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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Influence of Quality Service on Customer Satisfaction: A Study of Tourism Industry in Kisumu, Kenya

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Abstract

Tourism industry in Kenya is a key player in income-earning and accounts for a sizable proportion of the National GDP. The coastal towns of Kenya are popular tourists' destination. The tourists come from across the globe. Lately, there is a lot of promotion of local tourism by the state and practitioners. This ensures that the low tide seasons of foreign tourists are used by local tourists at subsidized rates. While tourists come to Kenya coastal hotels for holidays and leisure, it is not clear as to what values/quality measures attract them to Kenya. Many organizations use quality for competitive performance however, considering the vast disparity between standards offered by the different service providers in the tourist industry, it is necessary to establish what constitutes quality and customer satisfaction in the Kenyan tourism industry. Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction have long been recognized as playing a crucial role for success and survival in today's competitive market.

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INTRODUCTION

It is observed that tourism is a highly competitive industry, and tourism enterprise sector can no longer compete on the basis of cost alone. Quality is, therefore, a key element for the competitiveness of the tourism industry (Wang, 2009). It is also important for sustainable tourism development of the industry and for creating and improving jobs. Promoting quality in tourism and tourist products is a priority in different tourism activities. However, the meeting of measurements in tourism industry is complex (CEC, 2001). A number of confluences include tourism demand and the volume of tourism in tourist destinations, along with diverging developments in the various types of tourism. According to WTTC, (2002). Tourism product is extremely diverse. Natural and cultural resources, tourist facilities, the communications infrastructure, accommodation and restaurants are the basic resources of a tourist destination. In addition, vertical interdependence between tourism businesses is more pronounced than in most other sectors of the economy. Such interdependence, which also exists at world level, results in what are sometimes complex structures and trends in commercial relations. Zang, (2004). Apart from businesses and their representative organizations, destinations, with their different activities, combining public and private interests, are important stakeholders. Because of its diversity and fragmented nature, the tourism sector has no clear identity. This may, in part, explain why tourism has featured little at a political level, compared with its economic and social importance.

A high level of customer satisfaction is likely to generate positive feedback from the customer including revisiting the tourist area, increased purchase of products, and recommending these to others (Kozak and Rimmington, 2000; Gursoy et al. 2003; Andaleeb and Conway, 2006). The input of the tourists towards development and enhancement of a tourist destination is therefore essential in maintaining its competitive advantage. For this reason it is important for players in the industry to regularly assess the tourists' impressions of the visited sites, as a feedback to help improve and diversify the products and services offered. Several advantages for this undertaking include, but are not

limited to, ensuring that the tourists' needs and expectations are met, maximizing tourist flow and income generation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Objective 1: Measurement of Service Quality

Parasuraman et al set out with the objective of producing a general instrument with the objective of producing a general instrument for measuring perception of service quality. The instrument produced SERVQUAL was based on the contracts identified in the earlier work from which a large number of dimensional attributes of service quality discussed earlier in the chapter. An important advantage of the SERVQUAL instrument is that it has been proven valid and reliable across a large range of global services the SERVQUAL instruments needs considerable adaptation (Dabholkar et al, 1996) it still seems the best alternative for cross sectional and industry benchmarking (Fitzsimmons and Fitzsimmons, 1994). Dotchin and Oakland (1994) observed that the full list provides the most complete expression yet available of the issues, which influence consumers in their assessment of service quality. The second category requires supermarket service providers to win customers hearts by doing what they want. Pauline et al, (2000) indicate that a customer's perceptions of how customer oriented a firm is, will be more critical for successful business performance than the seller's own perceptions. Since service quality involves comparison of the expectations with performance (Atkins, 2000), customer who perceive high service quality believe that the service excellence is the one strategy dimension that is both important to many consumers and hard for competitors to duplicate (Berry, 1998) service quality remains difficult to measure because its often under what the customer expects yet service is a matter of meeting customer's expectations (Terpestra and Sarathy, 2000).

They argue that this observation is further complicated by the fact that not every customer experiences the same level of service quality even though the services they receive are identical. The company must consistently give the best solutions to his/her problems match his expectations, if it is to build customer satisfaction and loyalty (Zikmund et al, 1993).

Objective 2: Relationship between Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction

According to G.S Sureschandar, the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction has received considerable academic attention in the past few years. But the nature of the exact relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction (especially in the way the two constructs have been operationalised) is still shrouded with uncertainty.

