESOL work was cited in the focus groups among the ten desirable ELC manager attributes (Table 4.7) but a lack of understanding of TESOL was also perceived to be a barrier to excellent service (Table 4.8). It is therefore notable that ELC staff have such a positive view of this aspect of their managers’ behaviour (Table 5.11 and Appendix T), given some of the negative comments made in the focus groups about managers who were commercially driven and not TESOL focused.

Effective management communication with service staff is a common theme in both the generic climate literature and the service climate literature (e.g.

Kopelmann et al., 1990; Johnson, 1996; Koys & DeCotiis, 1991, and Appendix A) and was included by focus group respondents among several of the desirable ELC manager attributes (Table 4.7). Although ELC staff do not perceive this aspect of ELC manager behaviour as positively as the other two, it is still rated in a neutral to positive range. Staff perceive managers to be fairly effective in terms of keeping them informed about organisational issues but they are more non-committal about how well managers give staff feedback on their performance.

Manager support for service staff is likewise a common services climate theme (Koys & DeCotiis, 1991; Pugh et al., 2002, and Appendix A) and most of the items in this section are reflected in the desirable ELC manager attributes cited in the staff focus groups (Table 4.7). The findings from the survey show that ELC staff perceive that they are receiving good levels of support from their managers, particularly in areas such as encouraging staff, fostering mutual cooperation among staff, and supporting professional development. However, staff perceive that managers do not do such a good job of recognising their efforts in providing superior service (Table 5.13).

■ ***Staff service practices***

ELC staff have a positive view of issues surrounding their own service practices in areas such as skill level, role comprehension and intercollegial communication (Table 5.14). Collegial support helps counter the frustrations and demands of service provision (Zeithaml & Bitner, 1996) and is linked to client satisfaction (Johnson, 1996). The importance to staff of a supportive team environment in ELCs was evident from the high frequency mention of this issue in the staff focus groups (Table 4.2). The survey findings show that ELC staff perceive this to be one of the most positive aspects of service practice in their workplaces (Table 5.14 and Appendix T).

However, staff are less enthusiastic about their potential role as marketers of their organisations. Despite the fact that services best practice suggests that service providers in an organisation should be “part-time marketers” (Gronroos, 1990, p. 141), and although informal marketing was viewed as a key role in the focus groups (Tables 4.2 and 4.6), the survey findings show that, compared to perceptions of other aspects of service practice, there is not such a widespread perception among staff that marketing is part of their role (Table 5.14 and Appendix T). Group comparisons (see Section 6.2.4) indicated differences between staff sub-groups on this issue. Whatever the reason, while ELC staff do not appear to reject a marketing role outright, they do not overwhelmingly see themselves as marketers, a view that is not entirely in concert with the services best practice philosophy cited above.

■ ***Client focus***

Schneider (1980) found customer focus to be closely linked to customer satisfaction. The focus group data (Table 4.2) indicates the importance of this dimension to ELC staff and the survey findings (Table 5.15) confirm that staff perceived a strong, positive client focus in their institutions. Staff have a particularly positive perception of client ability to access staff, response to complaints, the service milieu, ethical matters, and the standard of teaching.

■ ***Service orientation***

The prominence of service orientation as a feature of effective service operations (e.g. Brown et al., 2002; Dale & Wooler 1991; McBride et al., 1997) was reflected in the staff focus group findings, which show that a number of aspects of service orientation are perceived to be essentials of good ELC service (Table 4.6). From the survey findings, service orientation is viewed as the most positive aspect of the ELC service climate (Tables 5.16, 5.17 and 5.18), particularly the staff personal attributes. Staff commitment, personal responsibility, and a concern for client needs and welfare are also strong elements. The findings confirm the presence in ELCs of a healthy provider-

client relationship (Lovelock 1995) in terms of provider empathy and sensitivity; boundary spanning roles (Zeithaml & Bitner, 1996) such as interface and pastoral care/counselling functions; and the ability to establish rapport with clients (Lovelock et al., 1998). This issue is further discussed in Section 6.3.10 below.

■ **Resourcing**

Although *resourcing* received a weak rating relative to the other climate dimensions (Table 5.10), in absolute terms ELC staff perceptions of this dimension border on the positive. This is slightly surprising, given the Question 72 findings (see Section 6.2.2) that ELC staff perceive a lack of equipment and facilities to be number one and inferior teaching resources to be number three among the top ten barriers to superior service (Table 5.22).

The relatively low staff rating of this dimension and the fact that it accounted for the greatest difference between ELCs, leads to the conclusion that resources are not a strong point of service provision in New Zealand ELCs and that there are considerable differences between individual ELCs in terms of the facilities and equipment they possess. The importance of tangibles in service operations is undisputed (Bitner, 1992; Parasuraman et. al, 1988) and the relevance of the issue to clients is further discussed below (Section 6.3.2)

■ **Employment issues**

Management reward and support mechanisms have been traditional dimensions of climate (Kopelman et al., 1990; Litwin & Stringer, 1968). The role of pressure in terms of work demands and time demands have also been acknowledged (Koys & DeCotiis, 1991; Moos, 1974, 1994). The *employment issues* dimension of the services climate survey comprised these areas. Although the staff rating for this dimension was the weakest of the 11 dimensions in the survey (Table 5.10) it was not a negative result and the ELC work environment is still regarded as relatively harmonious. Stress, low pay and

lack of job security are particular concerns (Table 5.19), but teachers and non-teachers have a considerable difference of opinion on the latter item (see Section 6.2.4). The first two of these concerns have been widespread among teachers in the public sector in New Zealand in recent years, resulting in ongoing industrial unrest. Staff in tertiary ELCs are likely to enjoy better pay and conditions than those in private sector ELCs – salary ranges for tertiary English language teachers are likely to be comparable with those of lecturers at the lower- and mid-points of the scale. Considerable numbers of private sector ESOL teachers, however, are likely to be on short-term contracts and even hourly rates, traditionally enjoying less job security and being hired and fired according to cyclical movements in the industry. It remains to be seen whether the current high demand for TESOL courses in New Zealand will lead to improved conditions for such ESOL teachers.

■ ***Estimate of client satisfaction with English language centre service***

Service provider perceptions of customer satisfaction have been shown to be linked to actual client satisfaction with the service (Johnson, 1996; Wiley, 1991). The rationale behind this questionnaire section was to obtain data permitting an exploration of this link and the findings from this exploration are discussed in Section 6.2.7. The weak rating the *estimate* dimension received (Table 5.10) indicates that ELC staff are more pessimistic about their clients' rating of them and the service they provide than they are about most other ELC climate dimensions. The reasons for this pessimism are not clear but may have something to do with the unusual nature of the question, which requires respondents to give their view of what someone else thinks about the performance of the respondents themselves. The 15% drop in response rate for the section is an indication of the difficulty some respondents had in coping with this type of question. Modesty may therefore have played a part. Whatever the reason, ELC staff perceive that clients are most satisfied with the teachers and least satisfied with the facilities (Table 5.21), which is an accurate perception according to the findings from the client survey.

6.2.2 The greatest perceived barriers to the provision of superior ELC service are inadequate facilities and equipment, poor planning and organisation, and inferior teaching resources.

The major barriers cited by staff relate mainly to organisational issues, including resourcing and managerial practices (Table 5.22). Emphasis is commonly placed on the key role of tangibles in the service provision (Bitner, 1992; Schneider & Bowen, 1995). It is therefore notable that ELC staff perceive a lack of suitable facilities and equipment to be, overwhelmingly, the greatest barrier to the provision of superior service, with inferior teaching resources and lack of space also prominent barriers (Table 5.22). This finding from the survey reiterates the staff focus group finding citing a lack of resources as a major barrier (Table 4.2) and reflects the client evaluation of ELC facilities as the poorest aspect of the ELC service from the nine dimensions (Section 6.3.2).

However, as indicated in Section 6.2.1, there appears to be something of a contradiction between this finding and the rating staff gave to resourcing in questions 60-62 of the survey. For instance, in Question 60, as many as 70% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that teaching resources were of a satisfactory standard (Appendix T) but in Question 72 they perceived inferior teaching resources or a lack of teaching resources to be a major barrier to superior service (Table 5.22). Likewise, poor planning and organisation were cited as the second most important barrier to superior service (Table 5.22), but planning and organisation issues were not so negatively perceived in the first three management-focused sections of the survey, about half recording *agree/strongly agree* ratings over 60%. On the other hand, the findings for Question 57 appeared to indicate that poor pay was an issue for ELC staff (Table 5.19 and Appendix T) but according to the findings for Question 72, the pay issue did not figure prominently as a barrier to superior service (Table 5.22).

Staff therefore appear to view some issues positively but simultaneously regard them as barriers to superior service; they view other issues negatively, but simultaneously do not necessarily regard them as barriers to superior service. One explanation for this apparent anomaly may lie in the response rates for the respective questions. Whereas the within-sample response rate for the resourcing questions (Table 5.20) was above 98%, that for Question 72 was 60%. Since the question required respondents to list negative aspects of the service in their opinion, over a third of respondents who perceived no major barriers did not respond.

6.2.3 ELC staff believe the key attributes of superior ELC service to be experienced, qualified teachers, client focus and staff attributes such as teamwork, dedication, and professionalism.

The need for qualified and experienced teachers is overwhelmingly the single most important attribute of superior ELC service in the opinion of staff (Question 73, Table 5.23). This finding highlights the issue of heterogeneity in services (Wright, 1995), that is, the potential for variability in the service provision and thus in the quality of service provided to different groups of clients. The need to reduce this form of heterogeneity was also reflected in the citation by respondents of the hiring of under-qualified staff as a major barrier to superior service provision (Table 5.22) and by the client perceptions of teacher skills (see Sections 6.3.2 and 6.7.2).

As discussed in Chapter 2 (Section 2.2.1), New Zealand does not have a single, common set of nationally recognised minimum qualifications for ESOL teachers in ELCs. In theory, this could mean that a New Zealand ELC could employ a teacher who has no formal qualifications to teach English. The responses to both Question 72 and Question 73 appear therefore to be drawing attention to this issue and indicate that some respondents do feel that underqualified staff are being recruited by their institutions.

A feature of the ranking of desirable items from Question 73 (Table 5.23) is that skills, qualities, and behaviours of ELC staff and managers appear to respondents to be the most important attributes of superior service, whereas organisational and resourcing issues are less important. This finding presents a neat corollary of the rankings from Question 72, since there, staff skills, qualities and behaviours barely figure as barriers (Table 5.22). In other words, in the minds of ELC staff it is mainly organisational issues and managerial practices that prevent them from providing superior service but it is staff skills, qualities, and behaviours that are most likely to facilitate superior service.

6.2.4 There are some significant differences between ELC staff sub-groups in terms of their perceptions of ELC service climate. The differences vary in their extent and their intensity.

Whereas *gender* and *employment status* account for only minimal differences in ELC service climate perception, *area of responsibility* and *length of service* account for more substantial differences. Female staff and full-time staff have a marginally more positive view of a few aspects of ELC service climate than do male staff and part-time staff. Where teachers and non-teaching staff and longer-and shorter-serving staff are concerned, the differences are rather more widespread, the non-teachers and longer servers having the more positive perceptions on about 25% of the survey items.

The greatest differences between teachers and non-teachers are in their perceptions of their managers and their clients (Table 5.24). Non-teachers have a significantly more positive view of management practices and a more optimistic view of how their clients rate them than do the teachers. This finding could indicate that admin staff are more in tune with the organisational side of service operations but less in tune with what their clients think. This would be natural, given that administrators are likely to spend more time with managers, whereas teachers spend more time with clients. Non-teachers also have a significantly greater feeling of job security than do teachers. Service

operations are traditionally beset by unpredictability of demand (Lovelock et al., 1998), which is likely to lead to ELC teachers enjoying less permanent employment conditions than non-teaching staff. In fact, the issue of job security produced (together with perceptions of the marketing role) the largest statistical difference between these two groups. This issue alone may offer a further explanation for the more positive outlook of the non-teachers.

Perceptions of the marketing role constitute a conspicuous point of difference between male and female ELC staff members, female staff being more likely to see staff as involved in marketing than males. Non-teachers and teachers also differed significantly on this issue, teachers being considerably less likely to perceive marketing to be part of ELC staff work (Table 5.24). This finding bears out previous studies that identified a similar lack of commitment to the marketing role on the part of professionals in health (Laing & McKee, 2001), universities and accountancy (Stratemeyer & Hampton, 2001). The teacher/non-teacher split is understandable, given the differing nature of the respective jobs. But it is not clear why there should be such a difference in the male/female view of this issue, particularly as on most other aspects of ELC climate no gender difference can be identified.

Long- and short-term staff perceptions of service climate differ to the same extent as those of the teachers and non-teachers but there are no clear points of focus as far as the content of the differences is concerned. The only overall trend that can be discerned with some confidence is that the longer staff members have been with the ELC, the more positive their perception of the service climate (Figure 5.19). A possible explanation for the difference may lie in the fact that longer-term staff are more likely to be committed to the institution, identify more closely with service practices and indeed may have been involved in developing them.

Although the differences between these groups are, overall, modest, their existence provides support for the existence of collective climates among ELC staff. Rousseau (1988) suggested that climate perceptions could cluster according to employee-related factors such as work experience, location, function, and length of time with the organisation. From the findings reported here, this may be what occurred. In terms of function (i.e. teaching/non-teaching) and length of service, some significant climate perception differences were evident from the data. Although not so marked, the full-time/part-time staff grouping could also account for the existence of collective climate perceptions. It should, however, be noted, that this conclusion is based on the aggregated data for the entire sample and not on data from individual ELCs. Larger staff sample sizes from individual ELCs containing representative numbers of the groups in question would be needed before statistical analysis could more confidently support the existence of collective climates in ELCs.

6.2.5 Staff in individual ELCs demonstrate moderate to strong consensus on the nature of ELC service climate in their institutions. However, levels of consensus vary according to individual climate dimensions.

This conclusion appears to support a *shared perceptions* and *consensus* approach to climate in organisations (Ashforth, 1985; Glick, 1985; Reichers & Schneider, 1990; Schneider et al., 1998), while contradicting the previous conclusion. However, the group differences described in Section 6.2.4 were based on *the aggregated data*. The climate consensus finding, as measured using the r_{wg} index (James et al., 1993), was based on small data sets from those *individual ELCs* that furnished sufficient staff data. The apparent contradiction between these two sets of findings may be explained by this difference because groups such as non-teaching staff made up a very small minority in a number of ELCs. The moderate to strong within-ELC climate consensus reported here (Table 5.30) is very likely based largely on relatively

homogeneous teacher samples. Furthermore, there was moderate to strong variation across ELCs in terms of the level of consensus on service climate.

The fact is that the large sample analysis identified not only quite significant differences but also consistent trend differentiation between at least two of the four groups making up the sample. If large enough samples of these groups had been available in the ELCs studied, and sufficient responses obtained, it is possible that the strong level of consensus in the ELCs indicated by the r_{wg} analysis might not have been sustained. In other words, the data shows that there is organisational consensus on service climate within ELCs but only because relative group sizes in the individual organisations allow there to be. This issue points to the difficulties of carrying out effective climate studies in organisations that have only small populations of employees.

The findings also show that consensus within individual ELCs varies somewhat across climate dimensions. ELC staff agree most on *service orientation* and least on *management* and *employment issues* (Table 5.30). Although the differences are not great, this variation would tend to weaken the argument for a *shared perceptions* approach to ELC climate and provide some support for a *collective climate* scenario.

6.2.6 There are some discernible differences in staff service climate perceptions between tertiary and private ELC staff. However, ELC size has little effect on service climate perceptions.

Significant differences in perception between tertiary and private ELC staff are evident on about one-third of the items in the survey, tertiary staff having a more positive perception than private ELC staff, especially where client focus and staff service ethos are concerned (Table 5.28). In particular, tertiary ELC staff have a stronger perception that clients receive the service they expect from publicity materials and are more likely to receive professional instruction, ethical treatment, and use satisfactory teaching resources (Table 5.29). Staff

commitment to service, feelings of personal responsibility for the service provided, and attention to detail are more evident in tertiary ELCs as far as tertiary staff are concerned, as are an understanding of their service role, empowerment and the skills required for the job (Table 5.28). Apart from these items, tertiary and private ELC staff differ very little in their perceptions of the service climate in their relative organisations. Perceptions of the ways their institutions are managed are not significantly different, nor are their perceptions of employment issues or resourcing in general terms. The only exceptions are a perception of better teaching resources in tertiary ELCs but more stress for staff (Table 5.28).

ELC size, however, has little or no effect on staff perceptions of ELC service climate. Regardless of whether staff work in small, medium, or large ELCs, their perceptions are much the same and the few significant differences that do exist do not point to any particular trends (Section 5.4.5 and Figure 5.21).

Taken together, these findings indicate that institutional type is a moderate determinant of ELC service climate but size is not. The tertiary-private differences may reflect what is anecdotally perceived to be a higher professional standard in the tertiary ELCs, which is likely to impact on issues such as ethics, resourcing, and teacher competence.

6.2.7 ELC staff are broadly aware of what their clients like and do not like about the service. But staff perceive their clients to be more satisfied with the service than they actually are.

Schneider's original study of service climate (1980) and Schneider and Bowen's subsequent research (1985) suggested a close link between service provider and service customer perceptions of service quality. Further confirmation was provided by Johnson (1996) and Wiley (1991) who identified links between service provider estimates of client satisfaction and actual satisfaction. It is therefore of interest to know if a similar link exists in the area of ELC service.

The aggregated data from this study showed that there was some approximation between rankings of ELC staff estimates of client ratings and rankings of actual client satisfaction ratings (Table 5.60), particularly in terms of the most popular and least popular aspects. This implies that ELC staff are broadly aware of what clients like and do not like about the service they provide. However, an examination of the data from individual ELCs and further statistical comparisons tell a different story:

- Staff in approximately three-quarters of ELCs have an inflated perception of how satisfied their clients are with the service they provide (Table 5.61).
- There is a statistically significant and substantial difference between client satisfaction levels and staff estimates of those satisfaction levels (Section 5.5.7).
- Staff have a considerably more positive perception of the quality of specific service items than do clients (Table 5.62). Some sizeable differences relate to key items such as the match between the service description and the actual service provided, the ELC *milieu*, staff availability, staff friendliness, and communication with clients. On only one item out of 10 – facilities – is there broad agreement between staff and clients.

Taken together, these findings do not support the provider-customer satisfaction link described in the services literature. In fact, they appear to indicate a significant gap between the two groups' perceptions of ELC service quality and a possible lack of awareness among staff about how their clients rate them and ELC services.

One explanation for this phenomenon may be found in the client feedback systems used in ELCs. The issue of client feedback was brought up in the client focus groups (Section 4.3.5), some participants reporting that they were not surveyed at all or at inappropriate times such as the end of their course and that cultural inhibitions and a perceived lack of anonymity might prevent them from giving honest opinions. In the subsequent survey, almost a third of

clients expressed disappointment with this aspect of ELC service. There is no data about how often ELCs survey their clients on their satisfaction with the service or whether they actually survey clients at all. Anecdotal evidence bears out the student comments above, implying that feedback procedures may be patchy or non-existent. Findings may lack validity when inappropriate data collection procedures are used. Nor is there evidence that when clients are surveyed by management, the results are necessarily shared with staff.

A further explanation might be a cultural and language divide between the staff and clients of ELCs. There is anecdotal evidence to suggest that many ESOL teachers are monolingual. Admin staff are unlikely to be proficient in client first languages unless they themselves are native speakers. Clients with poor English skills are therefore unlikely to be able to make their feelings known to staff on an ongoing basis and cultural norms might hinder the expression of direct criticisms to staff and management.

Taken together, such factors might very well fuel a lack of awareness among ELC staff about actual client levels of satisfaction with the service.

6.3 CONCLUSIONS ABOUT CLIENT SATISFACTION WITH ENGLISH LANGUAGE CENTRE SERVICE

Research Questions 2 and 4 were

What criteria do clients use to evaluate the service of New Zealand ELCs?

How satisfied are clients with the service provided by New Zealand ELCs?

The answers to these questions were evident in the findings from the focus group and survey research, which were presented in Chapters 4 and 5. In the following sections, a series of conclusions is presented, based on these findings.

6.3.1 Overall, clients are satisfied with the service they get from New Zealand ELCs but they are not delighted.

An examination of the Likert scale means (Table 5.31) using the guidelines suggested in Chapter 3 (Table 3.4) indicates that six of the nine ELC service dimensions can confidently be placed in the *about what I expected* category. Only one dimension – *teachers* – is clearly *better than I expected*. *Admin staff* borders on being *better than I expected* and *facilities* borders on being *worse than I expected*. None of the dimensions falls into *far worse* or *far better than expected* categories. This general finding indicates that ELC clients are expressing *mere satisfaction* (Patterson, 1993) with the service they receive from New Zealand ELCs but there is no overriding expression of delight as would be indicative of a best practice service provision. Client perceptions vary considerably across individual ELCs on a number of satisfaction dimensions. There are also differences between ELC types and among individual groupings within the client sample. These variations should be borne in mind in the discussion of the findings from the global sample.

6.3.2 Clients are most satisfied with the teachers and admin staff and least satisfied with the facilities and the activities programme.

■ *Teaching and admin staff*

The nature of the interaction between the client and front-line service provider can determine the success of the operation in terms of client satisfaction (Czepiel et al., 1985; Normann, 1991). The importance to clients of front-line staff was evident in the focus groups where issues surrounding the teacher had the highest frequency count. The findings from the subsequent survey show that clients are most satisfied with the front-line people who provide the service, that is, the ESOL teachers and the admin staff (Table 5.31).

However, these relatively high ratings are attributable more to client satisfaction with service provider human attributes such as friendliness and helpfulness than to client satisfaction with service provider expertise. As the data showed (Tables 5.32, 5.33, 5.38, 5.39), clients rated both teachers and admin staff high on personal attributes but low on essential job skills. Although admin staff friendliness was ranked top of the dimension, admin staff ability to give the right information was ranked bottom. The fact that friendliness was ranked top of the teacher dimension but teaching skills were ranked bottom indicates a strong ESOL teacher affective base but weak knowledge and experience bases (Richard-Amato, 1996), both of which cover issues such as ESOL teacher qualifications, training and competency in the classroom. ELC clients therefore regard ELC staff, and particularly the teachers, as people who are high on "niceness" but low on the sorts of competencies clients expect from trained, qualified staff.

As discussed in Sections 2.2.1 and 6.2.3, there are no nationally recognised minimum qualifications for ESOL teachers in New Zealand ELCs. Although Haddock (1998) provided some data on the qualifications of TESOLANZ members, these are mainly tertiary staff who comprise probably less than 25%

of the actual national ESOL teacher community. Because no national database exists that records the qualifications of all practising ESOL teachers (W. Oates, NZQA, personal communication, 23 May, 2002) there is no way of knowing to what extent the current national body is actually qualified to teach English. Furthermore, a barrier to superior service cited by staff respondents in the ELC climate survey was the hiring by ELCs of under-qualified teachers (Table 5.22), whereas qualified, experienced teachers were cited as most likely to support superior service (Table 5.23). These observations would appear to complement the low comparative rating by clients of teacher competency. Taken together, these findings imply that there may be an issue surrounding the qualifications and competency of teaching staff in ELCs.

■ **English lessons**

Considering that English lessons constitute *the* core activity in ELCs and the principal reason clients purchase the service, it is notable that the data (Table 5.34) indicates *mere satisfaction* (Patterson, 1993) but not delight with this aspect of the ELC service. Although the methodology and the lesson interest level are satisfactory, clients do not think so highly of the learning materials and perceive the lessons to be low on relevance for them. This implies that clients are satisfied with *how* the lessons are taught, but are less satisfied with *what* they are taught.

The client perception of the mix of nationalities in the class borders on disappointment (Table 5.34), which is not an altogether unexpected finding. Anecdotally, English language learners prefer a culturally diverse learning environment because this provides them with increased opportunities - and in a sense *forces them* - to use English for communication, which can only facilitate their progress. Students who venture overseas are also likely to be interested in learning about other cultures. Indeed, focus group participants cited a mix of cultures and nationalities as one of the desirable characteristics of an ELC (Section 4.3.3 and Table 4.14). The fact is, however, that the New Zealand

ELC population is not that diverse. In 2001, the year the survey was done, only three nationalities – Chinese, South Korean and Japanese – constituted almost 70% of the client population, while these three nationalities made up almost 85% of the sample (Table 5.5). It is not unusual, therefore, for clients belonging to these national groups to find themselves in classes that consist entirely of students from their own country and to react with disappointment.

The data also reveals a differentiated client response to the teacher role vs the manager role in the way lessons are *organised* (Table 5.35). Clients rate teacher-controlled aspects of lessons such as methodology or interest level more highly than manager-controlled aspects such as class size or quality of learning materials. As reported in Chapter 4 (Section 4.2.2), some teachers expressed concern in focus groups about manager control over some aspects of their work, especially when commercial priorities took precedence over TESOL best practice requirements. This particular aspect of the client findings presents some support for this point of view.

■ ***Service procedures***

Overall, clients find service procedures satisfactory as all ratings are within a *mere satisfaction* (Patterson, 1993) range. They are most satisfied with *enrolment* and least satisfied with *complaints* and *homestay administration* (Table 5.36). An issue that arose in client focus groups was the lack of ELC consultation with clients on service quality (Section 4.3.5). As had been shown (Johnson, 1996; Schneider et al., 1992), there are links between a positive climate for service within an organisation and the organisation's solicitation of and responsiveness to customer opinion. Focus group discussion suggested, further (Section 4.3.5), that ELC clients may be culturally inhibited from complaining and some participants felt there should be a number of different pathways for clients to make their problems known to management. The fact that the complaints procedure was rated last out of eight service procedures may be a reflection of these issues. Furthermore, the response rate for this

item dropped by around one-fifth, which might indicate that some respondents were not aware of the existence of such a procedure in their ELCs. As noted in the conclusions on service procedures above, clients are considerably less satisfied with the homestay administration than with the homestay itself. The second-to-last rating of *homestay administration* ($M = 2.86$, Table 5.36) is of note in light of the more positive rating clients gave to *homestay* ($M = 3.26$, Tables 5.31 and 5.40). Clients are therefore more satisfied with the content of the homestay experience than with the way the homestay is organised.

■ **Communication**

As discussed in Chapter 2, service provider communication involves keeping customers informed as well as listening to them (Parasuraman et al., 1985), thus protecting their self esteem and making them feel they are still in control (Schneider & Bowen, 1995). Communication should be accurate and timely not just during, but also prior to, the service (Zeithaml & Bitner, 1996). Service firms should avoid overpromising in marketing communications and under-delivering (Parasuraman et al., 1985).

