

**ANTECEDENTS OF INTERNATIONAL TOURISTS' DESTINATION
LOYALTY TO SERENGETI NATIONAL PARK IN TANZANIA**

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September, 2021

**ANTECEDENTS OF INTERNATIONAL TOURISTS' DESTINATION
LOYALTY TO SERENGETI NATIONAL PARK IN TANZANIA**

**BY
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**A Thesis Submitted in fulfilment of the requirement for the Award of Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy of Moshi Co-operative University**

**Moshi
2021**

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I, **Richard John Matolo**, declare that this thesis is my original work and that it has not been presented and will not be presented to any other higher learning institution for a similar or any other academic award.

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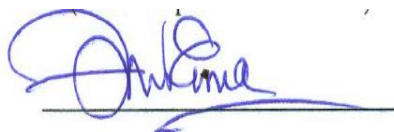
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CERTIFICATION

The undersigned certify that they have read and hereby recommend for acceptance by Moshi Co-operative University a thesis titled; “**Antecedents of International Tourists’ Destination Loyalty to Serengeti National Park in Tanzania**” in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of a degree of Doctor of Philosophy of Moshi Co-operative University.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my family, lovely wife Careen R. Matolo and my children Mark, Nola, Lina and Allan for their incredible love and support, prayers, encouragement, concern, tolerance and care while I was working on this thesis. This work is also dedicated to my lovely parents, the late Mzee John Matolo and Mama Theresia John Matolo for their love and academic guidance during their times; something which shall not be ever forgotten. Their legacy should live forever and ever to our children's grandchildren.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I thank the Almighty God for granting me a reward of life and good health throughout this Doctoral period. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my major supervisor Prof. Vedastus G. Ndibalema and Co-supervisor Dr. Paul J. Salia for their valuable guidance during this research program. I am intensely indebted to my supervisors for their constant supervision, constructive advices, criticisms, support, encouragement and guidance throughout the research process. Their expertise and faith in my work motivated and helped me at every stage of this research.

My gratitude to Dr. Allan J. H. Kijazi, Conservation Commissioner for TANAPA and also Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism for his invaluable support and encouragement. I am also grateful to Mr. William S. Mwakilema, Deputy Conservation Commissioner – Conservation Business Development, Alhajj. Juma M. N. Kuji, Deputy Conservation Commissioner – Corporate Services and Mr. Ibrahim A. Mussa (retired Director of Tourism & Marketing for TANAPA) for their never-ending inspiration and unconditional support during my entire doctoral work.

I am extremely indebted to all my friends and colleagues at MoCU whose constructive comments, ingenious ideas and suggestions during a number of seminars have immensely contributed to the final shape of this thesis. My appreciation to Miss. Agnes Boniface Mtui (PhD candidate 2019) for her assistance in final editing of this thesis.

I am particularly thankful to Prof. Alfred Sife (Vice Chancellor - MoCU), Prof. Athanasi Mangasini Katundu (Director of Research and Postgraduate Studies - MoCU), Dr. Alban Mchopa, Dr. Faustine Panga, Dr. Gideon Sikawa, Dr. Isaac Kazungu, Dr. Jones T. Kaleshu, Dr. Cyril Komba, Dr. Gratian Cronery and Dr. Bikolimana Muhihi (academic staff at MoCU), Mr. Christopher Mnyasa and Mr. Nkondora Benedict (administration staff at MoCU). I am also indebted to the entire DPRS and the Department of Management for their excellent services during this PhD journey.

I gratefully acknowledge and express my heartiest thanks to my family, my wife Careen, my sons Mark and Allan and daughters Nola and Lina whose proximity, support, love and affection consoled me while writing this thesis. Their infinite patience, sacrifices and tolerance cannot ever be underestimated. In the same accord, I heartedly thank Fr. Herbert Kaille Webbo for his cheerful encouragement, spiritual and

moral support and company during presentations at MoCU. Last but not the least, my special thanks to SENAPA staff Mr. Massana Gibril Mwishawa (Senior Assistant Conservation Commissioner - Incharge for SENAPA), Eng. Michael Joseph Tarimo (Senior Conservation Officer – Civil engineer) and Miss. Tutindaga George Mwakijambile (Principal Conservation Officer – Wildlife management – SENAPA) for their assistance in data collection. I am also grateful to all respondents who enabled me to obtain the required data. Thank you very much to you all.