Many researchers have operationalised customer satisfaction by using a single item scale and many others have used multiple item scales. The present study adopts a different approach and views customer satisfaction as a multi-dimensional construct just as service quality, but argues that customer satisfaction should be operationalised along the same factors (and the corresponding items) on which service quality is operationalised. In other words based on this approach, the link between service quality and customer satisfaction has been investigated. The results have indicated that the two constructs are indeed independent but are closely related, implying that an increase in one is likely to lead to an increase in another. During the last decades, researchers have attempted to explain and predict similarities and differences between services quality and customer satisfaction in order to deepen our understanding of these constructs (Dabholkar, 1993, 1995 a Lacobucci et al 1995: Oliver, 1997). It is suggested that where as service quality evaluation are purely cognitive (Parasuraman et al 1988) Customer satisfaction has both cognitive and effective aspects (hunt, 1977; YI 1990). Research has also found that customer satisfaction encompasses both expectation and perception but that service quality is only tied to perceptions (Babakus and Boller, 1992; Cronin and Taylor; 1002 Dabholkar et al, 2000). (and the corresponding items) on which service quality is operationalised. In other words based on this approach, the link between service quality and customer satisfaction has been investigated. The results have indicated that the two constructs are indeed independent but are closely related, implying that an increase in one is likely to lead to an increase in another. During the last decades, researchers have attempted to explain and predict similarities and differences between services quality and customer satisfaction in order to deepen our understanding of these constructs (Dabholkar, 1993, 1995 a Lacobucci et al 1995: Oliver, 1997). It is suggested that where as service quality evaluation are purely cognitive (Parasuraman et al 1988) Customer satisfaction has both cognitive and effective aspects (hunt, 1977; YI 1990). Research has also found that customer satisfaction encompasses both expectation and perception but that service quality is only tied to perceptions (Babakus and Boller, 1992; Cronin and Taylor; 1002 Dabholkar et al, 2000).

The traditional view holds that customer satisfaction is related and therefore proceeds any overall evaluation of service quality overtime (Parasuraman et al, 1988). More recently customer satisfaction has been viewed as a global assessment that follows evaluation of service quality Oliver, 1997).

Further research (Anderson and Sullivan, 1993 Spreng and Mackoy, 1996: Ennaw and Binks, 1999 Cronin et al, 2000) has found empirical support for customer assumption as a consequence of service quality. The implicit assumption in the quest for customer satisfaction and service quality is that a link between positive evaluations and repurchase behaviour (Zeithamlet al 1996). As a consequence, understanding how and what aspect of the service product impact on customer evaluation is a critical first step (Gabbot and Hogg, 2000).

Research by Crosby et al 1990 also suggests that sales opportunities in service mostly on trust and satisfaction which thy view as relationships quality. A basic requirement if a service firm is to in and requirements to keep customers satisfied (Gronroos, 2002).

Over the last decade service firms have identified quality as a driving force in the success of their firm and developing a sustainable competitive advantage (Leslie and Sheth, 2013). Services are much different from tangible product since, service are produced and consumed simultaneously and the delivery of the services often is inseparable from the personnel that provide it (Durvasulaet al, 2000). They also contend that ultimately the real focus is customer satisfaction because things can quite simply go wrong when least expected. This is also accorded by Zeithamlet al (1995) that service encounters can often produce negative reactions despite the service personnel trying to do their very best.

It was intuitively assumed by Pauline et al 2000) that degree of perceived value would be manifested by the business client's final judgment of service quality satisfaction purchase intentions and willingness to recommend. Such relationship between overall service quality and individual service satisfaction dimensions have been examined empirically by Cronin and Taylor (1992). They quite simply agreed with Pauline et al (2000) as they solely focused on repurchase intention resulting from service quality customer satisfaction. Recent research (Mohr and Bitner, 1995: Powpaka, 1996) has examined process and outcome along with service evaluations but the results of these studies taken together fail to provide a clear answer as to the exact relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Independent Variables Dependent Variable

This model indicatesthatthere are five dimensions used in measuring customer service quality. The dimensions included in this model are tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, empathy and assurance. The tangibles include the physicalappearance of the facilities, equipment, personnel and materialsused to communicatewithcustomers. Elementswithin the tangibles dimension are cleanliness, space, atmosphere, appearance of server and location. Measuringelement of responsibility and reliability are speed, willingness to respond, accuracy and dependability. The dimension of assurance and empathymaybemeasuredusingelements of knowledge, trainedprofessional, communications and caring.