The overall findings from this study do not provide overwhelming support for the existence of these principles in New Zealand ELCs. ELC communication with clients was a frequently raised issue in the focus groups (Table 4.12) and criticism of this aspect of ELC service was voiced (Section 4.3.7), particularly in terms of disparities between service descriptions or agents' promises and actual service content and quality. The survey findings (Table 5.37) indicate, at best, *mere satisfaction* (Patterson, 1993) with communication. Client ratings for the three aspects of communication surveyed are tightly clustered below the midpoint range, the lowest satisfaction rating being given to ELC communication with clients before their arrival. Clients might initially enquire about and book a language programme with an ELC either directly or through an agent or travel agency in the home country. It is possible that misunderstandings could occur if English is used to communicate with the ELC.

A situation in which a third party such as an agent is communicating on behalf of the ELC also creates potential for misunderstandings and inaccuracies. Whatever the reason, it is clear that effective communication before arrival is not a strong point of ELC service.

■ *Homestay*

Three homestay issues of concern to ELC clients arose in the focus groups, namely opportunities to use English, the homestay *milieu*, and the potential disparity between their desired and actual homestay types (Section 4.3.4). The survey data indicates, overall, *mere satisfaction* (Patterson, 1993) with ELC-organised homestays (Table 5.40), although clients are delighted with host friendliness since they rated this single aspect *better than expected*. Of the three issues raised in the focus groups, client satisfaction with the *milieu* almost borders on delight, but the opportunity to use English and the match with their desired homestay attract lower satisfaction ratings. Clients are least satisfied with the amount of time hosts spend with them, an issue that is also linked to the opportunity to speak English. Given the importance of tangibles to the service provision (Bitner, 1992; Parasuraman et al., 1988), it is notable that clients are satisfied with the physical comfort and the quality of food in the homestay (Table 5.40).

In the clients' minds, therefore, homestays are friendly, fairly comfortable places but hosts simply do not spend enough time with them, particularly in terms of helping them to develop their English skills – an important issue for clients, particularly as some feel that homestay provides a better context than formal lessons for the development of their speaking skills (Section 4.3.4). A glance at the item satisfaction rankings shows that the top three encompass pre-existing properties of the homestay context, namely the personal attributes of the hosts (which determine the atmosphere or *milieu*) and the physical make-up of the home. The amount of time hosts spend with clients, on the other hand, is the hosts' own choice, unless it is formally stated in a host-ELC

agreement or contract. To what extent ELCs do spell this out for hosts and even whether hosts consider spending time with clients to be part of their role are therefore issues of interest. Although some ELCs provide detailed orientations for their host families during which such issues are clarified, other ELCs may not go to such lengths, nor may contracts address the issue clearly enough.

■ **Facilities**

The tangible component of services may influence client satisfaction (Bitner, 1992). The more intangible the service, the more tangible aspects affect customer perceptions of quality (Schneider & Bowen, 1995). Despite this key role of tangibles in services, clients deemed this aspect of ELC service to be least satisfactory. The survey data shows that clients are *merely satisfied* (Patterson, 1993) with basic facilities such as classrooms and toilets, only just satisfied with the student lounge and the library, and dissatisfied with the self access unit and electronic equipment such as tape recorders, video and computers (Tables 5.41, 5.42 and Figure 5.31). The fact that, according to some respondents, their ELCs did not possess some of the equipment they were asked to assess (Section 5.5.2, Dimension 7) is a further comment on the levels of resourcing in some institutions.

Table 6.1 (next page) shows a comparison of frequency rankings of the focus group desired facilities (Table 4.16) compared to satisfaction rankings (Tables 5.41, 5.42). If frequency of mention in the focus groups is taken as some indication of importance to clients of items, these rankings (Table 6.1) suggest an almost inverse relationship – the more important the item, the lower client levels of satisfaction appear to be. Audio equipment such as tape recorders constitutes the most fundamental piece of electronic equipment for a language teaching operation. Yet this is the facility category ELC clients are least satisfied with (Table 5.42). ELC clients expect internet access to be an integral part of the service they are purchasing (Section 4.3.6 and Figure 4.2) yet the item

computers received the third worst satisfaction rating (Table 5.42). Statistical analysis found that the item *self-access unit* is a secondary predictor of both client satisfaction and a willingness to recommend the ELC (Table 5.59), yet clients are dissatisfied with this facility too.

Table 6.1

Comparison of Focus Group and Survey Rankings for Facilities/Equipment

FACILITY OR EQUIPMENT ITEM	FOCUS GROUP FREQUENCY RANKING	SURVEY SATISFACTION RANKING
Access to computers and internet	1	4
Video equipment	2=	5
Audio equipment	2=	6
Kitchen/client lounge	3	2
Library/study facilities	5=	3
Facilities in general (incl. classrooms, toilets)	5=	1

Overall, clients are disappointed with the quality of the *facilities* in their ELCs. As pointed out in Chapter 2, the *servicescape* of an ELC may also be instrumental in providing clients with an effective learning environment (Section 2.2.4). The perceived deficits reported here may therefore have an additional negative impact on the quality of the *learning* aspect of the service provided by ELCs.

■ **Activities**

The exclusion of the activities programme from the top ten focus group issues (Table 4.12) appears to indicate the relative unimportance for respondents of what is usually an optional part of the ELC offering. In fact ELC-organised activities were barely mentioned by focus group participants as an issue affecting their perception of service quality. An approximate 32% drop in the response rate for this dimension in the survey implies that only about two-thirds of respondents took part in activities or had an opinion about them. From

the survey findings, clients are *merely satisfied* (Patterson, 1993) with activities but place them at the lower end of the mid-range, that is, eighth out of the nine satisfaction dimensions (Table 5.31). Clients find most satisfactory the *variety* and the *information* provided about activities. The least satisfactory aspect is the *value for money* of the programme (Table 5.43).

■ **General**

A number of findings from the regression analysis confirmed the importance of the *general* dimension as an overall predictor of client satisfaction (Table 5.58), so it is notable that clients regard items such as the *physical comfort*, the *organisation* and the *mix of students* as satisfactory but only just (Table 5.44). Clients are clearly dissatisfied with one item, *value for money* (Table 5.44).

The importance of the human factor in the success of the service provision has already been stated, particularly in terms of the attitudes, skills, and emotional labour of service providers (Lovelock, 1995), a secure, unthreatening environment, the maintenance of client self-esteem and fair treatment within a positive service *milieu* (Schneider & Bowen, 1995). The focus group findings indicated that ELC atmosphere or *milieu* is an important issue for ELC clients (Table 4.12, Section 4.3.3 and Table 4.14). The survey findings show that while clients view ELC *milieu* as satisfactory (Table 5.44), placing it top of the items in the *general* dimension, there is not as clear an expression of delight as might have been desired for such a key aspect of the service.

ELC clients clearly do not think they are getting value for money from the ELC programmes they have purchased, despite the perceived relative inexpensiveness of New Zealand TESOL courses (ELICOS Association, 1997) compared to those of the other major provider nations. None of the data from the client focus groups or survey offered a specific explanation for this phenomenon and further research is required to explore it more fully.

One critically important issue for ELC clients is their rate of improvement in English, since the fundamental purpose of such a language course - and the core service for which clients are paying - is to raise their English proficiency levels. Although this issue was never directly raised by focus group participants, this was probably because it was such an obvious outcome that its importance was taken for granted. The questionnaire item asked respondents about their rate of improvement in English language proficiency *in their opinion* (Appendix I, Question 72), thus placing emphasis on their impressions, independent of any objective assessment. The data shows that clients are *merely satisfied* (Patterson, 1993) and their rating for this item is low, bordering on dissatisfaction (Table 5.44).

This finding should be seen in the light of comments in the staff focus groups about the unrealistic expectations of ELC clients regarding their rate of language proficiency gain (Section 4.2.2) and it is possible this is the reason for the finding reported here. Within a service operation, the *management* of customer expectations is important (Lovelock et al., 1998). However, it is not clear to what extent ELCs manage their clients' expectations by, for instance, clarifying prior to and on arrival at the ELC what a particular programme can and cannot achieve for a client in terms of proficiency gain or the client's own role in terms of developing vital self-directed learning behaviours.

6.3.3 Just over half of ELC clients would recommend their ELC to a friend. One-third of clients would not recommend. Willingness to recommend varies with age and nationality.

Satisfied clients are potential marketers for service organisations like ELCs through the spread of positive WOM (Dawes et al., 1992; Hall, 1996; Kingman-Brundage, 1994; Soutar et al., 1994; Swanson & Kelley, 2001). A measure of client willingness to recommend is therefore a key indicator both for individual ELCs and for the TESOL industry. The survey findings show that 56% of ELC clients surveyed said they would be willing to recommend their ELC (Figure

5.34), 34% said they would not, while 10% did not respond. However, accurate interpretation of this result is difficult without comparable data from a range of similar studies. An ELICOS survey (ELICOS Association, 1997) provided client recommendation data but did not report non-responses. If only valid responses from this study were taken into account, (i.e. 56% of 90%), a recommendation rate of 62% would result. This is identical to the reported ELICOS data (Table 6.2) and would appear to lend some credibility to the finding. However, the ELICOS figures are six years old. Findings from the most recent ELICOS survey are confidential to members and it was not possible to access this data at the time of writing.

While expectation of 100% client willingness to recommend is unrealistic, the fact is that almost 45% of respondents in this study either would not recommend their ELC or did not know if they would or not. Some ELC managers might find this acceptable and others may find it disappointing. Further research is indicated to obtain more perspective on the significance of differing client recommendation rates.

Table 6.2

Percentage of Clients Willing to Recommend New Zealand and Australian ELCs

	WOULD NOT RECOMMEND		WOULD RECOMMEND	
	THIS STUDY (NZ)	ELICOS 96 (AUS)	THIS STUDY (NZ)	ELICOS 96 (AUS)
Overall (valid)	38	38	62	62
Korean	44.5	51	55.5	49
Japanese	24	42	76	58
Taiwanese	35	38	65	62
Thai	26	27	74	73
Swiss	21	25	79	75

The recommendation data also showed that while *gender* and *length of time* in the ELC have little or no effect (Section 5.5.3 and Figure 5.40), a *client's age* and *nationality* significantly influence client willingness to recommend (Figures 5.36 and 5.38). Clients over 40 and from the miscellaneous "Other" national group are *most* likely to recommend and clients in their twenties and from P.R. China are *least* likely to recommend. The nationality findings are also comparable with the ELICOS survey (ELICOS Association, 1997), although no P.R. China clients were included in the latter. Table 6.2 shows that there is a good degree of correspondence between the two sets of statistics, with the exception of those for Japanese clients.

6.3.4 Client age and nationality have a significant influence on client levels of satisfaction with ELCs. However, client gender and the length of time a client spends in the ELC have only minor effects on satisfaction ratings.

Peterson and Wilson (1992) suggested that customer satisfaction levels could be dependent on customer age. Homburg and Giering's (2001) findings from a retail context supported this view empirically. The findings reported here provide further support by showing that that age is a significant influence on client satisfaction with ELC service (Figure 5.35). Clients in the 40-plus age group are most satisfied, followed closely by teenage clients, then by clients in their thirties, while those in their twenties are least satisfied with the service (Figure 5.35). The greatest differences between age groups relate to satisfaction with teachers and English lessons (Section 5.5.3). A similar pattern is evident in client willingness to recommend an ELC (Figure 5.36) as discussed in section 6.3.3. Why client satisfaction should be differentiated by age group is moot and further research is indicated to find an explanation for these differences.

The fact that customer satisfaction can depend on nationality or national culture was cited in Chapter 2 as a recurring theme in the services literature

(e.g. Espinoza, 1999; Johnson et al., 2002; Ueltschy & Krampf, 2001). The findings reported here provide further empirical support in terms of ELC service because significant differences were identified between the major national groupings on almost all survey items. Swiss clients are most satisfied with their ELC experience and Korean clients are least satisfied (Table 5.45). "Other" clients are most likely to recommend their ELCs and PR China clients are least likely to recommend (Figure 5.38). Client national groupings differ most on their perception of whether or not they are getting value for money from their ELC programmes. Again, it is not clear why these national differences should exist. It may be that European learning styles are more akin than Asian styles to those pertaining in New Zealand institutions. European clients may have a better basis for proficiency gain through better acquaintance with English and their expectations may be more realistic. However, these possible explanations are in the realm of speculation. Again, more research is indicated to find reasons for these differences.

Homburg and Giering (2001) found that gender was not a key predictor of client satisfaction with product quality and service in a German consumer context. A similar result is evident in this study: only minor differences are discernable between male and female clients in terms of their satisfaction with New Zealand ELCs and no differences exist in terms of a recommendation (Section 5.5.5). The vast majority of ELC clients are of Asian origin. Further research is therefore indicated on large samples from other national groups to investigate whether this finding is also valid for non-Asian clients.

Bateson (2002) and Söderlund (2002) suggested that higher customer familiarity with a service is likely to lead to greater satisfaction. If it is assumed that clients need time to become familiar with the service, the findings reported here do not provide strong support for this view as significant increases in ELC client satisfaction over time could not be identified. In fact, although no significant change in satisfaction levels is apparent for most survey items,

around 25% of items demonstrate a significant, gradual decrease in satisfaction levels over time (Figure 5.39). Such a finding might be more in tune with the anecdotal opinion that a client's perception's of ELC service might go through a "honeymoon" phase in the first couple of weeks when everything is new and then deteriorate as the realities of the situation became more apparent. However, this can be seen only as a minor trend here and satisfaction levels overall barely change. As reported (Section 2.2.4), there is anecdotal evidence that dissatisfied clients switch ELCs once they are in New Zealand, which would present a possible explanation for this phenomenon: satisfied clients remain with an ELC but dissatisfied clients leave or switch.

6.3.6 Clients in tertiary ELCs are marginally more satisfied with the service and marginally more likely to recommend than clients in private ELCs.

The importance to ELC clients of the ESOL teacher and of tangible aspects of the ELC service is evident from the focus group findings (Table 4.12). Tertiary ELC clients are significantly more satisfied with the teachers, facilities, and general aspects of the service than non-tertiary clients are with these dimensions of private ELC service (Figure 5.41 and Table 5.46). The largest differences in satisfaction with individual facilities pertain to the library, the self-access unit and audio/video equipment (Table 5.46). Anecdotally, tertiary ELCs may be better resourced than many private ELCs, particularly in terms of major facilities like libraries, and the findings may reflect this advantage.

6.3.7 Clients in small ELCs are more satisfied and more likely to recommend than clients in medium-sized and large ELCs.

Data analysis shows that client satisfaction is highest in small ELCs, lowest in large ELCs, and moderate in medium-sized ELCs (Section 5.5.4, Figure 5.43). Clients in small ELCs are more likely to recommend and those in medium-sized and large ELCs share the same recommendation rate (Figure 5.44). However, whereas variation in levels of client satisfaction is widespread, effect sizes are

not large. The largest differences between ELCs of different size pertain to atmosphere or *milieu*, the opportunity to meet students from different countries, and opportunities to use English. The issue of ELC size was not directly discussed in the focus groups but there were indirect indications of client preferences for an intimate learning environment. These included the importance of the *milieu* (Table 4.12) and in particular the perception of the ELC as “a family home” (Table 4.14), individual assistance and availability on the part of teachers (Table 4.3) and the wish that ELCs be personally interested in clients as people and not just as an income source (Section 4.3.9). It seems, therefore, that, with their particular style of service provision, small ELCs are able to do a marginally better job of satisfying clients than medium-sized and large ELCs.

6.3.8 Client satisfaction with ELC service varies significantly according to ELC location within New Zealand.

Wellington ELC clients are the most satisfied group followed in order by the North Island provinces, the South Island provinces and Christchurch; the least satisfied ELC clients are in Auckland (Table 5.47). A similar pattern applies to the willingness to recommend (Figure 5.45). This finding has to be treated, however, with some caution. All three Wellington ELCs surveyed are tertiary-owned and in the medium to small size range. All 12 Auckland ELCs are privately-owned with a good spread across the three size categories. In addition, all North Island and South Island provincial ELCs are small. As already shown, small to medium-sized and tertiary ELC clients are more satisfied than large and private ELC clients (Sections 6.3.6 and 6.3.7). This location finding is therefore likely to be somewhat influenced by variations in the other ELC criteria. Nevertheless, it is an indicator of a general trend: clients in small, tertiary ELCs in Wellington are most satisfied with ELC service and clients in large, privately-owned ELCs in Auckland least satisfied.

6.3.9 There is a close link between client satisfaction with ELC service and the willingness to recommend an ELC.

Services research shows that satisfied customers are more likely to spread positive WOM about a service firm (Dubrovski, 2001; Lovelock et al., 1998; Swanson & Kelley, 2001). The findings from the current research support this view since comparison of the primary and secondary predictors of client satisfaction and the willingness to recommend revealed widespread correspondences (Table 5.59). Also, the satisfaction and recommendation data was seen to be highly correlated (Section 5.5.6). Client willingness to recommend an ELC can therefore be termed an indirect indicator of satisfaction: the more satisfied clients are with ELC service, the more they tend to be willing to recommend the ELC to a friend.

6.3.10 Although human aspects of the ELC service are highly rated by both staff and client respondents, it is not human aspects that most influence client satisfaction but managerial and professional expertise and effectiveness.

The human dimension is traditionally regarded as vital to the success of the service process (Lovelock et al. 1998; Normann, 1984). The findings from the satisfaction survey showed that client respondents repeatedly gave a high rating to the human aspects of the ELC service such as provider personal attributes. For instance, *friendliness* was the top ranked item in the *teachers*, *admin staff*, and *homestay* dimensions (Tables 5.33, 5.39 and 5.40). At the same time, the climate survey findings showed that staff had a very positive perception of the human aspects of the service climate, giving the three *service orientation* dimensions exceptionally high ratings (Tables 5.16, 5.17, and 5.18).

These findings notwithstanding, it is apparent from the regression analysis that human aspects are not actually strong predictors of client satisfaction with ELC service (Tables 5.54 and 5.55) or the willingness to recommend (Tables 5.49 and 5.50). For instance, although teachers are perceived as very friendly, it is

not the friendliness of the teachers but their teaching skills that are most likely to lead to a recommendation (Table 5.49). Homestay families are similarly rated high on friendliness but it is in fact the opportunity to speak English with them that actually satisfies clients (Table 5.54) and makes them more likely to recommend the ELC (Table 5.49).

These human aspects of the service are closely linked to service orientation – the friendly, helpful, human face of the service provision (Hogan, 1992, cited in Cran, 1994; Saxe and Weitz, 1982; Schneider, 1980). Much has been made of the importance of service orientation in the services management literature (Dale & Wooler, 1991; McBride et al., 1993; Sanchez & Fraser, 1993). More recent research continues to point to the importance of service provider attributes and behaviours associated with service orientation (e.g. Baydoun et al., 2001; Brown et al., 2002; Burchell et al., 1999; Butcher et al., 2003; Chandrasekhar, 2001; Neng-Pai et al., 2001). A positive service orientation among service providers has been seen to be a key component of an effective service operation, helping to engender customer satisfaction and loyalty. However, the findings from this study show that although the service orientation component of the ELC service provision is highly rated both by ELC staff and clients, service orientation does not actually play a prominent role in satisfying clients or encouraging them to recommend an ELC.

On the contrary, the prime movers here appear to be the organisational and professional aspects of the service. For instance, among the predictors of client satisfaction and willingness to recommend, the emphasis is on organisation (e.g. class composition, organisation of activities, overall organisation of the ELC) and effectiveness (e.g. accuracy of information, ability to give information, effectiveness of lessons) of the service programme (Table 5.59). Good organisation is also prominent in the ability of the ELC to place clients in the type of homestay they requested, or the ability to produce publicity materials containing accurate information (Table 5.59). Professionalism and skills also

figure prominently, e.g. communication skills, the ability to give information requested, or teaching skills (Table 5.59).

The findings therefore appear to challenge Cran's (1994) views regarding the importance of personality over technical skills and academic qualifications as well as the general thrust of the studies cited above, at least as far as client satisfaction with ELCs is concerned. Although employers may cite service orientation as a key graduate competency and focus on applicants' personalities (Burchell et al., 1999), it seems that, as far as ELC service is concerned, managerial and "technical" skills as well as academic and professional expertise are actually more important to clients than service orientation. Curiously, this conclusion receives some support from Johnson's (1996) findings, although his climate study was done in a completely different area. He found that out of eight service climate dimensions that correlated with client satisfaction, service orientation was the weakest (Table 2.13).

It should also be noted that two of the main barriers to the provision of superior service cited by staff respondents (Table 5.22) were poor planning and organisation and inappropriate staffing practices such as the hiring of under-qualified staff. Additionally, *professional* and *staff skills* (particularly teacher skills) criteria were highly ranked in the staff "wish list" of attributes of superior service (Table 5.23). Taken together with the client data, these findings suggest that there is some consensus between staff and clients on the importance of this organisational skills/professionalism dimension of ELC service practice.

The findings could also be an indication that both *the human resources trap* (Schneider & Bowen, 1995) and the phenomenon of *friendly incompetence* (Section 2.2.4) are present in New Zealand ELCs. Institutions could be compensating for a lack of technical skills, training, professional qualifications, and organisational know-how among their staff by relying on the human,

service orientation aspects of the service such as friendliness, helpfulness and the fostering of a pleasant *milieu*. The implication is that while clients acknowledge the latter set of criteria, it is actually the former that they are looking for in ELC service.

6.3.11 A number of specific service areas can be identified as predictors of client satisfaction with ELC service. However, clients do not rate New Zealand ELCs highly in the very areas that are most likely to produce client satisfaction.

The findings from the regression analysis showed that for eight of the nine satisfaction dimensions, direct and indirect (willingness to recommend) client satisfaction had primary and/or secondary predictors in common (Table 5.59).

These predictors are:

- Teaching skills;
- Mix of nationalities in class;
- Accuracy of information in publicity materials;
- Admin staff ability to give information;
- Opportunity to speak English with host family;
- Quality of classrooms;
- Organisation of activities programme;
- Encouragement to achieve goals.

No common predictor could be identified for the *service procedures* dimension. These, then, are the specific service issues that are most likely to lead to client satisfaction with ELC service and to the client recommending their ELC to a friend. However, the ranking of these variables according to the survey findings on satisfaction (Tables 5.56 and 5.57) and willingness to recommend (Tables 5.51 and 5.52) shows that, in practice, clients do not rate them highly. For instance, among the primary predictors of client satisfaction (Table 5.56), two key items ranked bottom of their dimensions (teaching skills, mix of nationalities), two ranked second-bottom (teacher availability, accuracy of

information in publicity materials), while only one (classrooms) ranked top of its dimension and one, second-top (enquiries procedure). The other items had low rankings.

These findings appear to indicate that New Zealand ELCs are underperforming on the very service issues that most influence both direct and indirect client satisfaction.

6.4 CONCLUSIONS ABOUT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ENGLISH LANGUAGE CENTRE SERVICE CLIMATE AND CLIENT SATISFACTION WITH ENGLISH LANGUAGE CENTRE SERVICE

Research Question 5 was:

Is there a link between the service climate of New Zealand ELCs and levels of client satisfaction with New Zealand ELC service?

This section provides an answer to this question.

6.4.1 There is a link between ELC service climate and client satisfaction. As a general trend, the more positive the staff perception of the ELC service climate, the greater the client satisfaction with the service.

Linkage research has focused on examining possible links between service climate and client satisfaction (e.g. Johnson, 1996; Schmit & Allsheid, 1995; Schneider, 1980; Tornow & Wiley, 1991; Wiley, 1991, 1996). The findings reported here support the existence of such a link. This conclusion is supported by the comparative rankings of individual ELCs on service climate and client satisfaction (Tables 5.65 and 5.66) and by the statistical analysis, which demonstrated low to moderate, positive correlations between service climate perceptions and client satisfaction at the dimensional and individual variable level (Tables 5.67, 5.68 and 5.69). Similar correlations were observed between service climate data and client recommendation data at the dimension and individual level (Tables 5.70 and 5.71) and, as was previously reported, the client satisfaction and recommendation data was found to be highly correlated (Section 5.5.6). These findings therefore indicate that the greater the perceived climate quality, the greater the client satisfaction with the service.

In order to avoid oversimplification, however, a number of limitations of this conclusion need to be stated. First, it should be remembered that correlations are not predictors but merely indicators of a relationship. Furthermore, correlations are *summary statistics* and great care has to be taken in their

interpretation (de Vaus, 2002). In addition, over-reliance on significance values in conjunction with correlations may be unwise in certain circumstances and researchers are encouraged to complement inferential statistics with *descriptive measures* (de Vaus, 2002) before drawing firm conclusions about the data.

The moderate, positive correlation between ELC staff estimates of client satisfaction and actual client satisfaction is a case in point ($r = .62$, Table 5.68). This finding might lead some to the conclusion that when staff *perceive* high levels of client satisfaction, clients indeed enjoy high levels of satisfaction. But, if de Vaus's (2002) advice is heeded (and as discussed in Section 6.2.7) a comparison of the staff estimate and the actual client evaluation for each ELC, that is, the descriptive measures, showed that in around 72% of cases, the staff estimate was too high (Table 5.61) and statistical analysis showed that the difference between the two sets of data was significant (Section 5.5.7). Although staff estimates and client satisfaction were moderately, positively correlated, most staff did not accurately predict levels of client satisfaction with their ELC's service. Comparison of key individual variable data from both the service climate and satisfaction surveys revealed sizeable differences (Table 5.62), lending further support to these findings.

Besides, an examination of the descriptive data in terms of the respective global means shows that while staff perceptions of the service climate are fairly positive ($M = 3.72$, Section 5.4.1), client satisfaction operates at a considerably more modest level ($M = 3.08$, Section 5.5.1).

Although client satisfaction may increase as perceived service climate quality increases, therefore, a high level of service climate quality does not necessarily translate into high levels of client satisfaction in absolute terms, as far as ELC service is concerned.

6.4.2 The ELC service climate dimension most closely associated with both client satisfaction and the willingness to recommend is *client focus*. A number of specific climate variables are strongly associated with both client satisfaction and the willingness to recommend.

An outcome of the correlational studies was the identification of the strongest correlations in terms of both dimensions and individual variables between ELC service climate on the one hand and client satisfaction and client willingness to recommend on the other. The dimensions *estimate of client satisfaction* and *client focus* correlated most strongly with satisfaction and recommendation respectively. *Client focus* constituted the strongest correlation common to both the satisfaction and recommendation data (Tables 5.68 and 5.70). This suggests that *client focus* is the service climate dimension most closely associated with combined direct and indirect indicators of ELC client satisfaction.