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ACRONYMS

| | | |
|----------|---|--|
| AGFI | : | Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index |
| AVE | : | Average Variance Extracted |
| BOT | : | Bank of Tanzania |
| CB-SEM | : | Covariance Based Structural Equation Modelling |
| CFA | : | Confirmatory Factor Analysis |
| CFI | : | Comparative Fit Index |
| COVID-19 | : | Corona Virus Disease 2019 |
| CR | : | Composite Reliability |
| GDP | : | Gross Domestic Product |
| DOI | : | Digital Object Identifier |
| EDT | : | Expectancy Disconfirmation Theory |
| EFA | : | Exploratory Factor Analysis |
| GFI | : | Goodness of Fit Index |
| GOK | : | Government of Kenya |
| GOT | : | Government of Tanzania |
| KBS | : | Kenya Bureau of Statistics |
| MMNR | : | Maasai Mara National Reserve |
| MNRT | : | Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism |
| MoCU | : | Moshi Co-operative University |
| NFYDP | : | National Five-Year Development Plan |
| RMSEA | : | Root Mean Square Error of Approximation |
| SANParks | : | South Africa National Parks |
| SEM | : | Structural Equation Modelling |
| SENAPA | : | Serengeti National Park |
| TANAPA | : | Tanzania National Parks |
| TBS | : | Tanzania Bureau of Standards |
| TPB | : | Theory of Planned Behaviour |
| UNWTO | : | United Nations World Tourism Organization |
| URT | : | United Republic of Tanzania |
| US \$ | : | United States Dollar |
| WTTC | : | World Travel & Tourism Council |

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Tourists' loyalty is critical for the performance of any tourism destination. However, while Serengeti National Park (SENAPA) found in the northern Tanzania is one of the most famous tourists' destinations in Africa, its performance is low compared to similar parks on the continent. This study was conducted to assess the antecedents of international tourists' destination loyalty while focusing at Serengeti National Park in Tanzania. The study intended to meet four objectives which were to: assess tourists' satisfaction with quality of services offered in the park; assess the influence of destination image and service quality on perceived value; assess the effects of destination image, perceived value and service quality on tourists' satisfaction; and assess the determinants of tourists' loyalty to Serengeti as a destination. The study was guided by positivism research paradigm with an explanatory research design. Target population for this study comprised international tourists who visited SENAPA between March and September in 2019. The study adopted non-probability convenience sampling technique whereby the researcher involved tourists who were accessible and willing to participate in the study. A total of 1 148 respondents were involved. Primary data were collected by using a structured survey questionnaire while secondary data were obtained from the official websites of some National Parks in Africa. Paired sample t-test was used to assess extent to which tourists were satisfied with quality of services offered in the park. Based on the Expectancy Disconfirmation Theory (EDT), tourists' satisfaction was the difference between expectation and perceived experience. Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) technique was used for the analyses of data for second, third and fourth objective. Findings of this study revealed that tourists were satisfied with quality of tangibles found at SENAPA, reliability of service providers, responsiveness as well as empathy of service providers. The findings also showed that tourists were not satisfied with the assurance dimension of service quality which was concerned with service providers' knowledge, courtesy, and ability to inspire trust and confidence to visitors. Findings also revealed that destination image and service quality had positive and statistically significant effect on perceived value. Further findings revealed that service quality (SQ) had a positive significant effect on tourists' satisfaction (SAT). Similarly, destination image (DI) and perceived value (PV) were found to be positive predictors of tourists' satisfaction. The effects of service quality and destination image on tourists' satisfaction were maximized when mediated through perceived value. Lastly, the findings showed that service quality, destination image,

perceived value and satisfaction had positive and statistically significant effects on the international tourists' loyalty to SENAPA. It was also showed that satisfaction had a partial mediation effect on the relationship between service quality, destination image and perceived value on one hand and destination loyalty on the other. Although tourists were satisfied with quality of services offered to them while visiting SENAPA, customer care services among services' providers were poor. Quality of perceived image of SENAPA as well as quality of services provided enhanced tourists' perceived value. Tourists realized value for visiting the park given that benefits enjoyed during their trips outweighed the costs involved. Provision of services of high or appreciable quality increased the propensity of international tourists to remain loyal to a destination. Perceived value and satisfaction were critical determinants of tourists' loyalty to SENAPA. In view of the findings, SENAPA should strive to maintain its good image through marketing strategies including advertisements and promotions through international media, international tourism exhibitions and social media. Service providers in SENAPA like tour companies, hotel and lodge operators should use relevant modern service provision facilities which meet the demand of their customers. The management of the park in collaboration with other service providers in the park like hotel and lodge operators provide services of good quality at affordable costs. Tanzania National Parks (TANAPA) should make efforts that would enhance perceived value among the international tourists by making direct costs charged on individual tourists like park entry fees and taxes competitive compared to similar parks in Africa.

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Research Problem

International tourism is one of the major sources of economic growth in the world. According to the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTCC) the sector accounted for 10.3% of the global Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and 10.4% of total employment in 2019 (WTTC, 2020). Tourism sector grew steady from 2010 to 2018 in terms of international arrivals and receipts. Evidences from World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) revealed that international arrivals increased from around 1 000 million 2010 to 1 402 million tourists in 2018 (UNWTO, 2019). Accordingly, tourism receipts increased from around US \$ 520 billion in 2010 to US \$ 1 451 billion in 2018. During this period, growth was realized across all continents. In terms of tourism receipts in 2018, Europe enjoyed the largest share of US \$ 570 billion followed by Asia (US \$ 435 billion), America (US \$ 334 billion), the Middle East (US \$ 73 billion) and Africa (US \$ 38 billion). Africa, therefore, received the least share of those earnings. Nonetheless, the sector contributed to 24.3 million African jobs, or 6.7% of total employment (WTTC, 2020). Most of international tourists to the continent visited countries found in the Sub-Saharan region. This region enjoyed 72.2% of all tourism receipts to the African continent (UNWTO, 2019).