Reliability: it is the ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately. In itsbroadestsense, reliabilitymeansthat the companydelivers on its promises about delivery, service provision, problem resolution and pricing. Customerswant to do business withcompaniesthatkeep their promises, particularly their promises about core service attributes.

Responsiveness: is the willingness to help customers and to provide prompt service. This dimension emphasizes attentiveness and promptness in dealing with customer request, question, complaints and problems.

Assurance: involves employees' knowledge and courtesy and the ability of the firm and its employees to inspire trust and confidence. This dimension is likely to be particularly important for service that the customer perceives as involving high risk and or about which they feel uncertain about their ability to evaluate outcomes e.g. banking, insurance, medical e.t.c.

Empathy: also involves caring, individualized attention the firm provides to its customers. The essence of empathy is conveyed through personalized or customized service, that customers are unique and special. Customers want to feel understood by and important to firms that provide service to them.

Tangibles: are defined as the appearance of physical facilities, equipment, personnel and communication material. All of these provide physical representations or images of the service that customers, particularly new customers will use to evaluate quality.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study used descriptive survey research design specifically expo facto where data was not be manipulated. According to Kothari, (2004),survey research design is a present oriented methodology that is used to investigate population by selecting samples to analyze and discover occurrences. And its also suitable for extensive

research. This design enhanced rapid data collection and enabled the researcher to understand influence of service from a sample of service providers and consumers in the industry.

This research was carried out in tourism establishments in Kisumu city. Kisumu city situated in Kisumu district it is the third largest city in Kenya. It is the administrative headquarter of Nyanza province. It lies within longitude $33^{\circ} 20'$ E and $35^{\circ} 20'$ E, latitude of $0^{\circ}, 20'$ south and $0^{\circ}, 50'$ south. It borders Rachuonyo District to the Southwest, Kisii to the South, Nandi to the Northeast, Siaya to the West and Bondo to northwest. Kisumu City lies along the shores of Lake Victoria and covers a total area of 2,660 square kilometers. It has a population of 394,684 (2009 census). This region was chosen by the researcher because the region has low tourists visitings, it is easily accessible by the researcher in addition the researcher is well conversant with the region hence it is the ideal place for the research.

The population in this study was derived from hospitality and tourism establishments in Kisumu city. It was aligned according to the report published by Ministry of Tourism 2009/2012 vol. 5 on the nature and tourism components in the region. The population consisted of the visitors and employees of the hotels, restaurants, guest houses, hostels, travel agencies, museums and wildlife sanctuaries. This is illustrated in the table below :

Sample size and Sampling Techniques

The sample consisted of 196 respondents selected from the 1,950 respondents from various institutions. Gay suggests that for descriptive studies, at least 10% of the accessible population is acceptable. (Mugenda, 1999). The 196 respondents were distributed as shown in the table below. Purposive sampling was used to select Kisumu as a study location because the researcher is well conversant with the various tourism establishments in the area and door to door survey was employed. The establishments were divided into strata's and simple random sampling was applied in each stratum as shown below ;

Data Collection Instruments

Questionnaires were used to obtain important information from the customers of the selected establishment. The questionnaires contained simple questions systematically compiled containing closed and open ended and lastly score rated in the likert scale. The respondents were requested to read and understand the questions thoroughly before filling them. They were be given a maximum of one week to fill the forms after which the forms were collected by the researcher and hence all the views, opinions, perceptives, feelings and attitudes of the respondents were expressed in this tool.

Interview schedules contained questions that were asked by the researcher while interviewing the respondents. The employees were mostly interviewed since the management is few in number and the busy lifestyles as is usually in most cases the researcher considered them as internal customers. This was obtained from the institutions and analyzed by the researcher such as customer feedback forms, customers repeat records and bed occupancy records from various hospitality establishments.

Both the primary and secondary collection techniques was employed to collect data. The study used questionnaires, interviews and document guides as the main tools for collecting data. The selection of the tools was guided by the nature of data to be collected, the time available as well as by the objectives of the study.

Secondary data was collected from both published and unpublished materials such as books, statistical abstracts, economic surveys, journals, annual reports, research papers, magazines, and internet.