Evaluating this finding in terms of the few existing service climate/client satisfaction studies is problematical, however, due to the use of different methodologies, service dimensions/dimension terminology and service types (Johnson, 1996; Schneider, 1980; Schneider & Bowen, 1985; Wiley, 1991). A comparison between the service climate/direct satisfaction correlation rankings from this study (Table 5.68) with Johnson's (1996) findings on service climate and client satisfaction, for instance (Table 6.3, next page), demonstrates more differences than correspondences. One striking similarity between the two studies, however, relates to *service orientation*, which does not have a high ranking in either data set. This finding appears to support the conclusions about ELC service in 6.3.10 referring to the relative lack of importance of service orientation as a predictor of customer satisfaction.

Table 6.3

***Comparison of Service Climate Correlations With Client Satisfaction
(Johnson, 1996 and this study)***

RANK	JOHNSON (1996)	RANK	THIS STUDY
1	Information seeking from customers/ employees about service quality	1	Estimate of client satisfaction
2	Training	2=	Client focus
3	Rewards and recognition for excellent service	2=	Manager support (e.g. rewards, recognition, professional development)
4=	Service strategy	2=	Employment issues
4=	Estimate of customer satisfaction	5	Level of resourcing
6	Service systems, i.e. established policies and procedures	6	Staff concern for clients (service orientation)
7=	Service support i.e. cooperation and teamwork between units	7	Management communication
7=	Employee service orientation	8=	Management service practices (e.g. service strategy, leadership)
		8=	Staff personal attributes (service orientation)
		8=	Staff service practices (e.g. cooperation and communication)
		11	Staff service ethics (service orientation)

In terms of individual service climate variables that were highly correlated with overall client satisfaction, the satisfaction and recommendation data were found to have five in common (Tables 5.69 and 5.71). These variables are:

1. Management makes an effort to remove obstacles to the delivery of superior service.
2. Clients experience a relaxed, friendly service environment.
3. The service clients receive closely matches that in publicity materials.
4. Management shares with staff client feedback on service quality.
5. Staff actively support and encourage client efforts to achieve their English language goals.

As previously emphasised, correlations do not indicate causality. However, this finding does suggest that these five specific service climate issues are the ones most closely associated with both direct and indirect client satisfaction with ELC service. Overall client satisfaction therefore appears more likely when ELC management removes obstacles to excellent service, shares client feedback with staff, promotes a positive service milieu, and ensures that publicity materials depict the ELC service honestly, and when staff actively support and encourage clients. It is also noteworthy that two of these five, the match between the actual service and the descriptions in publicity materials and staff encouragement, were also among the eight predictors of client satisfaction (Section 6.3.11).

6.5 CONCLUSIONS ABOUT THE METHODOLOGY

The experiences gained during this study provide the basis for several conclusions about the research methodology used.

6.5.1 The research experience supports the use of specific research techniques for a second language context.

The client satisfaction survey was carried out in a second language context and a number of specific techniques were found to be appropriate. Client focus group participants were asked to prepare the broad discussion areas in advance. The facilitator moderated his questioning style to suit second-language speakers in the client focus groups. The satisfaction questionnaire was translated into the first languages of the client respondents. The client data was personally collected by the researcher in order to diminish respondent inhibition and enhance the validity of the data. The inclusion of these techniques within the research design contributed to some significant research outcomes.

6.5.2 The disconfirmation scale was an appropriate choice for the collection of client satisfaction data.

Reported strengths of this scale included correction of the skewness often seen in satisfaction data and high reliability (Danaher & Haddrell, 1996; Devlin et al., 1993; Rust et al., 1994). This study confirmed these findings, as the scale demonstrated strong internal consistency and no evidence of overall skewness (Table 5.8, Section 5.3.2). Furthermore, in terms of psychological-semantic principles, client respondents had no problems working with a scale based on a comparison of their expectations with their actual perceptions and used as a reference point for providing satisfaction ratings (Patterson et al., 1998).

A further advantage of the scale is that there is no neutral category. In placing large numbers of responses in this category, the ELICOS (1997) survey's satisfaction scale provided little clarity about the opinions of these respondents.

With the disconfirmation scale, by comparison, respondents are either *dissatisfied*, *satisfied* or *delighted*. The disconfirmation scale, therefore, as used in this study, produced a more complete, usable set of data than the satisfaction scale might have done.

|| **6.5.3 Questions remain over the service climate survey scale.**

The main part of the service climate questionnaire used the conventional Likert agree/disagree format. The data demonstrated high reliability for the scale but the data was mildly skewed (Table 5.6 and Section 5.3.1). This may simply represent a valid response to the questionnaire items. Nevertheless, this aspect of the climate instrument remains a concern.

|| **6.5.4 The climate methodology was unable to produce definitive findings about climate consensus in organisations.**

Although the r_{wg} analysis of the service climate appeared to indicate good levels of consensus within ELCs (Table 5.30), other descriptive and inferential data seemed to indicate the existence of collective climates (Rousseau, 1988; Young & Parker, 1999) (Section 6.2.5). Considerable variation in climate consensus across dimensions was also observed. ELCs are good examples of institutions with heterogeneous staff populations that may lend themselves to differentiated rather than shared climate perceptions (e.g. Reichers & Schneider, 1990). However, service climate theory as it currently stands does not adequately acknowledge such heterogeneous contexts.

|| **6.5.5 Climate data analysis is hampered by small samples.**

A key characteristic of the organisational staff populations surveyed in this research project was their small size. Although recent research has used small staff sample sizes (Andrews & Rogelberg, 2001), much of the published research on climate has been based on larger sample sizes per firm than those possible in this study. Schneider's original (1980) research, for instance, had a sample size of 263 employees from one firm – approximately the same size as

the staff sample in this study from 30 different firms. Johnson's (1996) staff sample from one bank was 538. ELCs participating in this study reflected the New Zealand business context in which small-and-medium-sized enterprises predominate. This did not present a problem in terms of the qualitative phase of the research but it did affect the quantitative phase as the small staff populations ($M = 19.6$) made it difficult to ensure a response rate that would make data analysis reliable. Several ELCs had to be excluded from statistical tests because of their low response rate. Measuring climate in organisations with small staff populations continues to present problems.

6.6 CONCLUSIONS ABOUT THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

The detailed conclusions covered in the previous section have suggested answers to the research problem that was stated in Chapter 1, namely:

Nothing is known about English language centre service climate in New Zealand or about levels of client satisfaction with English language centre service in New Zealand.

The previous chapter demonstrated that a number of conclusions can now be drawn. In terms of service climate and client satisfaction in New Zealand ELCs, the research project was able to

- provide insights into what constitutes service climate;
- provide a detailed account of the nature of service climate as perceived by non-managerial staff;
- identify the key service areas that are important to the clients;
- provide a detailed account of levels of client satisfaction with the service;
- demonstrate a link between the service climate and levels of client satisfaction with the service.

6.7 IMPLICATIONS

The conclusions presented in the previous sections provide the basis for a number of implications.

|| 6.7.1 Implications for management theory

■ ***Research techniques for second-language contexts***

Specific research techniques may enhance the effectiveness of research projects conducted in second language contexts.

■ ***The use of the disconfirmation scale***

The disconfirmation scale is recommended for the collection of client satisfaction data. The scale also appears appropriate when used in a multilingual format for respondents from various language backgrounds.

■ ***Refinement of service climate instrument***

Work is required to further refine and develop a viable instrument for the collection of service climate data in ELCs through, for instance, factor analysis.

■ ***Exploration of collective climates***

The possible existence of collective climates in organisations merits further exploration within the ongoing development of climate theory.

■ ***Climate research with small populations***

More attention could be given to developing a theory of climate measurement and a data collection methodology in organisations with small staff populations.

6.7.2 Implications for policy

These implications apply to government bodies, government-sponsored bodies, and private sector TESOL industry bodies and are particularly relevant in light of the growing importance of the TESOL sector to the national economy.

■ *Need for more research into New Zealand English language centres*

The development of policies supporting institutional and industry body research into ELC practice in New Zealand is indicated. Statistics New Zealand and Education New Zealand collect only basic demographic data on clients and revenue data. Although TESOLANZ has done some work in this area, more information is needed about ELCs, staff and clients. Staff data could include demographic data, qualification data, and data on workloads, resourcing, and remuneration. Client data could include demographic, satisfaction, and intention data, along the lines of the ELICOS surveys in Australia (ELICOS Association, 1997).

■ *Review of ESOL teacher mandatory qualifications*

Attention should be given to a review of the regulations pertaining to mandatory qualifications for teachers in ELCs to bring New Zealand into line with other leading TESOL countries such as Britain and Australia, thus ensuring that English teachers in New Zealand ELCs are actually qualified to teach English as a second language. Serious consideration should be given to whether ELC teachers in New Zealand should have, as a minimum requirement, a first stage TESOL qualification, such as a Cert. TESOL or equivalent. This, in turn, would imply a need to expand ESOL training opportunities within New Zealand.

6.7.3 Implications for practice

The study reported on here investigated service management in ELCs. The bulk of the conclusions have implications for ELC service management practice. The following points combine insights from examination of both the staff and client data and aim to support a positive service climate with a view to improving and maintaining client satisfaction with ELC service. These implications are organised according to Schneider and Bowen's (1995) three-tier model of service organisations (Section 2.2.6). It will be seen from the following that the bulk of implications are in the Coordination Tier area, that is relate to management coordination of overall service activities.

CUSTOMER TIER: FOCUS ON CLIENT EXPECTATIONS, NEEDS, COMPETENCIES

■ *Strategic management of client expectations*

A strategic approach to management of client expectations is indicated, especially in respect of what the ELC service can do for a client's English language proficiency. This would involve, for instance, not only establishing client needs through a proficiency check but also effective orientation of clients to the particular teaching methodology of the institution, as well as clarification of client goals, so that clients understand how the service can fulfill those needs and thus meet their expectations.

■ *Awareness of client wants, needs, and competencies*

An awareness on the part of management and staff of potential conflict between client wants and client needs could lead to strategies to deal effectively with the issue. An accurate knowledge of client competencies prior to commencement of the English language course is required to ensure that learning strategies are targetted to the particular needs of the client.

■ *Honouring promises made to clients*

ELCs should ensure they honour promises made to clients by agents and in publicity materials, particularly in terms of the programmes and facilities of the ELC and the type of homestay requested by the client.

BOUNDARY TIER: FOCUS ON SERVICE-PROVIDER/CLIENT INTERACTION

■ *English language centre milieu*

ELC management and staff should foster a friendly, pleasant ELC atmosphere in which clients can feel comfortable and secure.

■ *English language centre - client communication*

There is a need to improve the level of communication between ELC and client, especially before client arrival. ELCs should ensure that information provided to clients by agents and in publicity materials is accurate and gives an honest picture of the ELC and its programmes.

■ *English Lessons*

- **Content relevance:** A review of the relevance to clients of English lesson content seems indicated. This would involve exploring text-book relevance and introducing a degree of flexibility into the curriculum.
- **Client national mix:** ELCs have to ensure a better mix of nationalities and cultures in classes if they want to meet client expectations in this regard.

■ *Homestay*

- **Family time with client:** ELCs should clarify for both the host family and client how much time the host family is expected to spend with the client.
- **Opportunity to use English:** Clients should have greater opportunity to use English and obtain help with English in the homestay situation.

■ *Client activities programme*

This should be interesting, well-organised, and represent value for money.

■ *Client feedback*

It is advisable to secure regular and timely feedback from clients on their levels of satisfaction with the ELC service. Data collection should be conducted by third parties to ensure client confidentiality and validity of the data.

COORDINATION TIER: FOCUS ON MANAGEMENT COORDINATION OF ACTIVITIES

■ *Manager removal of obstacles*

ELC managers should be aware of their key role in the removal of obstacles to the delivery of superior service.

■ *Resourcing*

- **Teacher resources:** An upgrading of teacher resources in ELCs seems indicated, in particular the provision of suitable textbooks and materials.
- **Facilities:** A review and upgrade of facilities and equipment in ELCs seems desirable. Particular attention seems warranted to teacher work space and work equipment such as photocopiers and tape recorders as well as the student lounge, self-access facility, library, computers and audio/video equipment.

■ *Teacher skills and qualifications*

Implications for policy in respect of ESOL teacher qualifications were stated previously (Section 6.7.2). Localised management support for professional development would support the aim of developing a national ESOL teacher body that is properly trained and qualified.

■ *Balancing human attributes of teachers with professional skills*

More reliance should be placed on professional aspects of the teacher task area such as *teaching skills, lesson preparation, and subject knowledge* and less on the human aspects of ELC service as primary generators of client satisfaction. The promotion of professional standards could be supported through the organisation of national forums and/or professional development programmes.

■ *Balancing human attributes of admin staff with skills/ knowledge*

Likewise, ELC admin staff need to have more adequate skill and knowledge levels to carry out their role successfully, particularly in the area of providing information to clients. There should be less reliance on "niceness" to get the job done and more on professionalism and effectiveness.

■ ***Staff awareness of their marketing role***

There is a need to clarify for ELC staff the fact that, as service providers, they also have an informal marketing role. ELC managers should ensure that all ELC staff understand, and are equipped to fulfil, this aspect of their work.

■ ***Staff awareness of clients as informal marketers***

ELC managers should ensure that staff are aware of the role of client word-of-mouth recommendation in marketing the ELC as a means of securing future business.

■ ***Manager encouragement of staff support for clients***

Managers should encourage staff to actively support clients in the achievement of their English language goals.

■ ***Sharing client feedback with staff***

Staff should not be involved in conducting client satisfaction surveys. However managers should ensure staff get access to survey findings so that they have a realistic picture of what their clients think about them as service providers.

■ ***Market segmentation***

Clients of different national and age groupings respond differently to ELC service. An awareness of the needs of these different groups on the part of ELC managers, administrators, and teachers could enhance ELC service effectiveness.

■ ***Employment issues***

The constraints of the unpredictability of demand and the nature of TESOL work notwithstanding, attention to ELC staff concerns in the areas of stress, remuneration, and job security is indicated.

6.8 LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

The limitations of the research methodology were discussed in Chapter 3. These are reiterated briefly along with further limitations identified during the analysis of the data.

6.8.1 Accuracy of focus group data

Group process problems and inter-participant conflict may have affected the quality of the data. It is possible that focus group data was influenced by the presence of the researcher. There was potential for invalid respondent opinions and bias on the part of both respondents or researcher (Boulton & Hammersley, 1996). Staff respondents may have been inhibited by the status of fellow participants as colleagues and the use of the workplace as the discussion venue. Cultural inhibitions and language proficiency levels may have influenced the quality of the client focus group data.

6.8.2 Lack of a random sample

It was not possible to draw random samples of either the organisations or the individual participants in both the qualitative and quantitative phases of the research. In opting to take part in the service climate and client satisfaction surveys, ELCs in effect "self-selected". No claims can therefore be made about the representativeness of the samples.

6.8.3 Availability of subjects for surveys

Both surveys were limited by the subjects available on the ELC premises on the day of data collection and subject willingness to participate.

6.8.4 Access to respondents

The researcher was almost entirely dependent on the goodwill of the ELC manager/owner as "gatekeeper" for access to respondents in both phases of the research. Managers issued invitations to clients and staff to attend focus

groups and helped the researcher organise client and staff surveys. As far as could be ascertained, a valid cross section of respondents was included in the surveys. However, control over the choice of target respondent groups could not be claimed in every instance.

6.8.5 Client questionnaire languages

A few clients with no knowledge of the translated version of the questionnaire were obliged to use the English version. The likelihood of less adequate comprehension of the questionnaire items must therefore be identified as a possible limitation of the client survey methodology.

6.8.6 Research in a second-language context

This study took place in a second-language context and was thus subject to culture and language constraints on the part of both the client respondents and researcher. There was therefore potential for misapprehension and misinterpretation, as well as a cultural form of response style that could lead clients to suspend critical judgement.

6.8.7 Limitations of research in the workplace

Workplace studies that use volunteer informants may be subject to biased or unrepresentative opinions, particularly in terms of focus group data. There was the potential for this phenomenon to have occurred in this study, particularly in those ELCs with very small staff participation or response rates.

6.8.8 Affiliation of schools participating in survey

Most private-sector ELCs in New Zealand belong to one of the two major industry groupings, FIELS or CRELS. Although all centres in both groupings were invited to participate in the staff and client surveys, only 10% of FIELS members took part, as against 75% of CRELS members. No explanation is forthcoming for this phenomenon, nor can an interpretation be placed on any possible effects on the findings of this study. In fact, the CRELS and FIELS

blocks made up only 47% of the participating institutions and the other 53% were non-affiliated or tertiary ELCs. However, in terms of the representativeness of the private sector segment of the ELC surveys, this fact must be stated as a limitation of the research.

6.8.9 Over-representation of P.R. China respondents

P.R. China nationals were over-represented in the client sample in proportion to the 2001 population in New Zealand ELCs. The data from the ANOVA studies indicated significant differences among national groupings in terms of their levels of satisfaction with of ELC service. Given the over-representation of this one group, there was therefore potential for some distortion of the client satisfaction data to have taken place.

6.8.10 English language centre staff sample size

Analysis of the service climate data was hampered by the relatively small staff numbers in ELCs. This meant that response numbers were also small in relative terms, the average number per ELC being 9.2. More substantial numbers would have allowed more extensive data analysis to be carried out.

6.9 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Given the growing importance of the TESOL sector and the lack of empirical research reported in the management and education literature, there is a clear requirement for further research into ELC service management, not only in New Zealand, but globally. Possible areas for enquiry are described below.

6.9.1 Replication of this study

The study reported here is the only one of its kind known to the researcher. Replication of the study would go a long way towards increasing our knowledge about service climates in ELCs and about how client satisfaction operates. Replication in different national contexts such as Britain, Australia and the U.S.A. would provide useful opportunities for comparison between these countries in terms of ELC service provision.

6.9.2 English language centre satisfaction survey instrument

There is an obvious need for the development of a generic, multilingual client satisfaction survey questionnaire that can be used not only nationally but also internationally. This would generate data that would allow researchers to develop standards and models and would go some way towards the establishment of comparability between individual ELCs.

6.9.3 English language centre management

Because climate studies focus on employee perceptions, no data was collected from ELC managers in the course of this study. However, we know little about who ELC managers are, what their qualifications are, how they work, what their strengths and weaknesses are or how researchers can help them to manage more effectively. There is a clear need for research in this area.

6.9.4 English language centre service design

Virtually no work has been done on the design and nature of ELC service systems. One fruitful area, for example, would be the application of service blueprints (Shostack, 1984) to ELC service operations. Another would be the management of supply and demand since, as in many service types, unpredictability of demand is a key constraint for ELC managers. Research into areas such as these could produce findings that have the potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the service

6.9.5 The English language student as English language centre client

ELCs operate in a context that blends the commercial, the educational, and the professional. English language students are in the ambiguous position of being beholden to teachers, managers, and administrators, but at the same time are employing these people to provide a service. The issue of the *student as client* within a services context therefore bears investigation.

6.9.6 Cross-cultural issues in English language centre management

TESOL is a service sector that deals primarily with non-native speakers of English. A plethora of cross-cultural issues are ripe for research, from administrative staff skills to management of culturally diverse service providers.

6.9.7 English language centre staff

This study collected minimal demographic information about ELC staff. However, there is much that we do not know, for instance qualification levels, experience levels, and career intentions. Although some data exists (Haddock, 1998), more extensive data is needed on staff in the wider TESOL sector.

6.9.8 ESOL teachers as service providers

ESOL teachers are education professionals who work as service providers in a commercial environment. Their dual role implies the potential for ambiguity, both in terms of teacher training and role performance and this is therefore another area of potential research interest.

6.10 CONCLUSIONS

The research described in this study focused on an area that had not previously been accorded much attention by management researchers, that of the management of TESOL programmes in English language centres. As this final chapter has shown, light has been thrown on the two key aspects of the area chosen for the research, namely the nature of service climate in English language centres in New Zealand and levels of client satisfaction with the service provided by those English language centres. The number and nature of the research findings demonstrated the value of the classical combination of qualitative and quantitative methodology; the value of personal contact between researcher and gate-keepers and researcher and respondents; and the value of adapting conventional research methodology in a cross-cultural context.

The study has contributed to knowledge about services management practices in English language centres by identifying positive and negative aspects of the service both in terms of staff and client perspectives, and by indicating potential improvements for both policy-makers and managers, with a view to enhancing the effectiveness of English language centre TESOL operations. The findings of this study will be of interest to anyone involved in TESOL. Further research is now desirable to investigate a range of management issues in the ELC/TESOL services sector, with a view to increasing our knowledge of management aspects of the sector and enhancing the quality of the services it provides.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Service Climate Dimensions and Items

Management practices

- Service strategy formulation & communication to staff
- Clarification of employee service roles
- Facilitation of good service by removing obstacles
- Providing support for staff, e.g. services training
- Monitoring of employee performance/provision of feedback
- Reward/recognition of employee performance
- Leadership by example in terms of service attitudes and behaviours
- Recruitment of staff displaying service orientation traits and behaviours
- Sharing data with staff e.g. from customer feedback surveys
- Empowering staff to make decisions

Service Practices

- Focus on creating customer satisfaction
- Creation of a caring service environment
- Equipment and technology facilitate service delivery
- Effective procedures in place to facilitate service delivery
- Monitoring/measurement of customer expectations
- Solicitation of/responsiveness to customer opinion
- Active emphasis on service recovery and customer retention
- Customer expectation of ethical treatment

Staff practices

- Understanding of service role
- Possession of skills required for excellent service
- Demonstrations of service orientation
- Understanding of service procedures
- Perception of internal equity
- Mutual support among co-workers and departments
- Effective communication/Information sharing among co-workers, departments
- Principle of the "internal customer"

APPENDIX B: Focus Groups: Sample Request Letter to ELCs

Ms XXX
XXX English Language Academy
PO Box XXX
AUCKLAND

Dear Ms XXX

I am a lecturer in the Department of Management Systems, Massey University, and obtained details of your institution from the Education New Zealand web page. I am writing to you to ask if you and your language school are able to assist with research I am carrying out into English language programme management in New Zealand.

I am working on a PhD which looks at the service aspect of language school operations. The initial stage of the research requires me to run focus groups of language school staff to get their views on what providing excellent service means to them. I am therefore trying to identify language schools which are interested in taking part in the research project.

A focus group would have around six to eight participants including teachers and other staff such as a homestay coordinator and administrators. It would involve a discussion of about an hour to an hour and a half which would be tape recorded. Since I have to work to strict ethical guidelines as directed by the Ethics Committee at Massey University, it goes without saying that all data collected would be completely confidential to me and no person or institution would be identified in the research report.

I would be happy to fit into any time that is convenient for a particular language school or staff - a late afternoon or evening, for example, would present no problem. I also make a contribution of \$30 per participant towards expenses incurred in taking part in the focus group.

Since very little research has been carried out into the management of English language programmes I am hoping that my research will be useful to managers, particularly in terms of identifying best practice.

If you and your language school are able to help, I would be most grateful. I can be contacted at my email address which is J.Walker@massey.ac.nz. Thank you for taking the time from your busy schedule to consider this request and I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

John Walker

APPENDIX C: ELC Staff Focus Groups:

Sample Invitation to Participants

27 September 1999

Ms XXXXXXXXXXX
ILA South Pacific Ltd
PO Box 9107
Newmarket
AUCKLAND

Dear XXXXXXXX

FOCUS GROUP RESEARCH

I believe XXXXXXXX has spoken to you regarding the focus group taking place at ILA South Pacific, Auckland next week and I would like to thank you for accepting my invitation - through XXXXXXXX - to participate.

The focus group will take place on Wednesday 6 October at 3.45 pm and will last approximately an hour and a half. The discussion will cover the area of the management of ELT/TESOL programmes and specifically your role as a service provider within a language school. I will be giving you an information sheet and a consent form, which will provide you with more details of the research, the focus group process and your rights as a participant. I would just like to emphasise that my research is under the supervision of the Massey University Ethics Committee and I can assure you that all data gathered will be entirely confidential to me - no person or institution will be identified in the research report.

I would also like to confirm that I will be making a contribution of \$30 to each participant to cover your time and expenses.

As you may be aware, the area of language school management is a highly under-researched area and your contribution to this research will be invaluable. I am hoping that one of the outcomes of the research will be greater insight into service management best practice which will assist managers and staff of language schools and ELT/TESOL programmes to provide a more effective service to their students.

Once again, many thanks for your interest in participating in the focus group and I look forward to seeing you on Wednesday 6th October.

Yours sincerely

John Walker

APPENDIX D: ELC Client Focus Groups: Sample Invitation to Participants

19 October, 1999

XXXXXX XXXXXX

International Language Academies (ILA) South Pacific
PO Box 9107
Newmarket
AUCKLAND

Dear XXXXXX

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION AT ILA, SOUTH PACIFIC

I believe Ms XXXXXX XXXXXX has spoken to you regarding the Massey University focus group taking place at the ILA, South Pacific, Auckland, next week, and I would like invite you formally to take part.

The focus group will take place on Wednesday 27 October at 3.45 pm and will last approximately an hour and a half. The discussion will cover the area of the services language schools provide to their clients. I have attached an information sheet for you to look at, which will provide you with more details of the research, the focus group process and your rights as a participant. As you will see, the research must conform to the requirements of the Massey University Ethics Committee and I can assure you that all data gathered will be entirely confidential to me - no person or institution will be identified in the research report.

I am also enclosing a list of the questions for discussion in the focus group. I would ask you to prepare for the discussion by reading through the questions and thinking about how you would answer them. This will help you to better express your opinion in the focus group discussion.

I would also like to confirm that I will be making a contribution of \$20 to each participant to cover your time and expenses.

Many thanks for your interest in participating in the focus group and I look forward to seeing you this coming Wednesday.

Yours sincerely

John Walker
Lecturer, Department of Management Systems

APPENDIX E: ELC Staff Focus Group Questions

1. What do you understand by the concept of providing excellent service in a TESOL context?
2. How do you see your role as a service provider of TESOL?
3. Think about English language centres as providers of TESOL services. What can English language centres do to make sure that the service they provide to clients is of a high quality?
4. How can managers help their staff to provide good service?
5. What can colleagues do to support each other in the provision of TESOL service?
6. In a service operation, there might be some barriers to providing good service. What particular barriers come to mind when you think of providing good service in TESOL? How do you think these barriers could be overcome?

APPENDIX F: ELC Client Focus Group Questions

1. When you decide to attend an English language school, what is your main aim or goal? What do you want to do or achieve?