Customer characteristics were described using percentages for categorical data and median and inter-quartile range for continuous data. Bar and Pie charts were used for the graphical presentation of individual information collected. Associations between categorical predictor variables and the customer satisfaction outcome were examined using the chi-square or Fisher exact tests for infrequent exposures that resulted in small cell sizes. Correlation between the service quality dimensions and customer satisfaction was also analyzed. If the model converges, multivariable regression was used to identify factors independently associated with customer satisfaction. Data analysis was carried out using SAS for Windows version 9.2 (SAS, Cary, North Carolina, USA).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

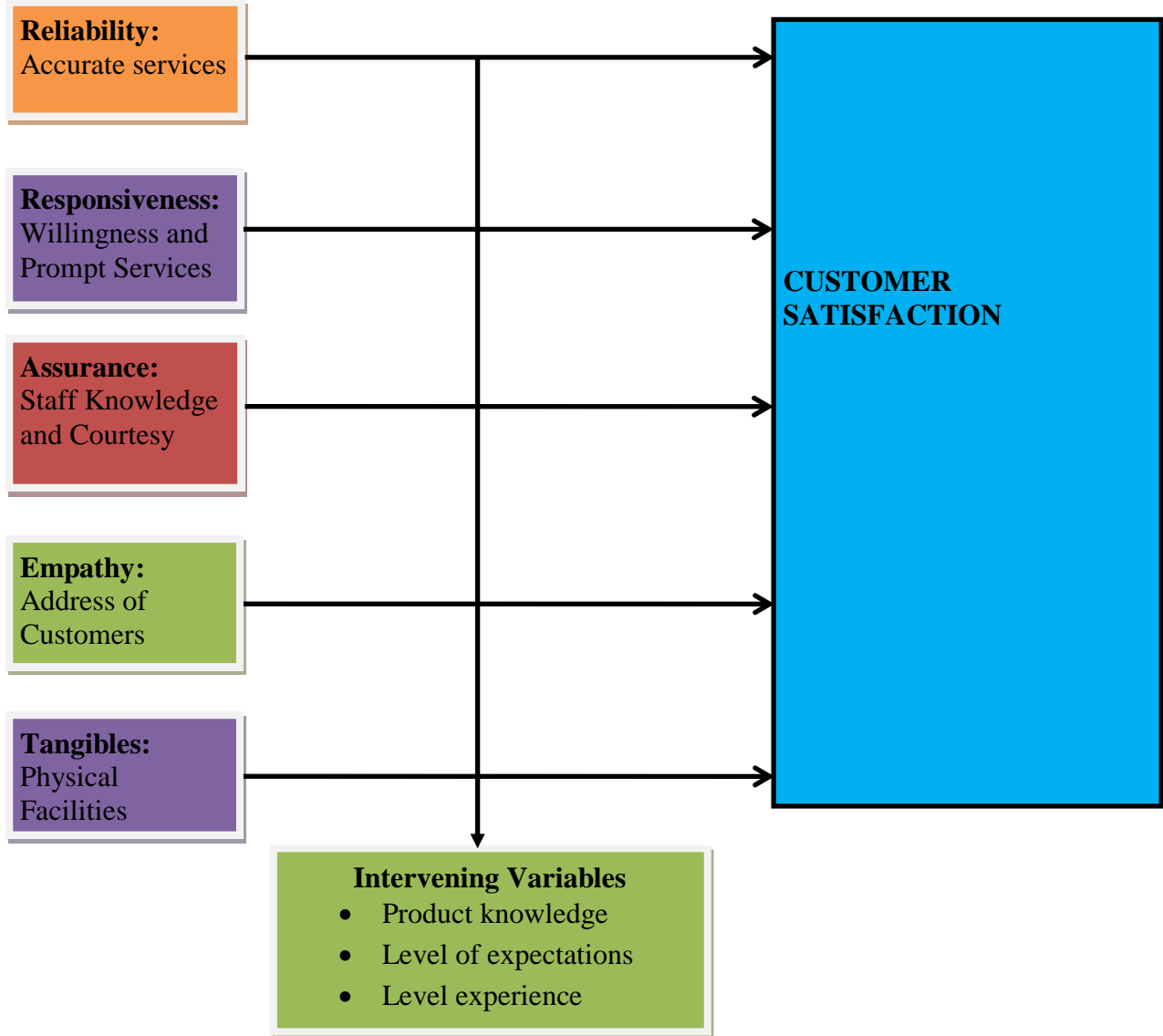
Questionnaire Response Rate

A total of 172 respondents responded to the study out of 196 targeted respondents. This was a good response rate of 87.76%.

Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The study interviewed one hundred and seventy two (172) respondents. Females had a higher representation of 59.88% (103). Majority of the respondents were those between ages 26-40 years 51.5% (86), followed by those

above 40 years of age 28.14 % (47). On marital status, close to half 47.27% (78) of them were married, 25.45% were divorced or widowed and 27.27% were single. Christians represented a major portion of the respondents having 68.6% followed far behind by Islam 23.84%. Most of the respondents attained Post secondary education 44.71 % (76) while 9.41 % (16) had no formal education. From 4.1 there is a new market segment coming in the industry and service sector and customers needs keeps on changing. The study shows between (26-40) years of which the majority are the youths tend to spend more time in tourism leisure and recreational facilities just as proven early by Olivia, (1999). Hence causing rapid growth in the tourism markets and destination. Level of education from the study has great positive influence in the tourism industry education enlightens the customers on the need and the importance of travelling or touring tourism destinations this because educated customers are aware of what they want in terms of products and services hence in the long term affects the quality and customers satisfaction. Chen, (2011).



Target population

Category	Hotels	Guest Houses	Restaurants, Outlets	Fast-Food	Travel Agencies	Museums and Wildlife Sanctuaries	Hostels
Employées	100	100	100		25	25	100
Visitors	300	300	300		150	150	300
Total	400	400	400		175	175	400

Source : Author (2013)

Sample Population

Category	Hotels	Guest Houses	Restaurants, Outlets	fast-food	Travel Agencies	Museums and Wildlife Sanctuaries	Hostels
Employees	10	10	10		2.5	2.5	10
Visitors	30	30	30		15.0	15.0	30
Total	40	40	40		18	18	40

Source : Author, (2013)

Table 1:Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents

Characteristic	Number	%
Gender		
Male	69	40.12
Female	103	59.88
Age in Years*		
Less than 25	34	20.36
26 - 40	86	51.5
above 40	47	28.14
Marital Status**		
Single	45	27.27
Married	78	47.27
Divorced	32	19.39
Widowed	10	6.06
Level of education***		
No Education	16	9.41
Primary	13	7.65
Secondary	65	38.24
Post Secondary/College	76	44.71
Religion		
Christian	118	68.6
Muslim	41	23.84

Pagan	4	2.33
Other	9	5.23

* 5 non response;*7 non response;*** 2 non resp.

Relationship between Dimension of Service quality and Customer Satisfaction

Service Quality Dimensions

The table 2 : Below summarises scores of the service quality dimensions. Various questions were asked to obtain the score rating for the service quality dimensions. Reliability had the highest mean rating of 3.5 while tangibles scored the least mean rating of 3.0. From the study timely service delivery still a major problem in the tourism industry. Customer need immediate wants to be achieved in time Parasuraman et al., (1990). Quick service delivery process satisfy immediate need of a customer. Most consumers do not want spend a lot of time being before served they prefer establishments with less queue and where there is exhaustive information portray to them this in turn will enhance customer's satisfaction and develop a positive quality in the mind of a consumer. Eric, (1991).

According to Brown, (1998). Most staffs in the service sector have little knowledge on products and services they have to the market, this is however evidence from this study where most of staffs from selected establishments were unable to address questions posed by their respective customers, staffs from this industry have inadequate knowledge on their products and service they offer to customers.