2. In your opinion, what can an English language school do to provide you with excellent service? Here are some areas of the service you can think about:

- Enrolment in the language school
- Placement in a class
- The classroom experience, eg the methods used to teach you
- The buildings and rooms
- The facilities, eg resource centre, student lounge, toilets,
- The equipment, eg computers, video etc
- Homestay, eg the homestay family, the homestay coordinator
- The administrative staff
- The teachers
- The director
- The location
- The cost / value for money
- Materials / textbooks
- Qualifications
- Anything else?

3. Imagine an English language school that does NOT provide excellent service. What are some of the features of such a language school?

4. What is the most important thing a language school can do to help you to achieve your aim or goal?

5. What have you enjoyed MOST about your language school experience?

6. What have you enjoyed LEAST about your language school experience?

APPENDIX G: ELC Service Climate Survey: Items, Descriptors and Sources

SOURCE KEY:
SFG = staff focus groups
CFG = client focus groups
L = literature

SERVICE DIMENSIONS	Source	Descriptor
Service Practices – Management In this English language centre, management...		
01. ensures that staff are familiar with the service goals.	L	Familiarity with service strategy
02. ensures that staff are familiar with the service policies and procedures.	L	Familiarity with service policy/procedure
03. ensures that staff know how to deliver superior service.	L	Familiarity with service practices
04. regularly monitors service standards.	SFG/L	Monitoring of staff performance
05. leads by example in providing superior service to clients.	L/SFG	Leading by example
06. demonstrates a sound grasp of the TESOL aspects of the service.	SFG	Manager familiarity with TESOL practice
Management Communication In this English language centre, management.....		
07. routinely talks to staff about the importance of providing superior service.	L	Management communication on service
08. routinely consults with staff on ways to improve service delivery.	L	Consultation with staff
09. provides staff with feedback on their performance.	L	Provision of feedback on performance
10. shares with staff feedback obtained from clients on service quality.	L	Information sharing with staff
11. keeps staff informed about issues affecting the organisation.	SFG	Information sharing with staff
Management Support In this English language centre, management.....		
12. encourages staff in their efforts to provide superior service.	L/SFG	Management support - encouragement
13. ensures staff have the material resources they need to provide superior service.	L/SFG	Management support - resources
14. makes an effort to remove obstacles to the delivery of superior service.	L	Management support – remove obstacles
15. fosters mutual co-operation and support among staff.	L	Management support – foster team spirit
16. supports professional development for staff.	SFG	Management support – prof development
17. recognises the efforts of staff who provide superior service.	L	Recognition of staff efforts

SERVICE DIMENSIONS	Source	Descriptor
Staff Service Practices In this English language centre, staff,.....		
18. have a clear understanding of their service role.	L/SFG	Role clarity
19. regard marketing the organisation as part of their service role.	SFG/L	Role clarity - marketing
20. have the necessary skills to provide superior service.	L	Service skills
21. are empowered to make decisions that affect the quality of their work.	SFG/L	Service provider empowerment
22. support one another in an effort to provide superior service.	SFG/L	Collegial support
23. communicate effectively with one another.	SFG/L	Collegial communication
Client Focus In this English language centre.....		
24. there is a focus on creating client satisfaction.	SFG/L	Focus on client satisfaction
25. the service clients receive closely matches that described in publicity materials.	L	Keeping service promises
26. there is effective communication with clients	L/CFG	Communicating effectively with clients
27. clients experience a relaxed, friendly service environment.	CFG/L	Nature of language school milieu
28. there are procedures in place to ensure the delivery of superior service.	CFG/L	Client orientation to the service
29. clients get the practical information they need to get the most out of the service.	CFG/L	Keeping clients informed
30. clients experience a high standard of professional instruction.	CFG	Quality of ESOL teacher/lesson
31. it is easy for a client to access a staff member for individual help or advice.	L/S/CFG	Service provider accessibility
32. there is an effective procedure for soliciting clients' opinions about service quality.	CFG/L	Solicitation of client opinion
33. If a client makes a complaint, it is taken seriously and acted upon .	CFG/L	Responsiveness to client opinion
34. clients are regarded as potential marketers of the organisation.	SFG/L	Clients as marketers of service
35. the service can be adapted to suit changing client needs.	L	Service flexibility
36. clients receive ethical treatment.	SFG/L	Ethical treatment of clients

SERVICE DIMENSIONS - Service Orientation	Source	Descriptor
Staff Service Ethos In this English language centre, staff.....		
37. are committed to providing superior service.	L	Commitment
38. feel personally responsible for the quality of service clients receive.	L	Feeling of responsibility
39. are painstaking in their work, paying close attention to detail.	L	Virtuosity
Staff Personal Attributes In this English language centre, staff.....		
40. display a friendly manner towards clients.	CFG	Friendliness
41. adopt a helpful attitude towards clients.	CFG	Helpfulness
42. empathise with clients who are having problems in an unfamiliar environment.	L/CFG	Empathy
43. exhibit patience when clients have problems communicating with them.	CFG	Patience
44. display professionalism in their dealings with clients.	CFG	Professional attitude
Staff Concern for Clients In this English language centre, staff.....		
45. are willing to assist clients adjust to life in this country.	SFG	Interface role
46. are sensitive to the needs of clients from other cultures.	L	Cultural sensitivity
47. are willing to help a client even outside normal working hours.	CFG/SFG	Service extension
48. make an effort to establish rapport with clients.	L/SFG	Establishing rapport
49. go out of their way to help a client who has a problem.	L/SFG	Going out of one's way for clients
50. actively support clients in their efforts to achieve their English language goals.	CFG/SFG	Encouragement
51. cater for individual needs of clients, when appropriate.	SFG	Cater for client individual needs
52. are willing to counsel clients who come to them with personal concerns.	SFG	Counselling role
53. take an active interest in clients' welfare.	SFG	Pastoral care

SERVICE DIMENSIONS	Source	Descriptor
Employment Issues In this English language centre,		
54. staff have a feeling of job security.	SFG	Job security
55. staff do not view their jobs as stressful.	L	Work stress
56. the workload is distributed fairly.	L	Equity
57. rewards are distributed fairly.	L	Equity
58. there is a harmonious work environment.	L	Work atmosphere
59. staff enjoy a satisfactory level of physical comfort.	L	Physical comfort
Resourcing In this English language centre,		
60. the teaching resources (e.g. textbooks, audio tapes) are of a satisfactory standard.	L/SFG	Teaching resources
61. the equipment (e.g. videos, computers) is of a satisfactory standard.	L/SFG	Equipment
62. the facilities (e.g. classrooms, bathrooms, offices) are of a satisfactory standard.	L	Facilities

APPENDIX H: ELC Service Climate Questionnaire

ENGLISH LANGUAGE CENTRE SERVICE SURVEY

Please mail this survey to:

John Walker
Department of Management
College of Business
Massey University
Private Bag 11222
PALMERSTON NORTH



Instructions for Completion

This survey questionnaire is intended for non-managerial staff employed in English language centres in New Zealand. The survey asks you for your views on service practices at the English language centre where you work.

Your responses will be handled in the utmost confidence. Completed questionnaires are returned directly to me and survey participants cannot be identified. Except for aggregated national data, no data from the survey will be made available to the management of your English language centre in any form whatsoever. Individual English language centres will not be identified in any subsequent reporting of the findings. You can therefore be assured of complete anonymity.

- 1. When deciding on your responses, think about *your perceptions of the organisation as a whole* and not just your particular area of work. In the statements, the term *management* refers to your language centre manager(s) and the term *staff* refers to both teaching and non-teaching employees of your language centre.**
- 2. Please answer ALL the questions.**
- 3. In sections 1-5, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statements about service aspects of the English language centre you are associated with. Just circle the appropriate number, using the scale below:**

5: I strongly agree with this statement.
4: I agree with this statement.
3: I neither agree nor disagree with this statement.
2: I disagree with this statement.
1: I strongly disagree with this statement
0: I don't know.
- 4. In sections 6-9, please follow the specific instructions for each section.**
- 5. When you have answered all the questions, place the completed questionnaire in the stamped, addressed envelope provided and mail it back to me at Massey University.**

Many thanks for taking the time to complete this survey. Your response will be a valuable contribution to our knowledge about English language centre service practices in New Zealand.

**John Walker
Department of Management
Massey University**

1: English Language Centre Service Management Practices

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
In this English language centre, management ...						
01. ensures that staff are familiar with the service goals.	5	4	3	2	1	0
02. ensures that staff are familiar with the service policies and procedures.	5	4	3	2	1	0
03. ensures that staff know how to deliver superior service.	5	4	3	2	1	0
04. regularly monitors service standards.	5	4	3	2	1	0
05. leads by example in providing superior service to clients.	5	4	3	2	1	0
06. demonstrates a sound grasp of the TESOL aspects of the service.	5	4	3	2	1	0
In this English language centre, management...						
07. routinely talks to staff about the importance of providing superior service.	5	4	3	2	1	0
08. routinely consults with staff on ways to improve service delivery .	5	4	3	2	1	0
09. provides staff with feedback on their performance.	5	4	3	2	1	0
10. shares with staff feedback obtained from clients on service quality.	5	4	3	2	1	0
11. keeps staff informed about issues affecting the organisation.	5	4	3	2	1	0
In this English language centre, management...						
12. encourages staff in their efforts to provide superior service.	5	4	3	2	1	0
13. ensures staff have the material resources they need to provide superior service.	5	4	3	2	1	0
14. makes an effort to remove obstacles to the delivery of superior service.	5	4	3	2	1	0
15. fosters mutual co-operation and support among staff.	5	4	3	2	1	0
16. supports professional development for staff.	5	4	3	2	1	0
17. recognises the efforts of staff who provide superior service.	5	4	3	2	1	0

2: English Language Centre Service Practices

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
In this English language centre, staff.....						
18. have a clear understanding of their service role.	5	4	3	2	1	0
19. regard marketing the organisation as part of their service role.	5	4	3	2	1	0
20. have the necessary skills to provide superior service.	5	4	3	2	1	0
21. are empowered to make decisions that affect the quality of their work.	5	4	3	2	1	0
22. actively support one another in an effort to provide superior service.	5	4	3	2	1	0
23. communicate effectively with one another.	5	4	3	2	1	0
In this English language centre,						
24. there is a focus on creating client satisfaction.	5	4	3	2	1	0
25. the service clients receive closely matches that described in the publicity materials.	5	4	3	2	1	0
26. there is effective communication with clients.	5	4	3	2	1	0
27. clients experience a relaxed, friendly service environment.	5	4	3	2	1	0
28. there are procedures in place to ensure the delivery of superior service.	5	4	3	2	1	0
29. clients get the information they need to get the most out of the service.	5	4	3	2	1	0
30. clients experience a high standard of professional instruction.	5	4	3	2	1	0
31. it is easy for clients to access a staff member for individual help or advice.	5	4	3	2	1	0
32. there is an effective procedure for soliciting clients' opinions about service quality.	5	4	3	2	1	0
33. if a client makes a complaint, it is taken seriously and acted upon.	5	4	3	2	1	0
34. clients are regarded as potential marketers of the organisation.	5	4	3	2	1	0
35. the service can be adapted to suit changing client needs.	5	4	3	2	1	0
36. clients receive ethical treatment.	5	4	3	2	1	0

3: Service Orientation

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
In this English language centre, staff.....						
37. are committed to providing superior service.	5	4	3	2	1	0
38. feel personally responsible for the quality of service clients receive.	5	4	3	2	1	0
39. are painstaking in their work, paying close attention to detail.	5	4	3	2	1	0
In this English language centre, staff.....						
40. display a friendly manner towards clients.	5	4	3	2	1	0
41. adopt a helpful attitude towards clients.	5	4	3	2	1	0
42. empathise with clients who are having problems in an unfamiliar environment.	5	4	3	2	1	0
43. exhibit patience when clients have problems communicating with them.	5	4	3	2	1	0
44. display professionalism in their dealings with clients.	5	4	3	2	1	0
In this English language centre, staff.....						
45. are willing to assist clients adjust to life in this country.	5	4	3	2	1	0
46. are sensitive to the needs of clients from other cultures.	5	4	3	2	1	0
47. are willing to help clients even outside normal working hours.	5	4	3	2	1	0
48. make an effort to establish rapport with clients.	5	4	3	2	1	0
49. go out of their way to help a client who has a problem.	5	4	3	2	1	0
50. actively support clients in their efforts to achieve their English language goals.	5	4	3	2	1	0
51. cater for individual needs of clients, when appropriate.	5	4	3	2	1	0
52. are willing to counsel clients who come to them with personal concerns.	5	4	3	2	1	0
53. take an active interest in clients' welfare.	5	4	3	2	1	0

4: Employment Issues

In this English language centre.....	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
54. staff have a feeling of job security.	5	4	3	2	1	0
55. staff do not view their jobs as stressful.	5	4	3	2	1	0
56. the workload is distributed fairly.	5	4	3	2	1	0
57. staff receive fair remuneration for their work.	5	4	3	2	1	0
58. there is a harmonious work environment.	5	4	3	2	1	0
59. staff enjoy a satisfactory level of physical comfort.	5	4	3	2	1	0

5: Resourcing

In this English language centre.....	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
60. the teaching resources (e.g. textbooks, audio tapes) are of a satisfactory standard.	5	4	3	2	1	0
61. the equipment (e.g. videos, computers) is of a satisfactory standard.	5	4	3	2	1	0
62. the facilities (e.g. classrooms, toilets/bathrooms, offices) are of a satisfactory standard.	5	4	3	2	1	0

6: Client evaluation of English language centre service

For each item, please circle the number that best represents YOUR ESTIMATE of how YOUR CLIENTS evaluate the service provided by the English language centre.

	Far better than they expected	Better than they expected	About what they expected	Worse than they expected	Far worse than they expected	Don't Know
Overall quality of						
63. the teachers	5	4	3	2	1	0
64. the English lessons	5	4	3	2	1	0
65. the service procedures	5	4	3	2	1	0
66. the communication with clients	5	4	3	2	1	0
67. the administrative staff	5	4	3	2	1	0
68. the homestay	5	4	3	2	1	0
69. the facilities	5	4	3	2	1	0
70. the activities programme	5	4	3	2	1	0
71. the English language centre service as a whole	5	4	3	2	1	0

7: Service Barriers

72. In this English language centre, are there any barriers that prevent you from providing as good a service as you would wish to provide?
If so, please name up to three barriers.

8: Service Attributes

73. In your opinion, what are the key attributes or features of English language centre service that are most likely to result in the delivery of superior service to your clients? Name up to three attributes.

9: Classification Data

74. What is your main area of responsibility in the English language centre? Tick the item that applies to you.

teaching administration

homestay other (please specify): _____

75. What is your gender?

female male

76. Are you employed on a full-time or part-time basis?

full-time part-time

77. How long have you been in your current position with this English language centre?

	year(s)
	month(s)

This is the end of the questionnaire. Thank you for your contribution.

APPENDIX I: ELC Client Satisfaction Questionnaire



ENGLISH LANGUAGE CENTRE CLIENT SURVEY

英語语言学校学生満足程度調査

Kundenbefragung zur Serviceleistung der Englisch-Sprachzentren

英語学校（イングリッシュ・ランゲージ・センター）顧客調査

영어 어학센터 수강생 설문조사

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETION

See over the page for instructions in Mandarin, Japanese, Korean and German.

This survey asks you for your opinion of the service provided by the English language centre (ELC) that you are currently attending. Please complete the survey according to these guidelines:

1. Complete the survey in a place where you know you will be undisturbed and relaxed.
2. Follow the instructions given for each section.
3. When you have answered all the questions, place the survey booklet in the stamped, addressed envelope, seal it and mail it back to me at Massey University.

DO NOT RETURN THE SURVEY TO ANYONE IN YOUR ENGLISH LANGUAGE CENTRE OR YOUR HOMESTAY. MAIL IT STRAIGHT BACK TO ME.

4. If you wish to remain anonymous, do not write your name on this questionnaire.

Many thanks for taking the time to complete this survey. Your response will be a valuable contribution to our knowledge about English language centre service in New Zealand.

John Walker
Massey University

Please mail this questionnaire to:

完成後请把此答卷寄给:

Bitte schicken Sie diesen Fragebogen an:

回答は下記宛先にご送付ください。

해당 설문지를 주소로 우송해 주십시오:

John Walker
Department of Management
College of Business
Massey University
Private Bag 11222
PALMERSTON NORTH
New Zealand

Diese Umfrage untersucht Ihre Meinung zum Service, der von Englisch-Sprachzentren (ELC) geleistet wird. Beziehen Sie sich auf das Englisch-Sprachzentrum, das Sie zur Zeit besuchen. Bitte beachten Sie folgende Hinweise zum Ausfüllen des Fragebogens :

1. Suchen Sie sich beim Ausfüllen des Fragebogens eine Stelle aus, wo sie ungestört und entspannt sind.

2. Folgen Sie den detaillierten Hinweisen auf der nächsten Seite.

3. Sobald Sie fertig sind, legen Sie den Fragebogen in den beigelegten frankierten Umschlag, versiegeln Sie ihn, und schicken Sie ihn mit der Post an mich an der Massey Universität.

Den Fragebogen bitte NICHT Mitarbeitern Ihres Englisch-Sprachzentrums oder Ihrer Gastfamilie geben. Schicken Sie ihn bitte direkt an mich.

4. Wenn Sie anonym bleiben möchten, geben Sie Ihren Namen bitte nicht im Fragebogen an.

Vielen Dank für Ihre Teilnahme an dieser Umfrage. Ihre Antworten leisten einen wertvollen Beitrag zu unserem Wissenstand über den Service in Englisch-Sprachzentren in Neuseeland.

**John Walker
Massey Universität**

この調査では、あなたが現在通っている英語学校（イングリッシュ・ランゲージ・センター）のサービス内容について、あなたの意見を尋ねるものです。以下の手順にそって、回答してください。

1. 邪魔の入らない、リラックスできる場所で回答してください。

2. 各セクションの指示に従って次のページの「回答方法について」を読み、従ってください。

3. 回答終了後、返信用封筒（切手貼付済）に入れて厳封の上、マッセイ大学の私宛てに郵送してください。

あなたの語学学校の関係者やホストファミリーに渡してはいけません。必ず、私に直接届くよう、郵送してください。

4. もし氏名を明らかにしたくない場合は、一切、氏名は書かないままにしてください。

あなたの回答は、英語学校のサービスに関する調査の貴重な資料となります。調査にご協力いただき、誠にありがとうございます。

ジョン・ウォーカー
マッセイ大学

本調査征询您对您所在的英语语言学校 (ELC)所提供的各项服务的意见。请根据下面规定完成本调查:

1. 在一个不受干扰的舒适的场所填写问卷。

2. 按每页所指示的要求回答问题。

3. 答毕後, 请将答卷放入提供的信封内, 信封上已贴有邮票并写好地址, 封好信, 然後将信寄出。不要将卷交给语言学校或您的寄宿家庭经手, 要直接寄回给我。

4. 如您不愿留下姓名, 就不必在答卷上写您的姓名。

衷心感谢您费时回答下列问题, 这对了解新西兰英语语言学校的的服务是一个有价值的贡献。

约翰·沃尔克
梅西大学

본 설문조사는 귀하가 수강 중인 영어 어학센터가 제공하는 서비스에 관한 귀하의 의견을 수렴하기 위한 것입니다. 아래 지침에 따라 성실껏 답변해 주시기 바랍니다:

1. 귀하가 방해받지 않는 편안한 장소에서 설문조사에 응해주시기 바랍니다.

2. 각 항의 주어진 지시사항을 지켜주시기 바랍니다.

3. 설문조사를 마친 후 우표와 수신자 이름이 찍혀진 우편봉투에 설문지를 넣은 후, 매시 대학으로 보내주시기 바랍니다. 귀하가 영어 어학센터에서 알고 있는 사람이나 귀하의 홈스테이 가족 어느 누구를 통해서도 이 설문조사지를 반납하지 마시고 반드시 저에게 우편으로 보내주시시오.

4. 무기명으로 설문조사에 응하길 원할 경우, 설문지에 귀하의 성명을 명기하지 마십시오.

해당 설문지를 작성하는데 시간을 할애해 주셔서 감사합니다. 귀하의 의견은 뉴질랜드의 영어 어학센터에서 제공되는 서비스에 대한 소중한 정보가 될 것입니다.

존 워커
매시 대학

PART ONE

第一部份 • Teil 1 • 第 1 部 • 제 1 장

In Part One, you are asked for your opinion about specific areas of the English Language Centre (ELC) service. For each item, put a circle round the number that indicates your level of satisfaction with this area of the service. Here is an example which asks a client's opinion about the food in her homestay:

	Far better than I expected	Better than I expected	About what I expected	Worse than I expected	Far worse than I expected	Don't know
Quality of food	5	4	3	2	1	0

In this example, the client has circled the number 3 to show that her level of satisfaction with the food was about what she expected. CHOOSE ONLY ONE ANSWER FOR EACH ITEM.

第一部份有关英语语言学校的服务的各具体领域。每项问题有 6 条选择，在选定您认为最能反应您的看法的那一条以后，就在那条前的数字上画圈：

- 5 — 好得多，即这方面的服务比我预料的好得多。
- 4 — 好，即这方面的服务比我预料的好。
- 3 — 差不多，即这方面的服务与我预料的差不多。
- 2 — 差，即这方面的服务比我预料的差。
- 1 — 差得多，即这方面的服务比我预料的差得多。
- 0 — 不知道。

例如:	好得多	好	差不多	差	差得多	不知道
伙食质量	5	4	3	2	1	0

倘若在数字 3 上画圈，则表示伙食质量与您预料的差不多。每项只能选定一条答案。

In Teil 1 des Fragebogens werden Sie über Ihre Meinung zu bestimmten Bereichen des ELC-Services befragt. Markieren Sie (z.B. durch ankreuzen oder einkreisen) die Nummer, die Ihrem Zufriedenheitsgrad mit diesem Servicebereich entspricht. In diesem Beispiel wird der Kunde über das Essen im Homestay befragt.

	Viel besser als erwartet	Besser als erwartet	Ungefähr wie erwartet	Schlechter als erwartet	Viel schlechter als erwartet	Ich weiß nicht
Qualität des Essens	5	4	3	2	1	0

In diesem Beispiel hat eine Kundin die Nummer 3 markiert, um zu zeigen, daß ihr Zufriedenheitsgrad mit dem Essen ungefähr ihren Erwartungen entspricht. WÄHLEN SIE BEI JEDER KATEGORIE NUR EINE ANTWORT AUS.

第1部では、英語学校の各種サービスについて、あなたの満足度を尋ねます。それぞれの質問項目について、あなたの満足度が一番近いものに(マル)をつけてください。例えば、ホームステイ先での食事についての満足度を尋ねる質問は、以下ようになります。

	はるかに期待以上で非常に良かった	やや期待以上でまあ良かった	ほぼ期待程度で普通だった	やや期待以下であまり良くなかった	まったく期待以下で非常に良くなかった	わからない
食事の質	5	4	3	2	1	0

この例では、満足度3に(マル)が着いています。食事については、ほぼ期待程度の満足度であったということになります。

各質問とも、回答はそれぞれ一つだけを選んで下さい。

1장에서는 영어 어학원(이하 ELC)의 특별 분야에 대한 귀하의 의견을 듣고자 합니다. 각 항별로 제공되는 서비스의 만족도에 따라 번호에 동그라미를 치십시오. 아래는 홈스테이 가정에서 제공되는 식사의 질에 대한 질문의 예입니다:

	기대했던 것 보다 훨씬 낫다	기대했던 것 보다 낫다	기대했던 수준이다	기대했던 것 보다 못하다	기대했던 것 보다 훨씬 못하다	잘 모르겠다
식사의 질	5	4	3	2	1	0

상기의 예에서 응답자는 식사의 질에 대한 만족도로 3번, 즉 '기대했던 수준이다'에 동그라미를 칩니다.

각 항별로 단 하나의 답변만 선택하십시오.

1 THE TEACHERS

教师 • Die Lehrer • 講師について • 영어교사

What is your level of satisfaction with your English teachers in this ELC? Think about those teachers whose classes you have participated in.

您对您所在的英语语言学校的任课老师是否满意? 指上您课的老师。

Wie zufrieden sind Sie mit den Lehrern in diesem ELC? Beziehen Sie sich auf diejenigen Lehrer, an deren Unterricht Sie teilgenommen haben.

あなたの英語学校の講師について、あなたの満足度はどうですか? 自分が授業を受けたことのある講師について回答してください。

현재 다니고 있는 ELC의 교사들에 대한 만족도는 어떻습니까? 귀하가 수강하고 있는 과목의 교사들을 기준으로 평가하십시오.

	Far better than I expected	Better than I expected	About what I expected	Worse than I expected	Far worse than I expected	Don't Know
01. Their professionalism 职业态度 <i>Professionalismus</i> プロとしての姿勢 전문성	5	4	3	2	1	0
02. Their teaching skills 教学技能 <i>Pädagogische Fähigkeiten</i> 教える技術 교습 기술	5	4	3	2	1	0
03. Their knowledge of the subject 专业知识 <i>Fachkenntnisse</i> 内容に関する知識 학습 주제에 대한 지식	5	4	3	2	1	0
04. How well prepared they are for the lesson 备课情况 <i>Wie gut ihre Unterrichtsvorbereitung ist</i> 授業前の準備 수업에 대한 사전 준비	5	4	3	2	1	0
05. Their ability to be flexible (How well they adapt the lesson to your needs) 灵活性 <i>Flexibilität (Inwieweit sie den Unterricht Ihren Bedürfnissen anpassen.)</i> 学生に合わせ、柔軟に対応できる 응용력(수업 중 학생의 요구에 대처하는 유연성)	5	4	3	2	1	0

	Far better than I expected	Better than I expected	About what I expected	Worse than I expected	Far worse than I expected	Don't Know
06. Their ability to teach interesting lessons 趣味性 <i>Fähigkeit, den Unterricht interessant zu gestalten</i> 面白い授業ができる 흥미로운 수업의 진행	5	4	3	2	1	0
07. Their friendliness 友善与否 <i>Freundlichkeit</i> 親しみやすい 교사로서의 친절함	5	4	3	2	1	0
08. Their communication skills 交流沟通能力 <i>Kommunikationsfähigkeit</i> コミュニケーション力がある 학생과의 대화 기술	5	4	3	2	1	0
09. Their ability to be patient with you 耐心程度 <i>Fähigkeit, Ihnen Geduld zu zeigen</i> 忍耐強く、教えてくれる 학생에 대한 인내력	5	4	3	2	1	0
10. Their ability to give clear explanations 解释清楚能力 <i>Fähigkeit, Ihnen klare Erklärungen zu geben</i> 説明がわかりやすい 정확히 설명하는 능력	5	4	3	2	1	0
11. Their willingness to help you in class 课内愿否帮助您 <i>Bereitschaft, Ihnen im Unterricht zu helfen</i> 授業中、困った時に助けてくれる 수업 중 도와주려는 자세	5	4	3	2	1	0
12. Their availability to help you outside class 课外愿否帮助您 <i>Verfügbarkeit zur Hilfestellung ausserhalb des Unterrichts</i> 授業外でも、困った時に相談できる 수업 외 도와주려는 의욕	5	4	3	2	1	0
13. Overall quality of the ELC's teachers 对教师的全面评估 <i>Die Qualität der ELC-Lehrer insgesamt</i> 講師に対する総合満足度 ELC 교사들의 전체 수준	5	4	3	2	1	0

2 THE ENGLISH LESSONS

英语课 • *Der Englischunterricht* • 授業について • 영어 수업

What is your level of satisfaction with the English lessons in the ELC?