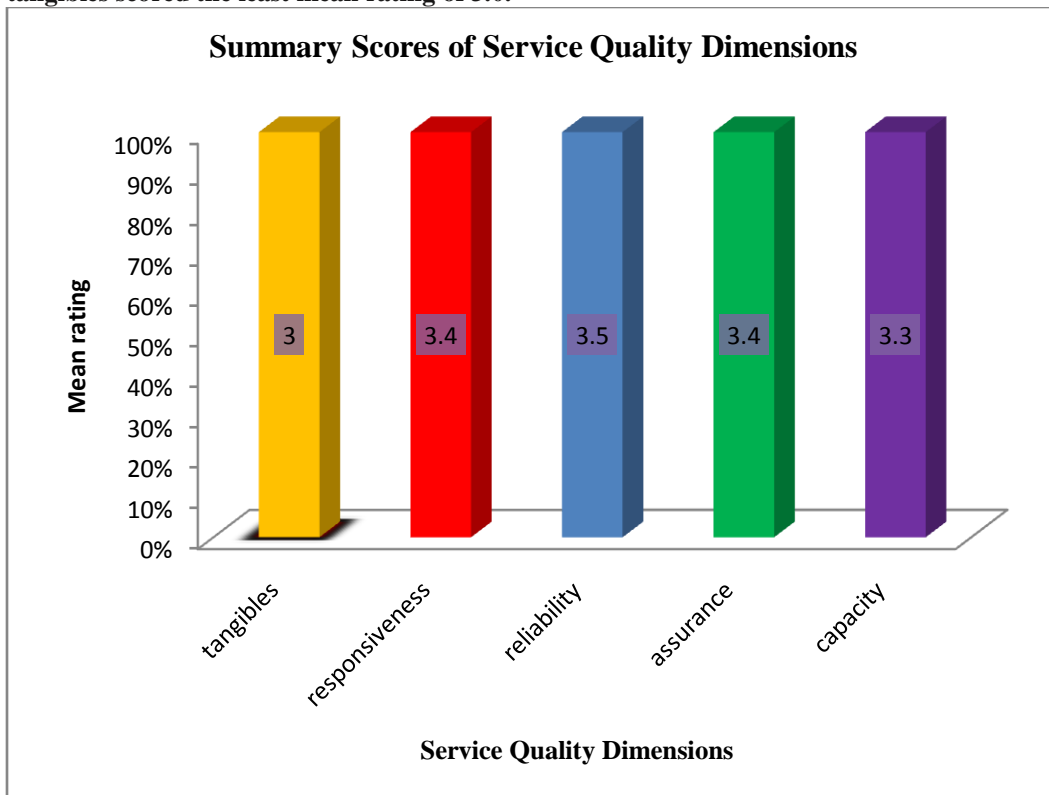
According to the study assurance and responsiveness had the same mean ratings to staffs from these establishments do not pay much attention to the tourists and the problem solving approach still remains poor as suggested by the tourists. Diaz, (2001) recommends tourists should be given much attention so as to get the exact need this enables the service providers to treat each customer separately to ensure individual need is met sufficiently. From table 4.2 clearly shows that service providers tend to focus more on the tangibles or the physical evidence in their establishments leaving out the intangible evidences of quality making customers dissatisfied in various perspectives. This has created a gap in the mind of consumers and service providers dimensions of rating quality Kotler et al, (2002). Parasuraman also suggested that for a quality to be rated highly the gap should be minimized efficiently and effectively this in turn will lead to customer's satisfaction in any given service in a competitive market.

Table 2: Service Quality Dimensions attributes.

Service Quality Dimensions	Summary Score
Tangibles	3
Sufficient No of Seats	2.33
Clean environment	2.33
Sufficient No of rooms	2.95
Rooms are comfortable	2.9
Seats are comfortable	2.98
Lighting quality is fine	2.97
Presence of a brochure/menu	3.08
Sufficient number of Vehicles (Travel Agencies)	3.3
Entertainment at reception (Music, TV, Magazines)	3.19
well serviced equipment	3.25
Well trained personell	3.27
Responsiveness	3.4
Staff tries best to address questions	3.44
Staff actively and aggressively provide services	3.4
Staff appreciation	3.37
Reliability	3.5
Deliveries are timely (food, vehicle, receipt etc)	3.23

Exhaustive brochure/Menu	3.53
Staff can answer questions accurately	3.5
Less queue	3.75
Assurance	3.4
classification fits with all customers	3.59
Directional signs are clear within the facility	3.36
staff friendly and courteous	3.09
Staff aware of every service item	3.36
Availability of security	3.77
Correct pricing for services offered	3.39
Empathy	3.3
Customers provided with brochures/assistance	3.44
Apologies offered for incorrect deliveries	3.27
Length of opening hours is satisfactory	3.43
Customers are assisted at individual basis	3.49
Complaints and requests are positively responded to	3.19
Welcoming staff	3.11

The figure 4.1 below summarizes scores of the service quality dimensions. Various questions were asked to obtain the score rating for the service quality dimensions. Reliability had the highest mean rating of 3.5 while tangibles scored the least mean rating of 3.0.



Mean Ratings of Dimensions of Service Quality

Customer Satisfaction

Respondent's satisfaction levels were assessed and the mean rating for the combined levels was found to be 3 and a mean of 3.3 was found for the possibilities of customers recommending the facility.