您对英语语言学校的英语课是否满意?

Wie zufrieden sind Sie mit dem Englischunterricht, den Sie im ELC besucht haben?

あなたの英語学校の授業について、あなたの満足度はどうですか?

ELC에서 제공하는 수업 전반에 대한 귀하의 만족도를 평가해 주십시오.

	Far better than I expected	Better than I expected	About what I expected	Worse than I expected	Far worse than I expected	Don't Know
14. Effectiveness of the lessons 课程有效性 <i>Effektivität des Unterrichts</i> 効果がある 수업의 효율성	5	4	3	2	1	0
15. Interest level of the lessons 课程趣味性 <i>Interessenlevel des Unterrichts</i> 面白い 수업의 흥미도	5	4	3	2	1	0
16. Lesson content 课程内容 <i>Unterrichtsstoff</i> 内容が良い 수업 내용	5	4	3	2	1	0
17. Relevance of the lessons to your learning needs 课程是否符合您需要 <i>Relevanz des Unterrichts in Bezug auf Ihre Lernbedürfnisse</i> 学びたいことと、内容が合っている 배우려는 내용과 가르치는 내용의 일치도	5	4	3	2	1	0
18. Quality of the learning materials 教材质量 <i>Qualität des Unterrichtsmaterials</i> 教材が良い 교재의 질	5	4	3	2	1	0
19. Methods used to teach you 教学方法 <i>Unterrichtsmethodik</i> 教授法が良い 교습 방법	5	4	3	2	1	0

	Far better than I expected	Better than I expected	About what I expected	Worse than I expected	Far worse than I expected	Don't Know
20. Class size 班级大小 <i>Klassengröße</i> クラスあたりの人数が適切 강의실의 학생 수	5	4	3	2	1	0
21. Mix of nationalities in class 班上不同国籍学生混杂情况 <i>Nationalitätenvielfalt in der Klasse</i> 多国籍クラスなので良い 다양한 국적의 학생구성도	5	4	3	2	1	0
22. Overall quality of English lessons 对英语课的全面评估 <i>Qualität des Englischunterrichts insgesamt</i> 授業に対する総合満足度 수업의 전반적인 질	5	4	3	2	1	0

3 THE SERVICE PROCEDURES

服务过程 • *Die Serviceverfahren* • 事務手続きについて • 행정 서비스

What is your level of satisfaction with the effectiveness of these service procedures?
 您对英语语言学校的工作人员在履行以下各项服务时的工作效率是否满意?

Wie zufrieden sind Sie hinsichtlich der Effektivität der folgenden Service-Verfahren?

あなたの英語学校の、以下の事務手続きは効率的ですか?

ELC의 각종 행정 서비스에 대한 효율성을 평가해 주십시오.

	Far better than I expected	Better than I expected	About what I expected	Worse than I expected	Far worse than I expected	Don't Know
23. Enrolment (when you arrived at the ELC) 您到达学校後的报到与注册 <i>Einschreibung (bei Ihrer Ankunft im ELC)</i> 入学手続きがスムーズ ELC도착시 등록 과정	5	4	3	2	1	0
24. Placement (assessing your English on arrival, putting you in the right class) 分级测试 (即您入学时英文水平的测试, 以便编入适当程度的班级) <i>Einstufung (Bewertung des Sprachlevels bei der Ankunft, Wahl der geeigneten Klassenstufe)</i> 最初のクラス分けが適切 영어 평가후 수업배정	5	4	3	2	1	0

	Far better than I expected	Better than I expected	About what I expected	Worse than I expected	Far worse than I expected	Don't Know
25. Information (keeping you informed about ELC procedures, regulations etc) 關於報名手續、規章 制度等提供 的諮詢 <i>Informationen (informiert Sie regelmäßig über ELC-Verfahren, Vorschriften usw)</i> 何事にも十分な説明がある ELC행정 에 관한 정보 제공(진행과정, 규칙등)	5	4	3	2	1	0
26. Complaints (dealing with student complaints about the ELC's service) 对学生投诉的处理 <i>Beschwerden (sich um Studentenbeschwerden über den ELC-Service kümmern)</i> 不満によく対応してくれる 학생들의 불만 처리능력	5	4	3	2	1	0
27. Homestay administration 对寄宿家庭的管理 <i>Verwaltung des Homestayprogramms</i> ホームステイが良く運営されている 홈스테이에 관한 행정	5	4	3	2	1	0
28. Enquiries (dealing with student questions, requests etc) 对学生问题、要求等回答 <i>Anfragen (sich mit Studentenfragen und -bitten befassen)</i> 質問に答えてくれる 학생들의 문의에 대한 대처능력	5	4	3	2	1	0
29. Student feedback (asking you for your opinion about the ELC's service) 对学生意见回馈 (即征求您对学校 各 项服务的意见) <i>Studentenfeedback (Ihre Meinung über den ELC-Service erfragen)</i> 学生の意見を取り上げてくれる 학생들부터의 의견 수렴	5	4	3	2	1	0
30. Overall quality of ELC's procedures 对学校各项服务的全面评估 <i>Qualität der ELC-Verfahren insgesamt</i> 事務手続きに対する総合満足度 ELC행정 서비스의 전반적인 수준	5	4	3	2	1	0

4 COMMUNICATION

信息沟通 • *Kommunikation* • 情報連絡について • 의사 소통

What is your level of satisfaction with the way the ELC communicates with you?

您对英语语言学校与您信息沟通的情况是否满意？

Wie effektiv kommuniziert das ELC mit Ihnen?

あなたの英語学校は、効果的な情報連絡をしていますか？

귀하와 ELC와의 의사 소통에 대한 만족도를 평가해 주십시오.

	Far better than I expected	Better than I expected	About what I expected	Worse than I expected	Far worse than I expected	Don't Know
31. Accuracy of the information in the ELC's publicity materials 宣示材料是否准确 <i>Genauigkeit der Informationen im ELC-Werbematerial</i> 学校の広報物の内容の正確さ ELC 홍보자료의 정확성	5	4	3	2	1	0
32. Effectiveness of the ELC's communication with you BEFORE your arrival in NZ 在您来新西兰前，学校与您的信息 沟通是否有效 <i>Effektivität der ELC-Kommunikation mit Ihnen VOR Ihrer Ankunft in Neuseeland</i> ニュージーランド到着前の情報連絡 뉴질랜드 도착전까지 의사 소통의 효율성	5	4	3	2	1	0
33. Effectiveness of the ELC's communication with you AFTER your arrival in NZ 在您来新西兰后，学校与您的信息 沟通是否有效 <i>Effektivität der ELC-Kommunikation mit Ihnen NACH Ihrer Ankunft in Neuseeland</i> ニュージーランド到着後の情報連絡 뉴질랜드 도착후 의사 소통의 효율성	5	4	3	2	1	0
34. Overall quality of ELC communication 对信息沟通情况的全面评估 <i>Qualität der ELC-Kommunikation insgesamt</i> 情報連絡に対する総合満足度 ELC와의 의사 소통에 대한 전체 만족도	5	4	3	2	1	0

5 THE ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

行政人員 • *Das Verwaltungspersonal*

事務局スタッフについて • 행정 담당 직원

What is your level of satisfaction with the ELC staff who are NOT teachers?

您对英语语言学校的非教学人员是否满意？

Wie schätzen Sie das ELC-Personal ein, das NICHT am Unterricht beteiligt ist?

あなたの英語学校の、講師以外のスタッフについて、あなたは満足していますか？

ELC에서 영어 교사가 아닌 행정 담당 직원들에 대한 귀하의 만족도를 평가해 주십시오.

	Far better than I expected	Better than I expected	About what I expected	Worse than I expected	Far worse than I expected	Don't Know
35. Their friendliness 友善与否 <i>Freundlichkeit</i> 親しみやすい 친절함	5	4	3	2	1	0
36. Their willingness to help you 愿意与否帮助您 <i>Bereitschaft, Ihnen behilflich zu sein</i> すすんで助けてくれる 학생을 도우려는 의지	5	4	3	2	1	0
37. Their availability to help you 能否找到他们 <i>Verfügbarkeit zur Hilfestellung</i> いつも助けを得られる 학생들이 쉽게 접근해 도움을 요청할 수 있는 개방성의 정도	5	4	3	2	1	0
38. Their ability to understand your needs 能否理解您的需要 <i>Fähigkeit, Ihre Bedürfnisse zu verstehen</i> よく理解してくれる 학생의 요구를 이해하는 능력	5	4	3	2	1	0
39. Their ability to give you the information you asked for 能否提供您要的信息 <i>Fähigkeit, die geforderte Information zu geben</i> 必要な情報をくれる 학생이 요구한 정보를 제공하는 능력	5	4	3	2	1	0

	Far better than I expected	Better than I expected	About what I expected	Worse than I expected	Far worse than I expected	Don't Know
40. Their communication skills 交际沟通能力 <i>Kommunikationsfähigkeit</i> コミュニケーション力がある 의사 소통 기술	5	4	3	2	1	0
41. Overall quality of administrative staff 对行政人员的全面评估 <i>Qualität des Verwaltungspersonals insgesamt</i> 事務局スタッフに対する総合満足度 행정 담당 직원들에 대한 전체 만족도	5	4	3	2	1	0

IF YOU ARE NOT IN A HOMESTAY PROVIDED BY THE ELC, PLEASE GO ON TO Q7 below.

如不住在英语语言学校所提供的寄宿家庭, 请跳过此题, 直接回答题 7。

*Wenn Sie nicht in einem vom ELC vermittelten Homestay wohnen,
gehen Sie direkt zu Frage 7.*

あなたが英語学校の「ホームステイ・プログラム」に参加していない場合は、
質問7に行ってください。

현재 홈스테이에서 생활하고 있지 않은 경우 아래 7번 문항으로 가십시오.

6 YOUR HOMESTAY

寄宿家庭 • *Ihr Homestay* • ホームステイについて • 홈스테이

What is your level of satisfaction with the homestay arranged for you by the ELC?

您对英语语言学校为您安排的寄宿家庭是否满意?

Wie zufrieden sind Sie mit dem vom ELC vermittelten Homestay?

英語学校が手配したホームステイについて、あなたの満足度はどうですか?

ELC에서 정해진 귀하의 홈스테이에 대한 만족도를 평가해 주십시오.

	Far better than I expected	Better than I expected	About what I expected	Worse than I expected	Far worse than I expected	Don't Know
42. Match between the kind of homestay you requested and the homestay you got 是否符合您的要求 <i>Übereinstimmung zwischen dem erwünschten Homestaytyp und dem Ihnen zugeteilten Homestay</i> 希望通りの家庭 요청한 홈스테이와 현재 거주중인 홈스테이의 일치도	5	4	3	2	1	0

	Far better than I expected	Better than I expected	About what I expected	Worse than I expected	Far worse than I expected	Don't Know
43. Opportunity to speak English with your host family 是否有机会练讲英语 <i>Gelegenheit, mit der Gastfamilie Englisch zu sprechen</i> ホストと英語を話す機会がある 현재 거주 중인 홈스테이 가정과 영어를 실습할 수 있는 기회	5	4	3	2	1	0
44. Host family willingness to help improve your English 寄宿家庭是否愿意帮助您 提高英语 <i>Bereitschaft der Gastfamilie, Ihnen bei der Verbesserung Ihrer Englischkenntnisse zu helfen</i> 英語力の向上に、ホストが協力的 학생의 영어력 향상을 위한 홈스테이 가정의 의지	5	4	3	2	1	0
45. Friendliness of your host family 寄宿家庭是否友善 <i>Freundlichkeit der Gastfamilie</i> 親しみやすい 홈스테이 가정의 친절함	5	4	3	2	1	0
46. Amount of time the host family spends with you 寄宿家庭是否有足够时间与您相处 <i>Zeit, die die Gastfamilie für Sie aufbringt</i> 一緒に過ごしてくれる時間が多い 홈스테이 가정이 학생과 함께 시간을 보내는 정도	5	4	3	2	1	0
47. Atmosphere (your feeling in the homestay) 家庭气氛 <i>Atmosphäre (wie wohl Sie sich dort fühlen)</i> 雰囲氣が良い 홈스테이 가정의 분위기	5	4	3	2	1	0
48. Physical comfort level 环境设备是否舒适 <i>Ihr körperliches Wohlergehen im Homestay</i> 生活環境が良い 홈스테이에서의 안락함	5	4	3	2	1	0
49. Quality of the food 伙食质量 <i>Qualität der Mahlzeiten</i> 食事が良い 제공되는 식사의 질	5	4	3	2	1	0
50. Overall quality of your homestay 对寄宿家庭的全面评估 <i>Qualität des Homestays insgesamt</i> ホームステイに対する総合満足度 홈스테이 가정에 대한 전반적인 만족도	5	4	3	2	1	0

7 THE FACILITIES

设备 • *Die Einrichtungen* • 設備について • 시설

What is your level of satisfaction with the standard of facilities in the ELC?

您对语言学校的设备水平是否满意?

Wie zufrieden sind Sie mit der Qualität der Einrichtungen im ELC?

あなたの英語学校の設備について、あなたの満足度はどうですか?

ELC시설의 수준에 대한 귀하의 만족도를 평가해 주십시오.

	Far better than I expected	Better than I expected	About what I expected	Worse than I expected	Far worse than I expected	Don't Know
51. Classrooms 教室 <i>Klassenzimmer</i> 教室 교실	5	4	3	2	1	0
52. Student lounge/cafeteria 学生休息室 / 小吃部 <i>Cafeteria/Aufenthaltsraum</i> 学生ラウンジ / カフェ 학생용 휴게실과 식당	5	4	3	2	1	0
53. Self-access unit 自修室 <i>Selbststudiumseinrichtung</i> 自習室 자습실	5	4	3	2	1	0
54. Toilets / bathrooms 卫生间 <i>Toiletten</i> トイレ / 洗面所 화장실	5	4	3	2	1	0
55. Library 图书室 <i>Bibliothek</i> 図書館 도서관	5	4	3	2	1	0

	Far better than I expected	Better than I expected	About what I expected	Worse than I expected	Far worse than I expected	Don't Know
56. Computers 电脑 <i>Computer</i> コンピュータ 컴퓨터	5	4	3	2	1	0
57. Audio equipment 音响设备 <i>Audiogeräte</i> オーディオ設備 오디오 시설	5	4	3	2	1	0
58. Video equipment 放录像设备 <i>Videogeräte</i> ビデオ設備 비디오 시설	5	4	3	2	1	0
59. Overall quality of the ELC's facilities 对语言学校的设备水平的全面评估 <i>Qualität der ELC-Einrichtungen insgesamt</i> 設備に対する総合満足度 ELC시설에 대한 전반적인 만족도	5	4	3	2	1	0

If your ELC does not have an activities programme, please go on to question 9.
 如您所在的英语语言学校没有课外活动项目，请跳过此题，回答 题 9。

Wenn Ihr ELC kein Freizeitprogramm hat, gehen Sie bitte weiter zu Frage 9.

あなたが英語学校の「アクティビティ・プログラム」に参加していない場合は、
 質問9に行ってください。

귀하가 다니고 있는 **ELC**에서 특별활동 프로그램을 개설하지 않은 경우 9항으로
 가십시오.

8 THE ACTIVITIES PROGRAMME

課外活動 • *Das Freizeitprogramm*

アクティビティ・プログラムについて • 특별활동

What is your level of satisfaction with the activities programme organised by the ELC?

您对语言学校组织的课外活动是否满意？

Wie zufrieden sind Sie mit dem vom ELC angebotenen Freizeitprogramm?

あなたの英語学校のアクティビティ・プログラムについて、あなたの満足度はどうですか？

ELC에서 개설한 특별활동에 대한 귀하의 만족도를 평가해 주십시오.

	Far better than I expected	Better than I expected	About what I expected	Worse than I expected	Far worse than I expected	Don't Know
60. Information about the programme provided by the ELC 課外活動信息提供情况 <i>Die vom ELC zur Verfügung gestellten Informationen über das Programm</i> 情報が適切である ELC에서 제공한 특별활동의 정보	5	4	3	2	1	0
61. Variety of activities 活動的多样性 <i>Vielfalt der Aktivitäten</i> いろいろなアクティビティがある 특별활동의 다양성	5	4	3	2	1	0
62. Interest level of activities 活動的趣味性 <i>Interessenlevel der Aktivitäten</i> 내용이面白い 특별활동의 흥미도	5	4	3	2	1	0
63. Value for money 是否合算 <i>Preisleistungsverhältnis</i> 費用から見て価値がある 특별활동의 효율성	5	4	3	2	1	0
64. Organisation of the programme 組織情况 <i>Programmorganisation</i> 運営がスムーズである 특별활동의 조직	5	4	3	2	1	0
65. Overall quality of the activities programme 对课外活动的全面评估 <i>Qualität des Freizeitprogramms insgesamt</i> アクティビティに対する総合満足度 특별활동에 대한 전반적인 만족도	5	4	3	2	1	0

9 GENERAL

一般情况 • Allgemeines • 全般について • 일반사항

What is your level of satisfaction with these general aspects of the ELC service?

总的来说，您对您所在的英语语言学校是否满意？

Wie zufrieden sind Sie mit diesen allgemeinen Aspekten des ELC-Services?

あなたの英語学校のサービス全般について、あなたの満足度はどうですか？

ELC서비스의 일반사항에 대한 귀하의 만족도를 평가해 주십시오

	Far better than I expected	Better than I expected	About what I expected	Worse than I expected	Far worse than I expected	Don't Know
66. Overall organisation of the ELC 学校总的组织情况 <i>Organisation des ELC insgesamt</i> 運営全般 ELC의 전체 조직	5	4	3	2	1	0
67. Atmosphere in the ELC 学校气氛 <i>Atmosphäre im ELC (wie wohl Sie sich dort fühlen)</i> 全体的な雰囲気 ELC의 분위기	5	4	3	2	1	0
68. General physical comfort level in the ELC 环境设备 <i>Allgemeines körperliches Wohlergehen im ELC</i> 設備面から見た快適さ ELC내에서 신체적인 안락함의 수준	5	4	3	2	1	0
69. Encouragement to achieve your goals 是否鼓励您达到学习目的 <i>Ermutigung, Ihre Ziele zu erreichen</i> 目標に向かい、勇気づけられる 학생의 목표달성을 위한 ELC의 격려	5	4	3	2	1	0
70. Opportunity for you to meet students from a range of different countries 见到来自不同国家学生的机会 <i>Gelegenheit, Studenten aus verschiedensten Ländern kennenzulernen</i> 多国籍の学生と出会うことができる 타국 학생들과 어울릴 수 있는 기회의 정도	5	4	3	2	1	0

	Far better than I expected	Better than I expected	About what I expected	Worse than I expected	Far worse than I expected	Don't Know
71. Opportunity for you to use your English 使用英語の機会 <i>Gelegenheit, Ihre Englischkenntnisse zu benutzen</i> 英語を使うチャンスがある 영어를 사용할 수 있는 기회의 정도	5	4	3	2	1	0
72. Rate of improvement in your English language proficiency, in your opinion 依您看是否能迅速提高您的英语水平 <i>Verbesserung Ihres Englisch-Leistungsstandes Ihrer Meinung nach</i> 自分の英語の伸びを自己採点すると 영어력향상 가능성에 대한 개인적 의견	5	4	3	2	1	0
73. Value for money of the ELC's programme 经济上是否合算 <i>PreisLeistungsverhältnis des ELC Programms</i> 費用から見て価値がある ELC 수강료의 효용가치	5	4	3	2	1	0
74. Overall quality of the ELC's service 对学校总情况的全面评估 <i>Qualität des ELC-Services insgesamt</i> 全般についての総合満足度 ELC의 전체 서비스에 대한 만족도	5	4	3	2	1	0

PART TWO

第二部份 • Teil 2 • 第2部 • 제2장

In Part Two, follow the instructions for each question.

请按照要求回答本部份的问题。

In Teil 2 befolgen Sie die Anweisungen für die einzelnen Fragen

第2部では、各質問の指示に従って下さい。

2장에서는 각 항의 지시에 따라 질문에 응답해 주십시오.

10. YOUR RECOMMENDATION

是否愿意推荐 • Ihre Empfehlung

あなたは、この英語学校を推薦しますか? • 추천

Would you recommend this English language centre to your friends?

Please tick in a circle to indicate your opinion.

您是否愿意向朋友推荐这所英语语言学校? 请选择一项:

Würden Sie dieses ELC Ihren Freunden empfehlen? Bitte kreuzen Sie Ihre Wahl an.

あなたは、この英語学校を友達に勧めますか? 自分の意見に近いものを一つチェックしてください。

귀하의 친구들에게 현재 귀하가 다니고 있는 ELC를 추천하겠습니까?

귀하의 의견과 일치하는 문항의 √을 하십시오.

75. YES, I WOULD recommend this English language centre to my friends.

是, 我愿意。

JA, ich würde dieses ELC meinen Freunden empfehlen.

はい。私はこの英語学校を、友達に勧めます。

예, 제 친구들에게 현재 다니고 있는 ELC를 추천하겠습니다.

76. NO, I WOULD NOT recommend this English language centre to my friends.

不, 我不愿意。

NEIN, ich würde dieses ELC meinen Freunden NICHT empfehlen.

いいえ。私はこの英語学校を、友達に勧めません。

아니요, 제 친구들에게 현재 제가 다니고 있는 ELC를 추천하지 않겠습니다.

11. YOUR PERSONAL DATA

个人情况咨询 • *Ihre Personalien* • 回答者データ • 작성자의 인적사항

Please tick in a circle or write down the information asked for.

请划钩或填写。

Bitte kreuzen Sie den Kreis an oder machen Sie die erforderlichen Angaben.

各質問について、チェックまたは記入してください。

빈칸이나 동그라미에 √을 하거나 질의사항에 응답해 주십시오.

77. I have been at this English language centre for ___ month(s)___ week(s)

我已在这所英语语言学校学习了 _____ (月) _____ (星期)。

Ich bin seit _____ Monaten _____ Wochen in diesem ELC.

私はこの英語学校で、_____年_____週間、勉強しています。

저는 현재 다니고 있는 ELC에서 _____개월 _____주 동안 공부하고 있습니다.

78. I am a visitor to New Zealand.

我持新西兰观光签证。

Ich bin Besucher in Neuseeland

私は、ニュージーランドの一時滞在者です。

저는 뉴질랜드 방문자입니다.

I hold permanent residency (PR) in New Zealand.

我有新西兰永久居留权。

Ich habe Aufenthaltserlaubnis in Neuseeland

私は、ニュージーランドの永住権保持者です。

저는 뉴질랜드 영주권자입니다.

I am a New Zealand citizen.

我是新西兰公民。

Ich bin StaatsbürgerIn in Neuseeland

私は、ニュージーランド国民です。

저는 뉴질랜드 시민권자입니다.

79. My country of origin is:

我的出生国是:

Mein Geburtsland ist:

私の出身国は

です。

저의 국적은:

My first (native) language is:

我的第一语言 (母语)是:

Meine Muttersprache ist:

私の母国語は

です。

저의 모국어는:

80. My age range is: 我的年龄(岁): • *Meine Altersgruppe:* • 私の年齢は: • 저의 연령군은:

<input type="radio"/> 14-19 yrs	<input type="radio"/> 20-29 yrs	<input type="radio"/> 30-39 yrs	<input type="radio"/> 40+ yrs
---------------------------------	---------------------------------	---------------------------------	-------------------------------

81. I am
我的性别:

Ich bin:

私の性別は

저의 성별은 :

<input type="radio"/> female 女 <i>weiblich</i> 女性 여성	<input type="radio"/> male 男 <i>männlich</i> 男性 남성
--	--

82. Future contact

您是否愿意本研究人员再次与您联系? 请选择一项: • *Weiterer Kontakt*

将来、あなたに連絡をとることはできますか? • 향후 연락처

I am willing to be contacted by the researcher again in the future regarding my opinions of English language centre service. My name and address in my home country are:
如你再次与我联系征询对英语语言学校的意见, 我愿意回答。 我的姓名和回国後的地址是:

Ich bin einverstanden, wenn der Forscher sich noch einmal mit mir in Verbindung setzt, um mich über meine Meinung zum ELC-Service zu befragen. Mein Name und meine Adresse in der Heimat sind:

はい。英語学校のサービスについて追加調査を受け、さらに意見を述べる用意があります。私の母国での連絡先は以下の通りです。

설문조사의 기획자가 뉴질랜드의 영어교육센터에 관해 향후 제게 연락을 취하는 것에 기꺼이 응합니다. 제 이름과 모국내 주소는 다음과 같습니다.

I do not wish to be contacted again by the researcher.

抱歉, 我不希望再次联系。

Ich möchte nicht, daß der Forscher sich noch einmal mit mir in Verbindung setzt.

いいえ。氏名を明かしたくないので、連絡をとって欲しくはありません。

설문조사의 기획자가 다시 제게 연락하는 걸 원치 않습니다.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THIS SURVEY.

非常感谢您参与本调查。

VIELEN DANK FÜR IHRE TEILNAHME AN DIESER UMFRAGE.

当调查にご協力いただき、ありがとうございました。

설문조사에 응해주셔서 대단히 감사드립니다.

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APPENDIX J: ELC Client Satisfaction Questionnaire: Items and Sources

QUESTIONNAIRE ITEM	SOURCE
01. Their professionalism	CFG
02. Their teaching skills	CFG
03. Their knowledge of the subject	CFG
04. How well prepared they are for the lesson	R
05. Their ability to be flexible (How well they adapt the lesson to your needs)	CFG
06. Their ability to teach interesting lessons	CFG
07. Their friendliness	CFG
08. Their communication skills	R
09. Their ability to be patient with you	CFG
10. Their ability to give clear explanations	CFG
11. Their willingness to help you in class	CFG
12. Their availability to help you outside class	CFG
13. Overall quality of the ELC's teachers	R
14. Effectiveness of the lessons	CFG
15. Interest level of the lessons	CFG
16. Lesson content	CFG
17. Relevance of the lessons to your learning needs	CFG
18. Quality of the learning materials	R
19. Methods used to teach you	CFG
20. Class size	CFG
21. Mix of nationalities in class	CFG
22. Overall quality of English lessons	R
23. Enrolment (when you arrived at the ELC)	R
24. Placement (assessing your English on arrival, putting you in the right class)	CFG
25. Information (keeping you informed about the ELC's procedures, regulations etc)	CFG
26. Complaints (dealing with student complaints about the ELC's service)	CFG
27. Homestay administration	R/CFG
28. Enquiries (dealing with student questions, requests etc)	R
29. Student feedback (asking you for your opinion about the ELC's service)	CFG
30. Overall quality of the ELC's procedures	R
31. Accuracy of the information in the ELC's publicity materials	CFG
32. Effectiveness of the ELC's communication with you BEFORE your arrival in NZ	CFG
33. Effectiveness of the ELC's communication with you AFTER your arrival in NZ	CFG
34. Overall quality of the ELC's communication	R
35. Their friendliness	CFG
36. Their willingness to help you	CFG
37. Their availability to help you	CGG

CFG = client focus groups
R = Researcher

QUESTIONNAIRE ITEM	SOURCE
38. Their ability to understand your needs	L
39. Their ability to give you the information you asked for	CFG
40. Their communication skills	R
41. Overall quality of the administrative staff	R
42. Match between the kind of homestay you requested and the homestay you got	CFG
43. Opportunity for you to speak English with your host family	CFG
44. Host family's willingness to help you improve your English	CFG
45. Friendliness of your host family	CFG
69. Amount of time the host family spends with you	CFG
47. Atmosphere (your feeling in the homestay)	CFG
48. Physical comfort level	L
49. Quality of the food	CFG
50. Overall quality of your homestay	R
51. Classrooms	CFG
52. Student lounge/cafeteria	R
53. Self-access unit	R
54. Toilets / bathrooms	R
55. Library	CFG
56. Computers	CFG
57. Audio equipment	CFG
58. Video equipment	CFG
59. Overall quality of the ELC's facilities	R
60. Information about the programme provided to you by ELC	R/CFG
61. Variety of activities	R
62. Interest level of activities	R
63. Value for money	CFG
64. Organisation of the programme	R
65. Overall quality of the activities programme	R
66. Overall organisation of the ELC	R
67. Atmosphere in the ELC	CFG
68. General physical comfort level in the ELC	R/CFG
69. Encouragement to achieve your goals	R
70. Opportunity for you to meet students from a range of different countries	CFG
71. Opportunity for you to use your English	CFG
72. Rate of improvement in your English language proficiency, in your opinion	CFG
73. Value for money of the ELC's programme	CFG
74. Overall quality of the ELC's service	R

APPENDIX K: ELC Service Climate Survey: Pretest Feedback Form

ELC STAFF QUESTIONNAIRE PRE-TEST: Feedback

Dear ELC Staff Member

The aim of this pretesting session is to check on the validity and accuracy of the survey questionnaire.

- First, please complete the questionnaire. When you start and finish, check your watch to see how long you took.
- Then answer the questions below and on the other side of this page.
- When you have finished, give the questionnaire back to me.

Your responses to these questions will help me fix any problems and generally improve the instrument in preparation for the survey proper. The information you provide during this pre-testing session will be handled confidentially and will not be analysed or reported on in any way. You can also be sure of complete anonymity.

Many thanks for your help in pre-testing this questionnaire.

John Walker
Department of Management
Massey University

SPACE FOR COMMENTS

1. What theme or general topic do you think this questionnaire addresses?

2. Do you think the questions do an effective job of covering this topic?

3. Did you think any important questions were omitted? If so, which one(s)?

Very Effective Effective Ineffective Very Ineffective

- No
- Yes, I did think so, namely.....

SPACE FOR COMMENTS

4. How clear were the instructions?

- In the "Instructions for Completion"?
- Throughout the different parts?

5. How clear was the layout of the questionnaire? (If unclear, say why.)

6. Was there enough space to respond to open-ended questions?

7. Please identify any questions you did not understand e.g. any ambiguous questions?

8. Was the question sequence logical?

9. Were the classification questions satisfactory?

10. How long did it take you to complete?

11. Any other comments?

Very clear	Clear	Unclear	Very Unclear
Very clear	Clear	Unclear	Very Unclear

Very clear	Clear	Unclear	Very Unclear
------------	-------	---------	--------------

Yes

No

Yes

No. Why not?.....

Yes

No. Why not?.....

APPENDIX L: ELC Client Satisfaction Survey: Pretest Feedback Form

ELC STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE PRE-TEST: Feedback

Dear English Language Student

The aim of this pre-test is to check the attached survey questionnaire for students at English language centres in N.Z.

- First, please complete the questionnaire. When you start and finish, check your watch to see how long you took.
- Then answer the questions below and on the other side of this page.
- When you have finished, give the questionnaire back to me.

Your answers will help me fix any problems with the questionnaire. The information you give in the questionnaire will be confidential and will not be analysed or reported on. You can also be sure of complete anonymity. Many thanks for your help in pre-testing this questionnaire.

John Walker
Department of Management
Massey University

1. How long did it take you to complete the questionnaire?

2. Do you think any important questions were left out?
If so, which one(s)?

3. Is the layout clear? (e.g. are the words easy to read?)

4. Any other comments?

- Yes (If "yes", say which questions are missing)
 No
- Yes
 No. (If "no", what is NOT clear?)

Please turn the page and complete the grid on the other side.

Questionnaire Section	Were the instructions clear?	Were the questions clear?	Was the translation clear?
Instructions for completion	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No. Why not?		<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No. Why not?
Instructions for Part One	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No. Why not?		<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No. Why not?
1. The Teachers	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No. Why not?	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No. Which ones?	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No. Why not?
2. The English Lessons	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No. Why not?	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No. Which ones?	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No. Why not?
3. The Service Procedures	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No. Why not?	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No. Which ones?	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No. Why not?
4. Communication	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No. Why not?	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No. Which ones?	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No. Why not?
5. Administrative staff	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No. Why not?	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No. Which ones?	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No. Why not?
6. Your Homestay	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No. Why not?	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No. Which ones?	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No. Why not?
7. The Facilities	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No. Why not?	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No. Which ones?	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No. Why not?
8. The Activities Programme	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No. Why not?	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No. Which ones?	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No. Why not?
9. General	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No. Why not?	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No. Which ones?	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No. Why not?
Part Two Instructions	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No. Why not?		<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No. Why not?
10. Importance of component parts	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No. Why not?	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No. Which ones?	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No. Why not?
11. Your Recommendation	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No. Why not?	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No. Which ones?	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No. Why not?
12. Your Personal Data	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No. Why not?	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No. Which ones?	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No. Why not?

Describe problems & make comments here.

APPENDIX M: ELC Client Satisfaction Survey: Letter of Invitation to Participants

Dear English Language Student

ENGLISH LANGUAGE CENTRE CLIENT SURVEY

I am a lecturer in the Department of Management, **Massey University** and I am inviting you to take part in a survey which looks at English language centres in New Zealand. The aim of the survey is to learn more about client satisfaction with the service they have received from English language centres.

You have been selected as representative of the many English language centre students currently studying in New Zealand. The survey gives you the chance to say how satisfied you are with the service provided by the English language centre you are attending. The survey is being carried out as part of my doctorate study at **Massey University** and is supported by **Education New Zealand**.

Your participation in the survey is entirely voluntary. If you agree to take part in the survey, you have the right to refuse to answer any particular question or end your participation at any time. I assure you that any data you provide will be handled in the utmost confidence and you will not be identified as a participant in the survey. English language centres may request and may receive only a summary of the data for their organisation.

This means that **NO ONE** in your English language centre will see your questionnaire. Your English language centre will **NOT** be involved in processing your questionnaire and will **NOT** be informed about your individual responses. You can therefore be assured of absolute confidentiality.

Many thanks for taking the time to complete the survey. Your participation will represent a valuable contribution to our knowledge about English language centre service. I wish you all the very best for your future English language studies.

John Walker

SEE ATTACHED PAGE FOR MANDARIN, JAPANESE, KOREAN AND GERMAN VERSIONS.

亲爱的英语语言学生:

我是梅西大学管理系的讲师,我邀请您参与有关新西兰英语语言学校的调查,这项调查的目的是为了了解学生对英语语言学校是否满意。

我邀请您作为在新西兰语言学校学习的众多学生的代表,表达对您所在的语言学校所提供的各项服务是否满意。本调查也是我在梅西大学作博士论文内容的一部份,得到《新西兰教育》机构的支持。

您是否参与本调查是完全自愿的。如参与本调查,您也有权拒绝回答某个问题,或随时退出本调查。我向您保证您所提供的内容是绝对保密的,你也绝对不会被认出。

答毕本问卷后,请直接寄到梅西大学我收。这就是说您所在的语言学校没人会看到您的答卷。您所在的英语语言学校不参与本调查,也不会被告知有关您的回答。您可以完全彻底地放心。

非常感谢您费时参与本调查。您的意见对于我们了解新西兰英语语言学校的各项服务情况将是很宝贵的。敬祝您在今後的英语学习中一切顺利。

约翰·沃克 (John Walker)

英語学習生の皆さん

英語学校(イングリッシュ・ランゲージ・センター)の顧客調査

私は、マッセイ大学経営学部講師のジョン・ウォーカーと申します。ニュージーランドの英語学校に関する調査に、皆様のご協力をお願いいたします。当調査の目的は英語学校で学ぶ学生の皆さんが、どれだけサービスに対し満足しているかを知ることです。

あなたは、現在ニュージーランドの英語学校で学んでいる多くの学生の代表として、当調査のために選ばれました。あなたがいま通っている英語学校のサービスについて、満足度を教えてください。当調査は、マッセイ大学での私の博士課程の研究の一部として行われるものであり、「エデュケーション・ニュージーランド」のサポートを受けています。

当調査へのご参加は完全にあなたの自由であり、強制ではありません。協力していただける場合も、質問によっては回答しない権利があります。途中で中止することもご自由です。また、あなたの回答した内容は他にもれぬよう厳重に管理されます。この調査から、あなたが特定されることはありません。

回答終了後は、マッセイ大学の私宛てに、直接郵送してください。あなたの英語学校の関係者が、あなたの回答を読むことは一切ありません。また、あなたの回答の処理に関わったり、個々の回答内容について情報を得ることもありません。あなたの回答は守秘されますので、ご安心ください。

当調査にご協力いただき、誠にありがとうございます。あなたの回答は、英語学校のサービスに関する調査の貴重な資料となります。あなたの英語学習が、今後より大きな実を結びますよう、お祈り申し上げます。

ジョン・ウォーカー
マッセイ大学経営学部

Liebe EnglischsprachstudentInnen!

KUNDENBEFRAGUNG ZUR SERVICELEISTUNG IN ENGLISCH-SPRACHZENTREN

Ich bin Dozent im Fachbereich Management an der Massey University und möchte Sie einladen, an einer Umfrage teilzunehmen, die Englisch-Sprachzentren in Neuseeland untersucht. Das Ziel der Umfrage ist es, mehr über die Zufriedenheit der Kunden mit dem von neuseeländischen Englisch-Sprachzentren angebotenen Service zu erfahren.

Sie sind als stellvertretend für die vielen Englisch-SprachstudentInnen, die zur Zeit in Neuseeland studieren, ausgewählt worden. Die Umfrage bietet Ihnen Gelegenheit, Ihre Meinung über das Angebot des Englisch-Sprachzentrums, welches Sie gerade besuchen, zu äussern. Ihre Teilnahme an der Umfrage wird einen wertvollen Beitrag zu unserem Wissen über den Service der Englisch-Sprachzentren leisten.

Diese Umfrage wird als Teil meiner Doktorarbeit durchgeführt. Sie wird von Massey University beaufsichtigt und wird von Education New Zealand unterstützt.

Wenn Sie sich bereit erklären, an der Umfrage teilzunehmen, haben Sie das Recht, die Beantwortung einer Frage zu verweigern und auch zu jeder Zeit aufzuhören. Ich versichere Ihnen, dass die von Ihnen gelieferten Angaben mit dem grössten Vertrauen gehandhabt werden, und Sie können als Teilnehmer an der Umfrage nicht identifiziert werden. Wenn Sie Ihren Fragebogen ausgefüllt haben, bitte ich Sie, ihn direkt an mich zu senden. Dies bedeutet, dass Ihr Englisch-Sprachzentrum an der Auswertung Ihres Fragebogens nicht beteiligt und NICHT über Ihre Angaben informiert wird. Sie können sich also absoluter Vertraulichkeit sicher sein.

Vielen Dank für Ihre Teilnahme an der Umfrage. Ich wünsche Ihnen alles Gute für die Zukunft mit Ihrem Englisch-Studium.

John Walker

영어 교육생 여러분

영어 어학원 수강생 설문조사 건

저는 매시대학 경영시스템학과의 강사 존 워커이며, 현재 뉴질랜드의 영어 어학원에서 제공하는 서비스의 질에 관한 설문조사를 실시하고자 합니다. 이번 설문조사의 주 목적은 영어 어학원에서 제공하는 서비스에 대한 수강생들의 만족도를 알아보기 위한 것입니다.

여러분은 현재 뉴질랜드의 수많은 영어 어학원에 재학 중인 학생들의 대표로 이번 조사에 참여하게 됩니다. 저희는 이 설문조사를 통해 여러분이 재학 중인 어학원에서 제공하는 교육 서비스 전반에 관한 여러분의 솔직한 의견을 듣고자 합니다.

설문조사는 저의 매시대학 박사학위 과정 중 일부로 실시되는 것이며, 뉴질랜드 교육재단이 후원하고 있습니다.

이 설문조사의 참여 여부는 전적으로 자의에 의한 것입니다. 만일 귀하가 설문조사에 참여하고 싶다면, 설문지를 작성하면서 특정 질문에 대해 답변하지 않을 권리가 있으며 또한 언제든지 참여를 중단할 수도 있습니다. 귀하가 제공한 자료는 엄중한 보안하에 관리되며, 귀하의 설문조사 참여 여부는 절대 외부로 노출되지 않음을 보증하는 바입니다.

설문지 작성이 끝난 후, 매시대학에 근무하는 제게 직접 우편으로 해당 설문지를 발송해 주시기 바랍니다. 다시 말해서 귀하가 재학 중인 영어 어학원의 어느 누구에게도 설문지를 보이지 말 것이며, 해당 어학원의 어느 누구도 귀하의 설문조사 작성에 직 간접으로 관여하지 말도록 하며, 또한 설문조사의 답변 내용을 어느 누구에게도 알리지 마십시오. 이렇게 함으로써 귀하에 관한 철저한 보안이 유지됩니다.

이번 설문조사를 작성하는데 시간을 할애해 주셔서 다시 한 번 감사드립니다. 귀하의 답변은 뉴질랜드의 영어 어학원들에 대한 정보를 얻는데 귀중한 자료가 될 것입니다. 향후 여러분이 재학 중인 영어 어학원에서 원하는 목표를 모두 성취하길 기원하는 바입니다.

존 워커 드림

English Language Centre Service Climate and Client Satisfaction

APPENDIX N: ELC Service Climate Survey: Letter of Invitation to Participants

Dear English Language Centre Staff Member

ENGLISH LANGUAGE CENTRE SERVICE SURVEY

I lecture in Management in the Department of Management at Massey University. I am inviting you to take part in a national survey which looks at service practices in English language centres in New Zealand. The aim of the survey is to obtain a clearer picture of service aspects of English language centre operations.

You have been selected as representative of English language centre professionals around the country. Your participation in the survey will make a valuable contribution to our knowledge about English language centre services.

The survey is being carried out as part of my doctorate study at Massey University and is supported by Education New Zealand.

I assure you that any data you provide will be handled in the utmost confidence. Completed questionnaires are returned directly to me and survey participants cannot be identified. Except for aggregated national data, no data from the survey will be made available to the management of your English language centre in any form whatsoever. Individual English language centres will not be identified in any subsequent reporting of the findings. You can therefore be assured of complete anonymity.

Many thanks for taking the time to complete the survey.

John Walker
Department of Management
Massey University

**APPENDIX O: ELC Client Focus Groups:
Participant Consent Form**

**Massey University,
Department of Management Systems**

LANGUAGE SCHOOL MANAGEMENT RESEARCH

CONSENT FORM FOR STUDENT FOCUS GROUPS

RESEARCHER: John Walker

RESEARCH AREA: Management of English language schools in New Zealand

THE PROJECT I have read the *Information for Student Focus Group Participants* and understand the aims and benefits of the project. My questions about the project have been answered to my satisfaction and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

THE FOCUS GROUPS I have read the *Information for Student Focus Group Participants* and understand the aims of the focus group and the focus group procedures. I also understand that I can leave the focus group at any time. I can also refuse to answer any questions during the focus group discussion.

CONFIDENTIALITY I agree to give information to the researcher (John Walker). I understand that this information will be completely confidential to the researcher. I understand that if this information is presented in a research report, my name will not be used and it will not be possible to identify me.

TAPE-RECORDING

I agree to the focus group discussion being tape recorded. I understand that I have the right to have the tape recorder turned off at any time. I know, also, that I can ask for a copy of the tape .

I do not agree to the focus group discussion being tape recorded.

Please tick one box.

DECLARATION I agree to take part in this project under the conditions set out in the *Information for Student Focus Group Participants* .

SIGNATURE: _____

NAME: _____

DATE: _____ 1999

I wish / DO NOT wish to have a copy of the focus group tape.

I wish / DO NOT wish to have a summary copy of the project findings.

Please tick and delete where appropriate.

APPENDIX P: ELC Staff Focus Groups: Participant Consent Form

**Massey University,
Department of Management Systems**

TESOL MANAGEMENT RESEARCH

CONSENT FORM FOR STAFF FOCUS GROUPS

RESEARCHER: John Walker

RESEARCH AREA: Management of TESOL operations in New Zealand

THE PROJECT I have read the accompanying sheet *Information for Focus Group Participants* and have had the purposes and benefits of the project explained to me. My questions about the project have been answered to my satisfaction and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

THE FOCUS GROUPS I have read the accompanying sheet *Information for Focus Group Participants* and understand the purposes of the focus groups and the procedures involved. I also understand that I am free to withdraw from the focus group at any time or to decline to answer any particular questions during the focus group discussion.

CONFIDENTIALITY I agree to provide information to the researcher on the understanding that it will remain completely confidential to the researcher. If reported in the research, such information will be presented in a format which makes it impossible to identify me personally.

TAPE-RECORDING

I agree to the focus group discussion being tape recorded on the understanding that I have the right to have the tape recorder turned off at any time. I know, furthermore, that I can request a copy of the tape .

I do not agree to the focus group discussion being tape recorded.

Please tick one box.

DECLARATION I agree to participate in this project under the conditions set out in the *Information for Focus Group Participants* .

SIGNATURE: _____

NAME: _____

DATE: _____ 1999

I wish / DO NOT wish to have a copy of the focus group tape.

I wish / DO NOT wish to have a summary copy of the project findings.

Please tick and delete where appropriate.

APPENDIX Q: ELC Staff Focus Group Data: Themes, Codes, Frequencies

1. SERVICE MANAGEMENT ISSUES

CODE, ORGANISED BY CATEGORY	Frequency
1. TASK ENVIRONMENT	[213]
Existence of supportive, collegial, team environment	76
Establishing and maintaining effective service systems	46
Managing disparity between commercial and educational demands on staff	30
Managing clients as marketers of the service/organisation	19
Existence of ongoing staff interaction/communication	16
Importance of effective management of homestay programme	16
Displaying common/consistent front to clients	6
Managing client feedback	4
2. CLIENT SERVICE ENVIRONMENT	[206]
Establishing and maintaining client happiness, satisfaction	52
Managing client expectations	39
Managing client individual needs and wants	36
Establishing/maintaining rapport with client	30
Establishing/maintaining caring/friendly/comfortable service environment	18
Maintaining individual contact with clients	16
Managing client diversity	11
Maintaining a harmonious client environment	4
TOTAL	419

2. SPECIFIC STAFF SERVICE ROLES / BEHAVIOURS

CODE, ORGANISED BY CATEGORY	Frequency
1. PASTORAL CARE / COUNSELLING ROLE	[50]
Providing pastoral care/counselling	21
Providing academic/career counselling	10
As motivators	9
Fostering student personal development	6
Fostering intercultural socialisation	4
2. CLIENT SUPPORT IN NEW ENVIRONMENT ROLE	[49]
As interface with NZ environment	19
As teachers of life skills for NZ environment	16
As a source of knowledge and information about NZ environment	14

3. SERVICE ORIENTATION	[35]
Displaying professionalism/dedication	12
Having empathy with client situation	9
Commitment to giving excellent service	8
In loco parentis	6
4. MARKETING ROLE	[30]
Marketers of the service/the organisation	26
Marketers of TESOL	4
5. TEACHING ROLE	[24]
Responsibility for client success	12
Promoting client language autonomy	10
Training clients to optimally access service	2
TOTAL	188

3. DESIRABLE ELC MANAGER ATTRIBUTES

CODE	Frequency
Encourages/supports staff professional development	30
Is generally supportive of staff efforts	23
Communicates effectively with staff/keeps staff informed	20
Monitors staff performance	12
Is aware of/understands TESOL work	8
Delegates to staff/allows staff flexibility of action	8
Shares commercial issues with staff	8
Praises/recognises staff excellence	6
Is approachable/listens to staff	6
Has management skills/training	6
Is seen by staff as credible/trustworthy	2
TOTAL	129

4. BARRIERS TO PROVIDING EXCELLENT SERVICE

CODE	Frequency
Lack of money/resources/equipment/appropriate materials	33
Lack of time	17
The nature of the client	17
Unpredictable nature of demand vs supply	14
Lack of effective service systems	9
Poor manager understanding of nature of TESOL service	8
Lack of space	3
Lack of suitable host families	2
Lack of staff skill/professionalism	2
Lack of definitive strategy	1
Lack of communication	1
Lack of professional development	1
Lack of recognition for efforts	1
TOTAL	109

5. SERVICE FEATURES

CODES	Frequency
Staff awareness of TESOL as a service	40
Service extends beyond classroom	16
Multidimensional nature of service	13
Teachers work independently of each other	10
Key role of links with local community	7
Service extends beyond normal parameters of space and time	6
Client expectation of staff member as friend	5
Key role of homestay in creating client satisfaction	4
TOTAL	101

6. WORKPLACE/EMPLOYMENT ISSUES

CODE	Frequency
Resourcing issues	18
Staff developing themselves professionally	15
Teacher security of tenure	11
Nature of working/contract conditions	11
Harmonious working environment	8
Favourable layout of work area	2
Teacher qualifications	2
TOTAL	67

APPENDIX R: ELC Client Focus Group Data: Themes, Codes, Frequencies

1. ESOL TEACHER

CODE, ORGANISED BY CATEGORY	FREQ
AS CLASSROOM PROFESSIONAL	[59]
The teacher should be professional.	13
The teacher should be an effective classroom practitioner.	13
The teacher should make use of good teaching materials.	9
The teacher should be flexible in terms of teaching style/lesson content.	8
The teacher should be a good communicator.	6
The teacher should correct errors in clients' spoken English.	5
The teacher should be aware of clients' strengths and weaknesses	5
AS COUNSELLOR/ ADVISER/ COACH	[34]
The teacher should be available to individual clients outside the classroom.	17
The teacher should motivate, encourage and push clients to succeed.	7
The teacher should be an advisor/counsellor to clients.	5
The teacher should help clients with their problems	5
PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES	[27]
The teacher should be friendly.	8
The teacher should be strict and closely direct clients.	7
The teacher should be interested in the clients	4
The teacher should be humorous but also serious at times.	4
The teacher should be patient when clients are having difficulties.	4
TOTAL	120

2. ENGLISH LANGUAGE CENTRE MILIEU

CODE	FREQ
The ELC environment should be friendly, comfortable and relaxed.	25
The ELC should be like a family home.	11
The language school environment should encourage clients to speak English.	9
The ELC should have a mix of cultures/nationalities.	2
It's better if the ELC is small.	2
TOTAL	49

3. HOMESTAY

CODE, ORGANISED BY CATEGORY	FREQ
HOMESTAY MILIEU	[26]
Host parents should be like substitute parents to clients.	7
Host families should provide clients with a friendly, comfortable home environment.	6
The ELC should be responsible for ensuring the quality of the homestay.	4
The homestay should, as far as possible, match the client's wishes.	3
Host families should provide decent food.	3
Host families should spend time with the clients.	3
CONTEXT FOR DEVELOPMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY	[20]
Host families should encourage and participate in English conversation with clients.	9
Homestay is an important part of the ELC service as it provides the opportunity to speak English.	8
Host families should be patient/sympathetic towards clients with language difficulties.	3
TOTAL	46

4. CLIENT FEEDBACK PROCEDURES

CODE	FREQ
ELCs should have effective procedures for obtaining feedback from clients.	17
Barriers exist that prevent clients from providing ELCs with useful feedback.	13
ELCs should make it possible for clients to give feedback in a variety of ways.	13
TOTAL	43

5. MISCELLANEOUS ISSUES

CODE	FREQ
The ELC should be conveniently located.	12
ELCs should ensure students succeed.	8
ELCs should provide value for money.	7
Miscellaneous	6
ELCs should be interested in students as more than just a source of income.	4
Issues relating to trips/activities.	4
TOTAL	41

6. FACILITIES AND RESOURCES

CODE	FREQ
The ELC should provide access to computers with internet capability.	11
The ELC should have good audio/video facilities and equipment.	10
The ELC should provide a good level of physical comfort.	5
The ELC should provide cooking, games and client lounge facilities.	5
The ELC should have adequate reading and library facilities.	4
The ELC should have good resources/facilities in general.	4
TOTAL	39

7. ELC COMMUNICATION

CODE	FREQ
The ELC should communicate effectively and honestly with clients.	17
Publicity materials, websites, agents should provide honest, accurate picture of ELC	12
There should be effective communication between the ELC and client's host family.	9
TOTAL	38

8. ENJOYED MOST AND LEAST

CODE, ORGANISED BY CATEGORY	FREQ
MOST	[22]
Interaction with other people/cultures.	17
Good teaching/teachers.	3
Miscellaneous.	2
LEAST	[15]
Poor/ineffective lessons	8
Miscellaneous	7
TOTAL	37