Test of Association between Service Quality Dimension and Customer Satisfaction

To test the difference in mean ratings between the service quality dimensions and customer satisfaction, a T test was used. Tangibles had a p value of 0.8957, which makes it fail to reject the hypothesis and conclude that there is no statistically significant mean difference between the two mean ratings. The rest had a p value less than 0.01 which makes it conclude otherwise. To test for relationship tangibility and empathy a p value of 0.001 and responsiveness had a p value of 0.05. This shows that there is significant relationship between the three mentioned dimensions with customer satisfaction hence the study supports Dabholkar et al., (2000). The constructs of service quality are indeed independent but are closely related, implying that an increase in one is likely to lead to another. Reliability and assurance had a p value of 0.069 and 0.105 respectively thus concluding no significant relationship.

Association between Service Quality and the Service Quality Dimensions

Quality service was found to be significantly associated with all the service quality dimensions, by having a p value of less than 0.005, except assurance ($p = 0.125$). Attributes related to assurance were found to be normal services expected by customers to be offered by the tourism industry. And this explains why it had no association. The attributes included were correct pricing, availability of security, staff aware of services, clear directional signs and courtesy among staff. Even though this dimension had a higher mean rating, this shows that customers expect far more from the industry to rate it as a quality service.

Accurate service was also found to be significantly associated with the quality service offered by the facility, save for responsiveness. Attributes related to this were found to be of high importance but not necessary for provision of accurate information. The attributes analyzed were staff being aggressive, trying best to address questions and appreciation.

Timely service was found to be only significantly associated to empathy. Attributes for this dimension were found to be highly correlated to services offered and the quicker they were addressed the higher the quality service off the facility. These included complaints addressed positively, length of opening hours, incorrect deliveries being addressed and customers being assisted at individual basis.

From the study, the quality services compared to the SERVQUAL dimensions developed by Parasuraman et al, (1990) gave a clear view of the tourism service industry in Kisumu. With the differing associations, it is safe to say that the relationship between customer satisfaction and service quality depends on the service dimensions. Further the research validates service quality theory, dimensions as major determinants of service quality. Lee et al, (2011). The p values for the association between service qualities in the tourism industry are as shown in table 4.3

P values

	Tangibles	Responsiveness	Reliability	Assurance	Empathy
Quality Service	0.004	0.006	0.02	0.125	<0.001
Accurate Service	<0.001	0.011	0.02	0.001	0.004
Timely Service	0.451	0.017	0.102	0.055	0.006

The variables with a p value of less than 0.05 are associated and vice versa.

Relationship between Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction in the Tourism Industry

A group analysis was done to determine the relationship between the service dimensions and customer satisfaction. These were fitted in regression model to help us identify the service dimensions that were independently related to customer satisfaction. From the results, tangibles, reliability, empathy and assurance were the service dimensions found to be independently associated with customer satisfaction. They also had a positive coefficient. Hence the study reveals that, when all these service dimensions are lumped together, the said four, stand out independently and strongly amongst customers. Since the model converged multivariate regression analysis was done. The results are as shown in table 4.4.

REGRESSION ANALYSIS OUTPUT

	Coefficient	P value	95% Confidence Interval	
Tangibles	0.2763794	0.04	0.0127685	0.5399902
Responsiveness	-0.057521	0.583	-0.2637855	0.1487435
Reliability	0.2918533	0.01	0.0710586	0.5126479
Assurance	0.0950301	0.317	-0.0918115	0.2818716
Empathy	0.4062795	0.001	0.1762699	0.6362892
Constant	-0.3499465	0.409	-1.184176	0.4842828

Service Quality Ratings by Customers

Timely service had the highest mean rating of 3.38. This is attributed to the fact that customers prefer efficient services. They don't like spending much of their time on a facility which does not keep to its schedule. They prefer facilities that attend to their individual needs, have length opening hours and welcoming staff. Quality service in this category scored the least by having a mean rating of 2.99. Its greatest undoing being unclean environment, insufficient and uncomfortable seats, unsatisfactory lighting quality and not satisfactorily rooms. Accurate service had a mean rating of 3.21 and this can be explained that customers also consider this as important since they require their services offered to at the best way possible. Hence generally service ranking is still average in the tourism sector in as purported by Ikiara and Oketch, (2002).

CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY**Conclusion**

The objective of this study was to determine the influence quality service on customer satisfaction a case study tourism industry in Kisumu City. The research questions were : "Is there a significant relationship between customer satisfaction and the dimensions of service quality ?"; "Is there an association between service quality in the tourism industry and the service quality dimensions ?"; "Is there a significant relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction in the tourism industry ?" and "What service quality dimensions are rated highly by customers in the tourism industry ?". From the summary of the results it could be seen that the research questions were answered in a group analysis of the joint variables.

Relationship between Dimension of Service quality and Customer Satisfaction

From the study it was found that all the service dimensions, had a different and higher mean ratings on customer satisfaction. Tangibles, responsiveness, reliability, assurance and empathy were found to be significantly related to customer satisfaction in this study. Since the standard benchmarking of the service dimensions was 2.5 less than 2.5 was considered to be insignificant to the study.

Association between Service Quality in the Tourism Industry and the Service Quality Dimensions

The service dimensions were examined to see if they were significantly associated with quality service, accurate service and timely service independently. As seen in the results and findings, Quality service was highly associated with tangibles, responsiveness, reliability and empathy. Accurate service was significantly associated with tangibles, reliability, assurance and empathy. Lastly, timely services were found to be associated with empathy.

Relationship between Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction in the Tourism Industry

The service dimensions found to be independently related with customer satisfaction were **ttangibles**, responsiveness and empathy. The mentioned variables also had a positive coefficient thus an increase in any unit of the dimensions is likely to increase the satisfaction levels of customers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Management of organizations could examine the service dimensions and service quality that the customers selected as reasons for satisfaction or dissatisfaction. In this case, the management could always adjust on those other factors to provide its customers with the best values and also dictate the important dimension(s) to lay more emphasis on in order to improve service quality hence achieving customer satisfaction.

Organizations should utilize delivery processes that are easy to comprehend and adhere to both to the customers and contact personnel. The service providers should undergo necessary training to educate them about the processes. They should also be equipped with correct tools of up-to-date technology that will enable them to provide quality

services. Customer orientation is also quite important. Customers should be briefed about the whole delivery process and how satisfaction is going to be effected. Any inquiries they have about the service being delivered should be handled as quickly as possible with preciseness. All in all, the services being delivered to clients should be of high quality and have the ability to cater for the clients' needs at all times.

The management should carry out continuous customer surveys this helps to learn what customers think about the services they receive in the sector and will help in correcting their points of failure and improve service quality delivery process.

Organization's management, for the organization's management to be more effective, it should embrace the Total Quality Management (TQM). This is an approach in which all the company's people are involved in constantly improving the quality of a service, product and business processes. This will enable the establishment to have quality as its top priority, be focused on customer satisfaction, be more focused to improving teamwork and empowerment and it will greatly lead to effective leadership where the top management will set quality standards and act as an example to be followed by the junior staff.

Market research, the organization should carry out a continuous market research on their target market to be able to know their expectations and perceptions. This will help them to give promises based on those expectations and perceptions and thus deliver quality and satisfactory. The findings from this research are relevant for academic purposes. This can be under categories of the consumer, the employee, the employer and lastly, for marketing research. Additional knowledge on customer research on satisfaction plays a vital role because organizations are trying to make it possible of gaining more customers by keeping the old customers and attracting new customers. Satisfying the customers by making sure they obtain good quality services is one of the latest strategies for organizations in today's business environment. That is why companies are going in for total quality management to improve the quality because quality has a great impact on customer satisfaction (Kotler, et al., 2002, p. 8). This contributes to this area by confirming or adding value to the relationships that are involved among customer satisfaction, service quality and some of the service quality dimensions by SERVQUAL model.

The present study institutes basis for assuming that service quality is not the only factor determining customer satisfaction in a service sector and also that service quality dimension is an important tool of evaluating service quality by the customers.

Areas for further Research

The study presents the following suggestions:

- i. This study recommend that further study should be done to established the effects of quality attributes in tourism industry. This will facilitate a comparison between results of this study on influence of quality aspects on customer satisfaction.
- ii. A follow up study in the same study area using a larger sample to determine if similar views still prevail and what their implications are to tourism sector is welcome.
- iii. A research in this context could bring about changes in findings. This is because of many variables that might not be put into standard because of varies in the service industry ranging from seasonality, personality of employees on duty, customers perceptions and expectations, and many more variables. Therefore, researchers are welcome to conduct a similar research.

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