9. PLACEMENT PROCEDURES

CODE	FREQ
The placement procedure should be well organized and effective.	8
The ELC should clarify the client's goals first.	6
It is important that clients are placed in appropriate class/at appropriate level.	4
Clients should be able to switch class if they want to.	4
TOTAL	22

10. ENGLISH LESSONS

CODE	FREQ
English lessons should be interesting/not boring.	9
English lessons should be taught in small classes.	7
Number of teachers	2
TOTAL	18

11. ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

CODE	FREQ
Administrative staff should be able to give clients info about NZ environment.	7
Administrative staff should be friendly, helpful and encouraging.	6
TOTAL	13

APPENDIX S: ELC Client Satisfaction Survey: Respondent Countries of Origin

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	COUNT	VALID PERCENT	COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	COUNT	VALID PERCENT
P. R. China	731	46.0	Tokelau	1	.1
Japan	319	20.1	Cambodia	3	.2
Korea (South)	292	18.4	Macedonia	1	.1
Thailand	37	2.3	Bulgaria	1	.1
Germany	7	.4	Pakistan	1	.1
Switzerland	33	2.1	India	3	.2
Taiwan	59	3.7	Vietnam	14	.9
Indonesia	2	.1	Chile	2	.1
Hungary	1	.1	France	2	.1
Brazil	13	.8	Myanmar	1	.1
Russia	4	.3	Kuwait	1	.1
Czech Republic	7	.4	Mongolia	1	.1
Srilanka	1	.1	Colombia	3	.2
Hongkong	18	1.1	Singapore	1	.1
Yugoslavia	3	.2	New Caledonia	1	.1
Ethiopia	1	.1	Tahiti	3	.2
Somalia	2	.1	Bangladesh	1	.1
Romania	3	.2	Denmark	3	.2
Sudan	1	.1	Sweden	2	.1
Malaysia	8	.5	Total	1588	100.0
Eritrea	1	.1	NR	96	
				1684	

APPENDIX T: ELC Service Climate Survey: Combined Descriptive Statistics

ITEM	N	M	SE	SD	Skewness	Disagree/ strongly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree /strongly agree
Management service practices: In this English language centre, management..								
01 ensures that staff are familiar with the service goals.	263	3.59	.067	1.08	-.794	16.7%	19.0%	64.3%
02 ensures that staff are familiar with the service policies/procedures.	267	3.59	.066	1.07	-.798	19.1%	13.9%	67.0%
03 ensures that staff know how to deliver superior service.	269	3.41	.064	1.05	-.526	19.0%	27.9%	53.2%
04 regularly monitors service standards.	264	3.42	.068	1.10	-.537	21.6%	22.3%	56.1%
05 leads by example in providing superior service to clients.	262	3.55	.074	1.20	-.667	19.1%	21.0%	59.9%
06 has sound grasp of the TESOL aspects of the service.	255	3.84	.075	1.20	-.946	15.7%	13.7%	70.6%
Management communication: In this English language centre, management....								
07 routinely talks to staff about the importance of providing superior service.	270	3.42	.072	1.18	-.553	23.0%	20.4%	56.7%
08 routinely consults with staff on ways to improve service delivery.	270	3.39	.073	1.19	-.582	23.7%	19.6%	56.7%
09 provides staff with feedback on their performance.	269	3.30	.067	1.09	-.422	25.7%	22.7%	51.7%
10 shares with staff feedback obtained from clients on service quality.	266	3.47	.069	1.13	-.580	20.3%	22.2%	57.5%
11 keeps staff informed about issues affecting the organisation.	271	3.49	.071	1.17	-.800	20.7%	15.9%	63.5%
Management Support: In this English language centre, management....								
12 encourages staff in their efforts to provide superior service.	271	3.69	.064	1.05	-.825	12.9%	21.4%	65.7%
13 ensures staff have the material resources they need to provide superior service.	274	3.60	.077	1.27	-.696	23.0%	12.4%	64.6%
14 makes an effort to remove obstacles to the delivery of superior service.	270	3.50	.071	1.17	-.622	20.7%	20.0%	59.3%
15 fosters mutual cooperation and support among staff.	273	3.68	.068	1.13	-.715	17.9%	16.1%	65.9%
16 supports professional development for staff.	265	3.68	.070	1.13	-.853	15.8%	17.4%	66.8%
17 recognises the efforts of staff who provide superior service.	260	3.14	.074	1.19	-.236	29.2%	28.5%	42.3%

Staff service practices: In this English language centre, staff....	N	M	SE	SD	Skewness	Disagree /strongly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree /strongly agree
18 have a clear understanding of their service role.	272	3.82	.056	0.92	-.860	9.2%	18.8%	72.1%
19 regard marketing the organisation as part of their service role.	268	3.07	.071	1.17	-.103	34.7%	24.6%	40.7%
20 have the necessary skills to provide superior service.	261	3.86	.053	0.86	-.898	8.8%	14.9%	76.2%
21 are empowered to make decisions that affect the quality of their work.	269	3.52	.064	1.05	-.825	16.0%	22.7%	61.3%
22 actively support one another in an effort to provide superior service.	273	4.05	.054	0.88	-1.092	7.0%	11.4%	81.7%
23 communicate effectively with one another.	273	3.85	.060	0.98	-.829	12.5%	14.3%	73.3%
Client focus: In this English language centre.....								
24 there is a focus on creating client satisfaction.	274	3.99	.059	0.98	-1.148	8.4%	13.5%	78.1%
25 the service clients receive closely matches that described in the publicity materials.	241	3.63	.071	1.10	-.587	17.0%	21.6%	61.4%
26 there is effective communication with clients.	263	3.79	.058	0.94	-.887	9.1%	20.5%	70.3%
27 clients experience a relaxed, friendly service environment.	271	4.20	.052	0.86	-1.346	4.4%	10.0%	85.6%
28 there are procedures in place to ensure the delivery of superior service.	258	3.73	.065	1.04	-.762	11.6%	23.3%	65.1%
29 clients get the information they need to get the most out of the service.	252	3.77	.060	0.96	-.851	9.5%	21.4%	69.0%
30 clients experience a high standard of professional instruction.	271	4.01	.053	0.87	-.764	7.0%	15.1%	77.9%
31 it is easy for a client to access a staff member for individual help or advice.	274	4.34	.046	0.75	-1.220	2.9%	7.3%	89.8%
32 there is an effective procedure for soliciting clients' opinions about service quality.	258	3.83	.063	1.01	-.748	10.1%	21.7%	68.2%
33 if a client makes a complaint, it is taken seriously and acted on.	256	4.21	.054	0.86	-1.241	3.9%	12.1%	84.0%
34 clients are regarded as potential marketers of the organisation.	255	4.10	.057	0.90	-1.071	4.7%	16.1%	79.2%
35 the service can be adapted to suit changing client needs.	266	3.84	.056	0.89	-.679	7.1%	22.9%	69.9%
36 clients receive ethical treatment.	266	4.20	.053	0.86	-1.343	4.1%	10.5%	85.3%
Staff service ethos: In this English language centre, staff....								
37 are committed to providing superior service.	274	4.25	.044	0.73	-1.049	1.8%	9.5%	88.7%
38 feel personally responsible for the quality of service clients receive.	274	4.29	.045	0.75	-1.170	3.3%	6.6%	90.1%
39 are painstaking in their work, paying close attention to detail.	267	4.06	.055	0.91	-.968	6.0%	15.7%	78.3%

	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Skewness</i>	Disagree/ strongly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree /strongly agree
Staff personal attributes: In this English language centre, staff								
40 display a friendly manner towards clients.	275	4.62	.034	0.56	-1.649	.4%	1.8%	97.8%
41 adopt a helpful attitude towards clients.	274	4.56	.036	0.60	-1.539	.7%	2.2%	97.1%
42 empathise with clients having problems in an unfamiliar environment.	275	4.43	.042	0.70	-1.271	1.5%	6.5%	92.0%
43 exhibit patience when clients have problems communicating with them.	274	4.47	.038	0.64	-1.318	1.1%	3.6%	95.3%
44 display professionalism in their dealing with clients.	275	4.36	.044	0.72	-1.375	2.2%	5.8%	92.0%
Staff concern for clients: In this English language centre, staff...								
45 are willing to assist clients adjust to life in this country.	270	4.20	.043	0.71	-.926	2.6%	8.5%	88.9%
46 are sensitive to the needs of clients from other cultures.	273	4.36	.043	0.71	-1.191	2.2%	6.2%	91.6%
47 are willing to help clients even outside normal working hours.	265	3.88	.055	0.89	-.522	6.8%	24.2%	69.1%
48 make an effort to establish rapport with clients.	272	4.40	.041	0.67	-1.113	1.1%	6.3%	92.6%
49 go out of their way to help a client who has a problem.	274	4.19	.047	0.78	-.913	2.2%	13.5%	84.3%
50 actively support clients in efforts to achieve English language goals.	273	4.36	.043	0.70	-1.344	1.8%	5.5%	92.7%
51 cater for individual needs of clients, when appropriate.	268	4.19	.045	0.74	-1.095	1.9%	10.8%	87.3%
52 are willing to counsel clients who come to them with personal concerns.	268	4.11	.049	0.79	-.834	3.0%	15.3%	81.7%
53 take an active interest in clients' welfare.	269	4.17	.046	0.75	-.768	2.2%	13.4%	84.4%
Employment issues: In this English language centre.....								
54 staff have a feeling of job security.	269	2.94	.074	1.22	-.173	36.4%	24.5%	39.0%
55 staff do not view their jobs as stressful.	268	2.55	.069	1.13	.244	51.5%	25.0%	23.5%
56 the workload is distributed fairly.	266	3.23	.067	1.09	-.492	24.8%	26.7%	48.5%
57 staff receive fair remuneration for their work.	264	2.77	.070	1.14	.000	45.1%	21.6%	33.3%
58 there is a harmonious work environment.	273	3.77	.061	1.01	-.998	11.7%	16.5%	71.8%
59 staff enjoy a satisfactory level of physical comfort.	273	3.29	.071	1.17	-.469	27.8%	18.3%	53.8%

Resourcing: In this English language centre.....	N	M	SE	SD	Skewness	Disagree/ strongly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree /strongly agree
60 the teaching resources (e.g. textbooks, audio tapes) are of a satisfactory standard.	270	3.68	.073	1.20	-.813	21.1%	9.3%	69.6%
61 the equipment (e.g. videos, computers) is of a satisfactory standard.	272	3.43	.076	1.26	-.426	29.0%	12.9%	58.1%
62 the facilities (e.g classrooms, toilets/bathrooms) are of a satisfactory standard.	274	3.27	.080	1.33	-.320	32.8%	14.6%	52.6%

(Give) your estimate of how your clients evaluate the service provided by the ELC: Overall quality of...	N	M	SE	SD	Skewness	Worse/ far worse than they expected	About what they expected	Better/ f. better than they expected
63 the teachers?	251	3.56	.044	0.69	-.245	4.8%	40.2%	55.0%
64 the English lessons?	248	3.46	.043	0.68	.032	4.8%	49.2%	46.0%
65 the service procedures?	240	3.23	.051	0.79	-.028	13.8%	52.5%	33.8%
66 ELC communication?	238	3.53	.051	0.79	-.188	7.6%	40.8%	51.7%
67 the admin staff?	242	3.49	.052	0.81	-.044	8.3%	43.8%	47.9%
68 the homestay?	214	3.15	.058	0.85	-.069	20.1%	46.7%	33.2%
69 the facilities?	244	2.96	.061	0.94	-.104	29.1%	43.0%	27.9%
70 the activities programme?	217	3.18	.069	1.02	-.208	23.5%	37.8%	38.7%
71 the ELC service as a whole?	246	3.42	.049	0.76	-.156	7.7%	47.6%	44.7%

APPENDIX U: Key to Computer Codes

Service Climate Codes

MGSERPRAC	Management service practices
MGCOMM	Management communication
MGSUPPT	Management support
STSERPRAC	Staff service practices
CLIENTFOC	Client focus
STSERETH	Staff service ethics
STPERATT	Staff personal attributes
STCNCERN	Staff concern for clients
EMPISSUE	Employment issues
RESOURCG	Resourcing
ESTIMATE	Staff estimate of client evaluation of service

Client Satisfaction Codes

TEACHER	Teachers
ENGLSSN	English lessons
SERVPRC	Service procedures
COMMUN	Communication
ADMSTFF	Admin staff
HMSTAY	Homestay
FACLTIES	Facilities
ACTVPRG	Activities programme
GENERAL	General
RECOMM	Recommendation

APPENDIX V: ELC Client Satisfaction Survey: Combined Descriptive Statistics

ITEM	N	M	SE	SD	Skewness	Worse/ far worse than I expected	About what I expected	Better / far better than I expected
The Teachers								
01 Professionalism	1668	3.51	.023	0.92	-.151	11.3%	39.4%	49.2%
02 Teaching skills	1670	3.33	.023	0.92	-.039	16.5%	42.8%	40.7%
03 Knowledge of the subject	1654	3.41	.023	0.92	-.028	14.0%	42.3%	43.7%
04 Lesson preparation	1652	3.48	.023	0.94	-.174	13.1%	38.7%	48.2%
05 Flexibility	1666	3.51	.024	0.99	-.272	14.6%	34.3%	51.1%
06 Ability to teach interesting lessons	1667	3.35	.024	0.98	-.116	18.1%	38.6%	43.4%
07 Friendliness	1672	4.04	.022	0.89	-.711	5.2%	20.0%	74.8%
08 Communication skills	1672	3.69	.022	0.88	-.307	7.6%	33.0%	59.4%
09 Ability to be patient	1664	3.78	.023	0.93	-.474	8.8%	26.7%	64.5%
10 Ability to give clear explanations	1669	3.48	.022	0.90	-.157	11.6%	39.9%	48.5%
11 Willingness to help in class	1671	3.85	.022	0.90	-.492	6.3%	26.8%	66.8%
12 Availability to help out of class	1562	3.38	.027	1.07	-.231	19.7%	34.1%	46.3%
13 Overall quality	1635	3.51	.022	0.87	-.234	11.2%	37.2%	51.6%
The English lessons								
14 Effectiveness	1658	3.08	.023	0.92	-.178	23.6%	44.5%	31.9%
15 Interest level	1670	3.17	.022	0.91	.027	21.4%	44.9%	33.7%
16 Content	1669	3.06	.021	0.86	.048	23.0%	49.6%	27.4%
17 Relevance	1656	2.84	.024	0.98	.091	35.2%	41.7%	23.1%
18 Quality of learning materials	1644	2.97	.024	0.96	-.027	28.6%	44.4%	27.0%
19 Teaching methods	1665	3.21	.023	0.92	-.055	19.2%	45.3%	35.5%
20 Class size	1662	2.92	.027	1.08	.068	33.5%	39.5%	27.1%
21 Mix of nationalities in class	1626	2.61	.030	1.20	.280	47.8%	29.0%	23.2%
22 Overall quality	1659	3.09	.021	0.84	-.033	21.5%	49.4%	29.2%
The service procedures								
23 Enrolment	1579	3.32	.023	0.90	-.160	13.7%	46.7%	39.6%
24 Placement	1616	2.93	.025	0.99	-.051	30.0%	44.2%	25.8%

ITEM	N	M	SE	SD	Skewness	Worse/ far worse than I expected	About what I expected	Better / far better than I expected
25 Keeping you informed	1620	3.02	.025	0.99	-.015	26.9%	44.5%	28.6%
26 Complaints	1394	2.81	.027	1.02	.029	36.4%	40.0%	23.6%
27 Homestay administration	1248	2.86	.031	1.09	.037	34.9%	39.0%	26.1%
28 Enquiries	1556	3.15	.025	0.98	-.190	22.0%	42.5%	35.5%
29 Student feedback	1457	2.92	.025	0.97	-.079	30.4%	43.3%	26.3%
30 Overall quality	1597	3.03	.022	0.87	-.109	23.6%	49.3%	27.1%
Communication								
31 Publicity materials - accuracy	1488	2.91	.024	0.91	-.140	27.8%	49.7%	22.4%
32 Effectiveness of before arrival	1356	2.79	.026	0.96	.045	34.9%	45.2%	19.9%
33 Effectiveness after arrival	1461	2.98	.023	0.89	-.081	25.3%	49.8%	24.9%
34 Overall quality	1511	2.93	.023	0.88	-.114	26.8%	50.4%	22.8%
The admin staff								
35 Friendliness	1647	3.66	.024	0.97	-.425	10.6%	31.3%	58.2%
36 Willingness to help	1624	3.47	.024	0.97	-.346	13.9%	35.8%	50.3%
37 Availability to help	1614	3.35	.024	0.97	-.160	17.2%	39.7%	43.1%
38 Ability to understand client needs	1611	3.24	.025	1.00	-.161	21.3%	39.0%	39.7%
39 Ability to give right information	1587	3.23	.025	0.99	-.163	20.3%	41.2%	38.5%
40 Communication skills	1610	3.33	.022	0.89	-.102	14.0%	45.9%	40.1%
41 Overall quality	1619	3.32	.023	0.94	-.197	15.9%	42.6%	41.5%
Homestay								
42 Match with homestay requested	1035	3.10	.036	1.15	-.038	29.2%	35.6%	35.3%
43 Opportunity to speak English	1069	3.16	.037	1.21	-.080	31.2%	28.3%	40.5%
44 Host willingness to help with English	1045	3.22	.039	1.24	-.171	28.7%	28.5%	42.8%
45 Friendliness of hosts	1060	3.61	.036	1.17	-.528	16.5%	27.4%	56.1%
46 Amount of time hosts spend with client	1043	3.02	.039	1.25	.052	36.5%	28.0%	35.5%
47 Atmosphere	1055	3.35	.037	1.21	-.253	23.4%	31.1%	45.5%
48 Physical comfort level	1060	3.32	.036	1.18	-.246	24.2%	30.4%	45.5%
49 Quality of the food	1051	3.10	.038	1.24	-.068	31.3%	31.4%	37.3%
50 Overall quality	1056	3.31	.036	1.18	-.267	24.1%	30.1%	45.7%

ITEM	N	M	SE	SD	Skewness	Worse/ far worse than I expected	About what I expected	Better / far better than I expected
Facilities								
51 Classrooms	1669	3.06	.022	0.91	-.106	23.5%	47.0%	29.4%
52 Student lounge/cafeteria	1623	2.70	.025	1.02	.144	42.1%	37.5%	20.4%
53 Self-access unit	1376	2.54	.029	1.08	.206	47.5%	34.7%	17.7%
54 Toilets/bathrooms	1656	3.06	.024	0.96	-.082	24.4%	46.0%	29.6%
55 Library	1329	2.69	.034	1.24	.162	43.6%	29.8%	26.6%
56 Computers	1525	2.48	.029	1.15	.370	53.7%	26.1%	20.2%
57 Audio equipment	1381	2.30	.028	1.03	.338	57.3%	30.7%	12.0%
58 Video equipment	1388	2.45	.028	1.02	.207	51.1%	34.3%	14.6%
59 Overall quality	1622	2.70	.023	0.91	-.027	39.3%	43.3%	17.4%
Activities Programme								
60 Information provided by ELC	1177	3.02	.029	0.98	-.148	26.4%	43.2%	30.3%
61 Variety of activities	1194	3.03	.032	1.10	-.115	31.7%	32.6%	35.8%
62 Interest level of activities	1183	2.97	.031	1.05	-.057	31.4%	38.3%	30.3%
63 Value for money	1120	2.74	.032	1.06	.044	38.8%	38.7%	22.5%
63 Organisation of the programme	1111	2.91	.030	1.00	-.071	31.6%	41.9%	26.6%
65 Overall quality	1152	2.92	.030	1.01	-.087	31.8%	40.2%	28.0%
General ELC								
66 Overall organisation	1572	2.99	.021	0.85	-.069	24.3%	51.7%	24.0%
67 Atmosphere	1647	3.13	.023	0.95	-.135	22.8%	43.2%	34.1%
68 Physical comfort level	1646	2.96	.023	0.92	-.078	29.2%	43.9%	26.9%
69 Encouragement to achieve goals	1615	3.01	.025	0.99	-.083	28.4%	41.4%	30.3%
70 Student national mix	1628	3.10	.029	1.17	-.108	30.9%	30.7%	38.4%
71 Opportunity to use English	1652	3.11	.025	1.03	-.025	27.8%	37.0%	35.1%
72 Rate of improvement in English	1620	2.78	.024	0.98	.082	38.6%	39.2%	22.2%
73 Value for money of programme	1579	2.44	.026	1.03	.292	52.4%	33.4%	14.2%
74 Overall quality	1632	2.94	.022	0.87	-.140	27.4%	48.7%	24.0%

APPENDIX W: ELC Service Climate Survey: Comparison of Individual Dimension Means*

*For purposes of display, dimension means are rounded up to two decimal places.

	ELC SERIAL														
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
DIMENSION															
Management service practices	3.41	3.32	3.93	2.39	2.43	4.32	4.28	3.81	3.59	3.87	3.20	3.93	3.42	3.22	2.24
Management communication	3.36	3.45	3.66	2.04	2.36	4.17	3.83	3.52	3.34	3.69	3.12	3.76	2.73	3.13	2.04
Management support	3.45	3.13	3.81	2.33	2.57	4.29	3.83	4.07	3.35	4.14	3.48	3.25	2.89	3.40	2.65
Staff service practices	3.38	3.50	3.79	3.28	3.22	4.08	3.67	3.77	3.65	4.13	3.25	4.13	3.45	3.92	2.85
Client focus	3.57	3.74	4.04	2.94	3.54	4.57	4.24	4.37	3.92	4.39	3.62	4.43	3.92	3.88	2.84
Staff service ethos	3.86	3.87	3.93	4.00	3.87	4.67	4.10	4.47	4.20	4.27	3.80	4.47	3.89	4.42	3.66
Staff personal attributes	4.32	4.32	4.47	4.46	4.22	4.76	4.42	4.76	4.45	4.56	4.16	4.76	4.53	4.60	3.90
Staff concern for clients	3.97	4.01	4.14	4.05	3.89	4.56	4.34	4.73	3.96	4.16	3.74	4.56	4.52	4.24	3.48
Employment Issues	2.81	2.43	2.74	2.12	2.48	3.43	3.56	3.13	3.23	3.90	3.14	3.60	3.00	3.24	2.72
Resourcing	3.29	2.18	3.33	2.07	2.48	4.58	3.90	4.00	3.59	4.57	3.73	2.27	3.33	2.50	3.00
Estimate of client evaluation of service	3.06	2.76	3.15	2.63	3.01	3.77	3.73	3.28	3.58	3.54	3.16	3.27	3.39	2.95	2.81
Mean of means	3.50	3.34	3.73	2.94	3.10	4.29	3.99	3.99	3.71	4.11	3.49	3.86	3.55	3.59	2.93

	ELC SERIAL														
	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
DIMENSION															
Management service practices	4.10	2.81	3.60	3.50	3.44	4.28	3.94	3.73	3.71	2.77	3.58	4.37		3.25	3.99
Management communication	4.00	2.98	3.48	3.32	3.39	4.18	3.62	3.78	3.63	3.33	3.23	4.08		3.40	3.78
Management support	4.10	2.81	3.35	3.30	3.46	4.36	3.81	3.75	3.94	3.59	3.71	4.21		3.21	4.13
Staff service practices	3.94	2.86	3.37	3.70	3.70	4.19	3.54	4.11	4.11	3.28	3.78	4.15		3.87	4.01
Client focus	4.38	3.14	3.50	4.05	3.88	4.35	4.14	4.48	4.38	3.81	3.93	4.33		4.46	4.18
Service ethos	4.57	3.60	4.10	4.13	4.12	4.58	3.89	4.67	4.50	4.00	4.40	4.77		4.55	4.06
Staff personal attributes	4.80	3.98	3.96	4.55	4.55	4.88	4.54	4.88	4.78	4.14	4.62	4.54		4.70	4.62
Staff concern for clients	4.43	3.68	3.89	4.13	4.21	4.77	4.24	4.70	4.58	4.37	4.08	3.98		4.64	4.21
Employment Issues	3.78	1.93	2.61	3.34	3.25	3.81	3.47	3.65	3.34	2.76	3.28	3.22		2.78	3.68
Resourcing	3.83	2.47	3.00	2.87	2.63	4.46	4.07	3.75	4.33	3.50	3.97	4.27		2.59	4.37
Estimate of client evaluation of service	3.93	2.58	3.07	3.45	3.34	3.84	3.64	3.76	3.43	3.24	3.27	3.85		3.30	3.43
Mean of means	4.17	2.99	3.45	3.67	3.63	4.34	3.90	4.11	4.07	3.53	3.80	4.16		3.70	4.04

APPENDIX X: Climate Consensus – r_{wg} Values for Nineteen ELCs

ITEM	ENGLISH LANGUAGE CENTRE SERIAL																		
	2	3	4	6	7	8	9	10	15	17	18	20	21	22	25	26	27	29	30
01	.64	.67	.62	.79	.88	.90	.63	.13	.36	.50	.65	.49	.87	.22	.25	.63	.39	.65	.78
02	.53	.80	.56	.72	.80	1.00	.82	-.01	.33	.50	.94	.52	.89	.55	.65	.32	.88	.67	.89
03	.56	.85	.26	.72	.46	.21	.55	.28	.42	.52	.20	.16	.86	.09	.65	.72	.88	.71	.56
04	.63	.80	.55	.89	.50	.40	.35	.36	.62	.47	.61	.52	.87	.13	.67	.50	.88	.65	.87
05	.62	.85	.24	.82	.76	.85	.90	.50	.11	.32	.50	.22	.72	-.35	.85	.53	.86	.67	.80
06	.83	.65	.10	.85	.65	.85	.61	.56	.37	.32	.44	.19	.71	.55	.50	.87	.95	.26	.53
07	.38	.47	.27	.79	.79	.00	.24	.42	.24	.33	.63	.66	.72	.08	.45	.78	.09	.55	.69
08	.36	.42	.31	.78	.32	-.40	.30	.15	.63	.29	.84	.45	.32	.06	.45	.61	.88	.58	.49
09	.33	.29	.45	.70	.33	.65	.29	-.22	.55	.57	.20	.64	.71	.64	.27	.61	.84	.67	.75
10	.55	.71	.37	.62	.26	.35	.46	.86	.47	.50	.58	.57	.75	.42	.47	.65	.55	.43	.66
11	.44	.80	.43	.71	.25	.50	.47	.24	.15	.53	.56	.72	.71	.20	.00	.14	.77	.89	.80
12	.20	.41	.10	.83	.55	.85	.45	.33	-.10	.50	-.03	.59	.89	.51	.45	.80	.66	.72	.75
13	-.05	.60	.02	.87	.50	.85	.30	.91	.13	.14	.24	-.08	.86	.22	.47	.23	.77	.61	.76
14	.11	.32	.46	.77	.43	.75	.40	.51	.00	.53	.20	.22	.87	-.03	.80	.33	.69	.44	.77
15	.24	.51	.33	.72	.43	.85	.30	.53	-.09	.26	.22	.56	.87	.31	.05	.56	.64	.55	.76
16	.00	.77	.26	.83	-.24	.65	.20	-.10	.00	.17	.22	.75	.89	.67	.27	.32	.77	.93	.17
17	.24	.80	.60	.73	.24	-.25	.10	.11	.38	.69	.24	.69	.87	.28	.32	.14	.53	.08	.66
18	.75	.32	.64	.83	.51	.35	.37	.58	.33	.35	.17	.70	.89	.42	.67	.65	.66	.86	.88
19	.78	.63	.58	.43	.28	-.60	.45	.39	.22	.59	.75	.47	.86	-.38	.67	.50	.36	.61	.47
20	.89	.55	.45	.92	.38	.35	.65	.62	.49	.45	.51	.39	.94	.22	.67	.79	.87	.75	.74
21	.88	.85	.03	.86	.05	.40	.21	.73	.24	.47	.75	.32	.58	-.13	.72	.70	.87	.87	.67
22	.53	.62	.70	.87	.80	.90	.74	.88	.24	.41	.42	.50	.86	.47	.20	.53	.86	.79	.73
23	.38	.85	.77	.69	.43	.25	.55	.76	.51	.52	.53	.27	.87	.55	.25	.63	.88	.29	.78
24	.88	.73	.41	.90	.43	.85	.68	.69	-.02	.55	.62	.65	.86	.78	.32	.87	.77	.87	.88
25	.65	.83	.75	.76	.46	.54	.70	.86	.32	.69	.22	.77	.76	.06	.65	.80	.77	.69	.84
26	.87	.54	.59	.78	.58	.50	.80	.58	.20	.53	.62	.92	.71	.69	.67	.95	.80	.88	.87

ITEM	ENGLISH LANGUAGE CENTRE SERIAL																		
	2	3	4	6	7	8	9	10	15	17	18	20	21	22	25	26	27	29	30
27	.64	.48	.37	.88	.87	1.00	.76	.95	.36	.50	.36	.75	.89	.76	.20	.69	.80	.89	.87
28	.53	.78	.29	.82	.78	.35	.87	.51	.28	.56	.25	.67	.89	.75	.27	.72	.86	.67	.82
29	.64	.66	.44	.72	.78	.85	.83	.78	.36	.39	.32	.62	.79	.28	.67	.77	.73	.88	.75
30	.53	.65	.71	.83	.60	.65	.82	.76	.53	.52	.11	.62	.71	.28	.60	.76	.95	.72	.72
31	.91	.88	.63	.90	.71	1.00	.83	.87	.44	.38	.39	.72	.71	.76	.65	.78	.53	.87	.86
32	.78	.87	.69	.82	.45	.15	.59	.15	.29	.61	.56	.47	.61	.58	.52	.77	.66	.76	.77
33	.28	.55	.65	.91	.65	.90	.56	.46	.00	.46	.49	.60	.87	.74	.87	.85	.86	.86	.86
34	.77	.72	.90	.78	.87	.90	.89	.53	-.01	.52	.50	.72	.89	.56	.32	.56	.80	.87	.72
35	.25	.63	.69	.77	.58	.25	.75	.76	-.06	.53	.57	.85	.65	.84	.45	.72	.66	.58	.72
36	.73	.80	.46	.90	.62	.90	.82	.86	.29	.52	.58	.95	.86	.69	.32	.87	.88	.87	.72
37	.67	.88	.66	.88	.68	.85	.85	.75	.38	.50	.44	.75	.89	.51	.72	.87	.91	.87	.92
38	.80	.89	.69	.89	.82	.85	.87	.55	.58	.27	.73	.69	.86	.44	.60	.88	.88	.87	.82
39	.53	.43	.43	.89	.55	.15	.71	.63	.00	.23	.87	.70	.86	.11	.32	.86	.91	.87	.72
40	.87	.68	.87	.94	.87	1.00	.87	.91	.62	.38	.58	.87	1.00	.88	.72	.90	.88	.89	.92
41	.87	.87	.87	.92	.87	.85	.87	.76	.44	.41	.80	.86	1.00	.88	.72	.90	.87	.89	.92
42	.86	.87	.87	.89	.63	.90	.87	.76	.55	.29	.73	.87	.89	.77	.40	.86	.44	.94	.86
43	.66	.87	.87	.90	.87	.90	.88	.86	.44	.36	.73	.87	.94	.64	.72	.87	.75	.86	.87
44	.56	.87	.80	.90	.80	.85	.87	.75	.36	.47	.80	.49	.89	.24	.72	.86	.87	.87	.89
45	.73	.87	.89	.78	.87	.90	.88	.62	.72	.44	.76	.59	1.00	.88	.85	.81	.49	.71	.80
46	.77	.93	.87	.90	.78	1.00	.93	.55	.36	.52	.91	.76	.94	.87	.67	.78	.66	.89	.79
47	.36	.91	.87	.52	.38	.60	.74	.78	.60	.44	.69	.72	.87	.53	.72	.61	.63	.87	.39
48	.66	.80	.88	.90	.78	.90	.85	.75	.55	.47	.55	.87	.89	.87	.85	.87	.88	.93	.76
49	.62	.87	.50	.83	.76	.85	.88	.84	.50	.35	.67	.72	.94	.77	.87	.83	.73	.86	.79
50	.80	.89	.80	.85	.87	.85	.83	.76	.47	.47	.44	.76	.94	.75	.87	.87	.87	.94	.87
51	.91	.80	.85	.83	.80	.90	.74	.84	.09	.41	.22	.76	.71	.82	.72	.80	.80	.87	.75
52	.94	.83	.80	.78	.87	.90	.71	.89	.63	.39	.82	.42	.71	.87	.85	.72	.80	.87	.69
53	.80	.66	.85	.87	.87	1.00	.85	.73	.32	.44	.28	.62	.94	.84	.72	.78	.76	.87	.75
54	.69	.89	.46	.52	.80	.60	.24	.62	.22	.88	.65	.64	-.14	.11	.27	.59	.64	.04	.69
55	.39	.37	.70	.56	-.04	.40	.20	.53	.40	.78	.47	.09	.71	.44	.87	.44	.51	.43	.59

ITEM	ENGLISH LANGUAGE CENTRE SERIAL																		
	2	3	4	6	7	8	9	10	15	17	18	20	21	22	25	26	27	29	30
56	.53	.57	.65	.72	.28	-.15	.21	.78	.32	.53	.66	.53	.86	.11	.32	.59	.76	.52	.80
57	.88	.45	.87	.48	.69	.40	.29	.51	.51	.59	.25	.19	.43	.44	.65	.06	.75	-.14	.42
58	.24	.46	.14	.80	.46	.35	.80	.86	.51	.63	.31	.80	.86	.13	.67	.88	.62	.87	.92
59	.69	.85	.63	.61	.13	.00	.65	.87	.51	.53	-.05	.53	.79	.88	.45	.73	.84	.44	.69
60	.61	.12	-.04	.74	.55	.85	.29	.87	.20	.14	.22	.80	.87	.25	.67	.88	.88	.71	.87
61	.94	.80	.41	.59	.57	1.00	.37	.88	.42	.23	.09	.44	.87	.36	.52	.41	.88	.72	.89
62	.78	.12	.58	.90	.03	-.15	.53	.87	.69	.32	.44	.64	.87	.87	.47	.23	.80	.79	.39
63	.69	.43	.79	.78	.85	.67	.83	.74	.80	.64	.20	.63	.94	.61	.85	.86	.88	.72	.87
64	.77	.87	.78	.78	.79	.88	.78	.86	.53	.65	.82	.88	.71	.57	.65	.86	.88	.72	.89
65	.95	.87	.83	.84	.59	.88	.70	.78	.53	.82	.89	.76	.86	.73	.90	.89	.65	.87	.69
66	.75	.92	.69	.84	.71	.83	.78	.75	.61	.49	.78	.86	.71	.66	.85	.86	.78	.72	.71
67	.88	.74	.86	.77	.75	.83	.74	.65	.53	.57	.82	.86	.75	.58	.85	.69	.44	.65	.58
68	.86	.70	.56	.81	.56	1.00	.79	.67	.65	.76	.86	.85	.72	.44	.54	.75	.75	.65	.50
69	.73	.45	.80	.82	.54	.50	.47	.78	.77	.78	.67	.57	.72	.69	.90	.41	.87	.72	.71
70	.75	.69	.46	.71	.51	.54	.37	.88	.75	.75	.69	.78	.79	.29	.90	.52	.00	.00	.71
71	.84	.75	.61	.85	.76	.88	.72	.90	.71	.72	.65	.78	.86	.49	.83	.76	.75	.80	.86
Mean	.63	.68	.58	.79	.58	.62	.62	.63	.38	.48	.51	.62	.80	.48	.58	.68	.74	.70	.74

APPENDIX Y: ELC Client Satisfaction Survey: Comparison of Individual Dimension Means*

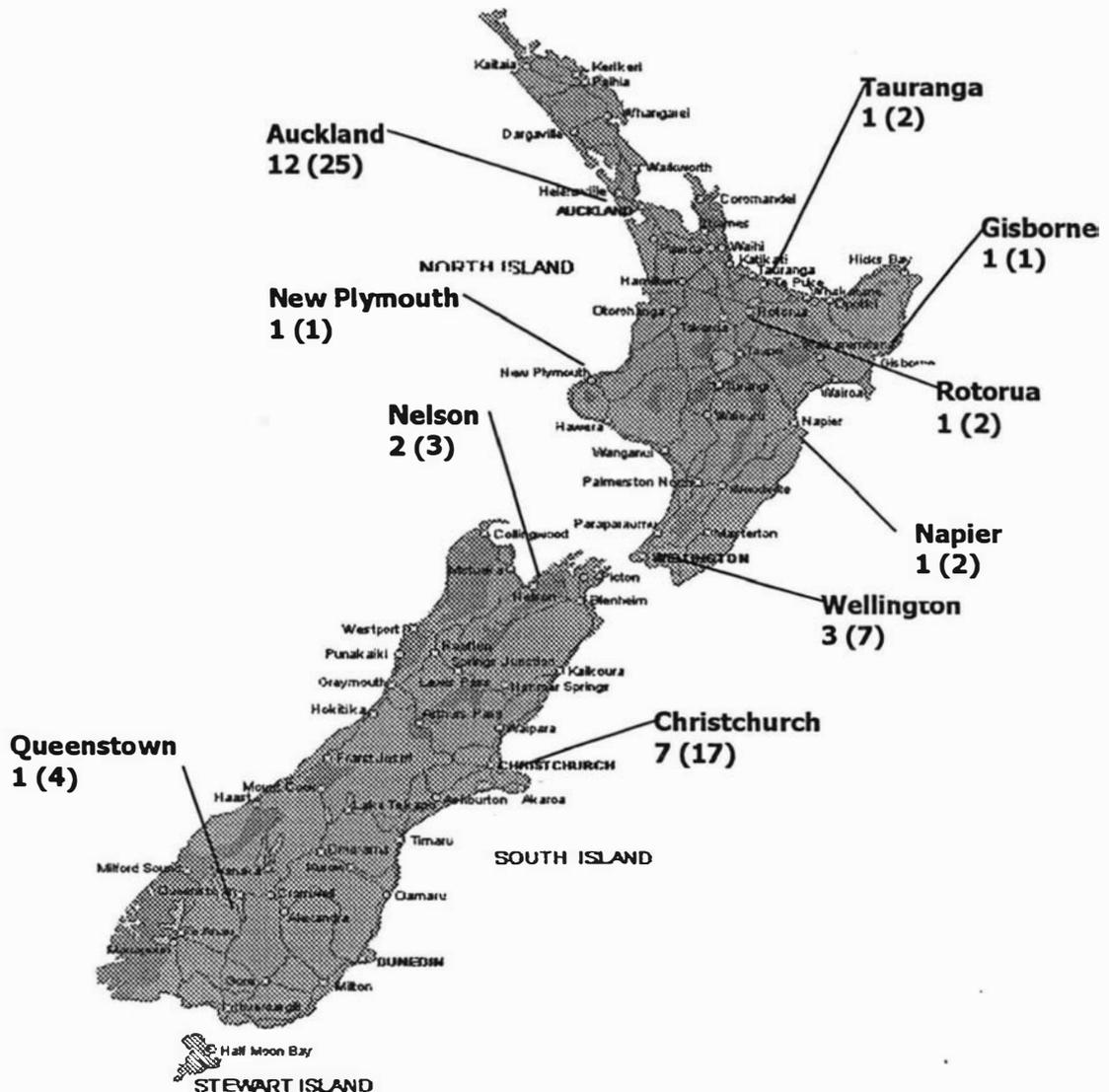
* For purposes of display, dimension means are rounded up to two decimal places.

		ELC SERIAL														
	DIMENSIONS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
01	Teachers	3.18	3.33	3.36	3.26	3.19	3.78	3.37	3.73	3.47	3.62	3.98	3.69	3.82	3.40	3.71
02	English Lessons	2.80	2.58	2.88	2.73	2.52	3.21	2.90	3.04	2.61	3.01	3.36	2.94	3.24	2.77	3.20
03	Service Procedures	2.97	2.59	2.82	2.79	2.62	3.33	3.07	3.17	2.71	3.39	3.17	3.13	3.05	2.72	3.09
04	Communication	2.61	2.70	2.73	2.58	2.42	3.20	3.05	3.07	2.58	2.98	3.14	3.05	3.09	2.49	2.98
05	Admin Staff	3.28	3.07	3.25	3.14	2.88	3.59	3.56	3.45	3.17	3.91	3.53	3.86	3.45	3.06	3.49
06	Homestay	2.51	2.72	3.26	2.89	3.06	3.61	3.60	3.15	2.95	3.46	3.62	3.42	3.17	3.00	3.43
07	Facilities	2.34	2.24	2.37	2.43	1.95	3.28	2.80	3.21	2.13	2.90	2.99	2.32	2.61	2.33	2.69
08	The Activities Program	2.24	2.91	2.94	2.82	2.51	3.44	3.01	3.17	2.23	3.59	2.75	2.72	2.77	1.77	2.49
09	General	2.84	2.54	2.92	2.46	2.30	3.27	3.01	3.16	2.27	3.33	3.23	3.12	3.21	2.44	3.01
	Mean of means	2.75	2.74	2.95	2.79	2.61	3.41	3.15	3.24	2.68	3.35	3.31	3.14	3.16	2.66	3.12
10	Recommendation mean	1.50	1.65	1.41	1.70	1.76	1.13	1.24	1.26	1.85	1.14	1.05	1.21	1.38	1.58	1.28
	Willing to recommend?															
	% YES	42	32	56	26	22.4	78.7	63.6	72.3	13.6	84.0	80.0	77.3	53.3	38.6	65.0
	% NO	42	59	39	61	70.4	11.5	19.7	25.5	77.3	14.0	04.0	20.5	33.3	52.3	25.0
	% No response	16	09	05	13	07.1	09.8	16.7	02.1	09.1	02.0	16.0	02.3	13.3	09.1	10.0

		ELC SERIAL														
	DIMENSIONS	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
01	Teachers	3.65	3.13	3.27	4.01	4.12	3.76	3.60	3.71	3.77	3.51	3.40	4.04	4.08	3.74	3.35
02	English Lessons	3.04	2.59	2.73	3.49	3.54	3.37	3.17	3.22	3.12	3.20	2.65	3.33	3.31	3.37	2.97
03	Service Procedures	3.05	2.66	2.69	3.12	3.54	3.56	3.11	3.22	3.24	2.87	2.60	3.16	3.45	3.34	2.97
04	Communication	3.05	2.78	2.69	2.92	3.25	3.41	2.97	3.09	3.08	2.89	2.70	3.25	2.95	3.15	3.06
05	Admin Staff	3.63	3.13	2.90	3.19	3.84	3.88	3.39	3.59	3.62	3.06	3.04	3.49	3.80	3.50	3.33
06	Homestay	3.63	2.98	2.93	2.61	3.51	3.73	3.37	3.57	3.41	3.65	3.15	3.38	3.79	3.22	2.87
07	Facilities	2.40	3.05	2.07	2.31	2.95	2.65	2.58	2.44	2.86	2.72	2.79	3.49	3.53	2.96	2.65
08	The Activities Program	3.48	2.86	1.96	2.33	3.31	3.59	3.02	3.53	2.65	2.82	1.81	3.19	3.36	3.15	3.03
09	General	3.31	2.73	2.45	2.73	3.23	3.49	3.21	3.16	3.10	3.11	2.49	3.44	3.43	3.21	3.01
	Mean of means	3.25	2.88	2.63	2.97	3.48	3.49	3.16	3.28	3.21	3.09	2.74	3.42	3.52	3.29	3.03
10	Recommendation mean	1.20	1.58	1.58	1.43	1.23	1.16	1.30	1.20	1.37	1.20	1.63	1.18	1.29	1.09	1.29
	Willing to recommend?															
	% YES	76.5	38.2	36.7	40.0	58.5	70.3	67.7	76.6	58.6	72.7	33.8	68.8	60.0	78.8	65.8
	% NO	19.6	52.7	51.0	30.0	17.0	13.5	29.0	19.1	34.5	18.2	58.5	14.6	25.0	07.7	27.4
	% No response	03.9	09.1	12.2	30.0	24.5	16.2	03.2	04.3	06.9	09.1	07.7	16.7	15.0	13.5	06.8

APPENDIX Z: New Zealand Map: Locations of ELCs Surveyed

Numbers refer to number of ELCs surveyed. Numbers in brackets indicate ELC total at that location at the time of the surveys (August-October, 2001).



APPENDIX Z/2: Factor Analysis

1. Service Climate Scale

The data obtained from items 1 – 62 of the service climate questionnaire was subjected to principal components analysis using the SPSS package. An initial examination of the data confirmed its suitability for factor analysis. The number of cases ($N = 275$) was just under Tabachnik and Fidell's (1996) recommended number of 300 plus. The ratio of cases to items, at 4.5:1, was similar to that used in comparable climate studies (e.g. Young & Parker, 1999) and approached Tabachnik and Fidell's (1996) recommended ratio of 5:1. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was 0.946, which exceeded the recommended minimum value of 0.6 for effective factor analysis (Tabachnik & Fidell, 1996), while the Bartlett test of sphericity indicated statistical significance ($p = .000$).

Initial analysis revealed the existence of nine components with eigenvalues over 1, which together explained a total of 68.6% of variance. An examination of the scree plot appeared to show a break between the third and fourth components. This was confirmed by the component matrix, which indicated that most items loaded on components 1, 2 and 3. These three components were therefore retained for further investigation with the assistance of Varimax rotation with Kaiser normalisation. The three-factor solution explained 54.8% of the variance, with Component 1 providing 23.2%, Component 2, 21.2% and Component 3, 10.4%. Approximately half of the variables loaded on Component 1 and / or Component 2 and approximately one-third on Component three. The strongest loadings for each component (above 0.6) are displayed in the table below.

Variables	Components		
	1	2	3
Staff empathise with clients having problems in unfamiliar environment.	.797		
Staff are sensitive to the needs of clients from other cultures.	.796		
Staff exhibit patience when clients have problems communicating with them.	.776		
Staff actively support clients in efforts to achieve English language goals.	.776		
Staff adopt a helpful attitude towards clients.	.774		
Staff make an effort to establish rapport with clients.	.761		
Staff display professionalism in their dealing with clients.	.758		
Staff go out of their way to help a client who has a problem.	.739		
Staff take an active interest in client's welfare.	.736		
Staff cater for individual needs of clients, when appropriate.	.735		
Staff display a friendly manner towards clients.	.724		
Staff are willing to assist clients adjust to life in this country.	.691		
Staff are committed to providing superior service.	.636		
Staff are painstaking in their work, paying close attention to detail.	.621		
Staff actively support one another in effort to provide superior service.	.619		
Staff feel personally responsible for the quality of service clients receive.	.615		
It is easy for a client to access staff member for individual help/advice.	.606		
Staff are willing to counsel clients with personal concerns.	.604		
Mgmt consults with staff how to improve service delivery.		.770	
Mgmt regularly monitors service standards.		.761	
Mgmt encourages staff in efforts to provide superior service.		.751	
Mgmt provides staff with feedback on their performance.		.737	
Mgmt ensures staff know how to deliver superior service.		.730	
Mgmt talks to staff about importance of prov superior service.		.729	
Mgmt shares with staff client feedback on service quality.		.716	
Mgmt leads by example in providing superior service.		.715	
Mgmt ensures staff familiar with service goals.		.701	
Mgmt ensures staff familiar with policies/procedures.		.691	
Mgmt makes an effort to remove obstacles to delivery of superior service.		.682	
Mgmt has sound grasp of TESOL.		.674	
Mgmt informs staff on issues affecting organisation.		.667	
Mgmt fosters mutual cooperation / support among staff.		.648	
There are procedures in place to ensure delivery of superior service.		.623	

Mgmt ensures staff have material resources needed for superior service.		.619	
Mgmt recognises efforts of staff who provide superior service.		.614	.
Mgmt supports staff professional development.		.610	
The workload is distributed fairly.			.726
Staff enjoy a satisfactory level of physical comfort.		.	.706
Staff do not view their jobs as stressful.			.692
The facilities are of a satisfactory standard.			.678
The equipment is of a satisfactory standard.			.643

The variables loading on the three components were examined in order to ascertain their interpretation. The strongest Component 1 loadings, with only one exception, were derived from the three service orientation scales, and mainly from the *staff personal attributes* scale and the *staff concern for clients* scale. The strongest Component 2 loadings were, without exception, from the three management scales and principally from *the management service practices* and *management communication* scales. The strongest Component 3 loadings were from the *employment issues* scale (3) and the *resourcing* scale (2). These three components can be designated:

1. ELC staff service orientation towards clients
2. ELC manager service practices
3. ELC staff work conditions

These findings appear to demonstrate that these three factors constitute the underlying structure of service climate in English language centres.

2. Client Satisfaction Scale

The data obtained from items 1 – 74 of the client satisfaction questionnaire was subjected to principal components analysis using the SPSS package. An initial examination of the data confirmed its suitability for factor analysis. The number of cases (N = 1684) was well over Tabachnik and Fidell's (1996) recommended number of 300 plus. The ratio of cases to items, 22.8:1, greatly exceeded Tabachnik and Fidell's (1996) recommended ratio of 5:1. The Kaiser-Meyer-Okin measure of sampling adequacy was 0.977, which exceeded the recommended minimum value of 0.6 for effective factor analysis (Tabachnik & Fidell, 1996), while the Bartlett test of sphericity indicated statistical significance ($p = .000$).

Initial analysis revealed the existence of ten components with eigenvalues over 1, which together explained a total of 68.3% of variance. An examination of the component matrix indicated that components 1 to 4 attracted most loadings. These four components were therefore retained for further investigation with the assistance of Varimax rotation with Kaiser normalisation. The four-factor solution explained 55.8% of the variance, with Component 1 providing 16.3%, Component 2, 16.2% Component 3, 13.3% and Component 4, 10.1% (figures rounded up). The strongest loadings for each component (above 0.6) are displayed in the table below.

Variables	Components			
	1	2	3	4
The teachers: their teaching skills	.762			
The teachers: their overall quality	.758			
The teachers: their professionalism	.729			
The English lessons: methods used to teach	.717			
The teachers: their ability to give clear explanations	.709			
The teachers: their ability to be flexible	.706			
The teachers: how well prepared they are for the	.696			

lesson			
The English lessons: effectiveness	.694		
The teachers: their knowledge of the subject	.684		
The teachers:willingness to help you in class	.672		
The teachers: their ability to teach interesting lessons	.671		
The English lessons: interest level	.666		
The English lessons: content	.663		
The English lessons: overall quality	.660		
The teachers: their communication skills	.634		
The teachers: their ability to be patient with	.627		
Facilities: overall quality		.769	
Facilities: self-access unit		.755	
Facilities: audio equipment		.746	
Facilities: video equipment		.703	
Facilities: library		.700	
Facilities: student lounge/cafeteria		.668	
Facilities: computers		.666	
Activities programme: overall quality		.662	
General physical comfort level in the ELC		.661	
Activities programme: organisation of the programme		.645	
Activities programme: interest level of activities		.624	
Activities programme: variety of activities		.620	
Activities programme: information about programme provided by ELC		.603	
Activities programme: value for money		.602	
The admin staff: their ability to understand your needs			.773
The admin staff: their overall quality			.764
The admin staff: their willingness to help yo			.757
The admin staff: their availability to help you			.740
The admin staff: their ability to give you the information you asked for			.712
The admin staff: their friendliness			.699
The admin staff: their communication skills			.676
Service procedure: enquiries			.642

Service procedure: student feedback			.631	
Service procedures: overall quality			.607	
Service procedure: complaints			.605	
Homestay: overall quality				.901
Homestay: atmosphere				.865
Homestay: friendliness of your host family				.859
Homestay: amount of time the host family spends with you				.833
Homestay: host family willingness to help you improve your English				.817
Homestay: physical comfort level				.790
Homestay: match between what you requested and what you got				.786
Homestay: opportunity to speak English with your host family				.755
Homestay: quality of the food				.747

The variables loading on the four components were examined in order to ascertain their interpretation. The strongest Component 1 loadings were derived overwhelmingly from the *teacher* scales, with a few from *English lessons*. The strongest Component 2 loadings were focused on the facilities scale, and some *activities* items were included. The strongest component 3 loadings were focused on the *admin staff* scale, with some from the *service procedures* scale (2). Component 4 consisted of items entirely from the *homestay* scale. These four components can be designated:

1. ELC teachers
2. ELC facilities
3. ELC admin staff
4. ELC homestay

The underlying structure of client satisfaction in English language centres seems, therefore, to be represented by these four factors.

The findings from the factor analysis of these two sets of data are also of interest in terms of their relationship to each other. Given the close working relationship of clients and staff in English language centres, the question could be asked to what extent the service climate construct and the client satisfaction construct essentially consist of the same elements. The factor analysis does indicate some overlap between the service climate and client satisfaction scales. The key staff service orientation factor [Factor 1] in the service climate scale intrinsically encompasses similar elements to those of the teachers [Factor 1] and admin staff factors [Factor 3] in the client satisfaction scale, reflecting personal attributes and willingness to assist and care for clients (see diagram below). The remaining factor scales, however, that is, Factors 2 and 3 on the service climate scale and Factors 2 and 4 on the client satisfaction scale represent fairly discrete factors, with little overlap.