In Tanzania, tourism sector experienced a steady growth in the past two decades before the eruption of COVID-19 in early 2020. Evidence from the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism (MNRT) indicated that the number of those arrivals increased from 612 754 tourists in 2005 to 1 527 230 in 2019 (MNRT, 2019). Accordingly, the receipts from the international visitors increased from US\$ 823.05 million in 2005 to US \$ 2 612.8 million in 2019 (MNRT, 2019). According to the Bank of Tanzania (BOT), the sector contributed to 17% of GDP while accounting for about 25% of export revenue (BOT, 2017).

Most of the international tourists to Tanzania visit Serengeti National Park (SENAPA). For example, it is observed that 34% of all international tourists who visited Tanzania in 2019 went to SENAPA (MNRT, 2019). Thus, SENAPA is one of the key attractions for international tourists compared to other destinations in Tanzania. However, evidence show that performance of SENAPA, as a tourists'

destination, is low compared to other parks with a similar ecosystem in the East African region. For instance, the park received fewer visitors per square kilometre compared to Maasai Mara which is in Kenya (TANAPA, 2017; KBS, 2017; Bhandari, 2014; MMNR, 2010). Another evidence shows that while Tanzania received 1 527 230 international tourists in 2019 (MNRT, 2019), Kenya received 2 025 206 tourists in the same year (GOK, 2019). Given this evidence, it is plausible to investigate the likelihood of tourists to continue visiting SENAPA in the near future by focusing on their loyalty to the park.

In general terms, loyalty to a product or service refers to customers' behaviour for repeated purchases or willingness to recommend the same to friends or family members (Iordanova, 2016). In the tourism context, loyalty may be expressed in terms of revisit intention, willingness to recommend a friend or relative or having positive word-of-mouth (Almeida-Santana and Moreno-Gil, 2018). Maintaining tourists' destination loyalty is, therefore, crucial given that it is less costly to retain an existing customer than to attract new ones (Chiu *et al.*, 2016). Thus, performance of a tourism sector depends primarily on the volume of international arrivals and associated receipts. Impliedly, performance of this sector largely depends on tourists' loyalty to a specific destination. It is important, therefore, to understand the key determinants of tourists' loyalty so as to introduce measures that can make certain destinations perform better than their competitors.

Tourists' loyalty to a destination may be affected by several factors including, but not limited to, service quality (Jeong *et al.*, 2019; Priporas *et al.*, 2017), destination image (Moon and Han, 2018; Türkmen *et al.*, 2018) perceived value (Kim and Uysal, 2015; Kim *et al.*, 2015; Um *et al.*, 2006) and satisfaction (Mainolfi and Marino, 2020; De Nisco *et al.*, 2017). Destination image, which is defined as the sum of beliefs, ideas and impressions that a visitor has towards a certain destination or place (Assaker and Hallak, 2013), is crucial for marketing of tourist destination. Tourists who hold a good image of a specific destination are likely to revisit the same or recommend it to friends or relatives. In other words, tourists' destination loyalty may be influenced by destination image.

Service quality is unquestionable attractive factor for tourists to visit specific destination. The rationale for provision of high-quality services in the tourism sector is based on the conviction that such services are likely to lead to customer satisfaction

(Sanjar *et al.*, 2020). Camilleri (2017) observes that businesses can only exist because of customers. Generally, firms that are able to satisfy customers tend to be more successful. Zhao and Di-Benedetto (2013) argue that success of tourism sector is largely determined by quality of services provided at a particular destination. It is observed that service quality is a central issue in assessments focusing on tourists' satisfaction with specific destination (Zhao and Di-Benedetto, 2013). Thus, type of services experienced by tourists may play a decisive role in their future behavioural intentions. Specifically, tourists who enjoy good quality services tend to leave a destination with feelings of satisfaction and are likely to remain loyal to it. Similarly, perceived value, which is an outcome of cost-benefit analysis regarding value worth for visiting a specific destination (Shen, 2016) is a determinant that may influence tourists' loyalty to the destination (Kim and Uysal, 2015; Kim *et al.*, 2015; Um *et al.*, 2006). Tourists who leave a destination with feelings that what they spent during the trip was less compared to the benefits enjoyed will tend to recommend friends and relatives to visit the same.

Satisfaction is yet another factor that affects tourists' loyalty to a destination. According to Kotler and Armstrong (2018), customer satisfaction is the extent to which products or services provided meet or surpass customer expectations. In the context of tourism, satisfaction is extent to which tourists meet their travel expectations. It is observed that customer satisfaction is central if any business firm is to make customers feel that services or products offered are valuable (Zameer *et al.*, 2015). Generally, satisfied customers tend to remain loyal to products and services that can satisfy their needs and wants (Mohd Suki, 2017). Satisfied tourists are likely to remain loyal to destination; the fact that guarantees better performance of tourism sector in that destination in the future. High level of satisfaction among tourists is in turn expected to contribute to tourists' loyalty to destination let alone willingness to maintain long relationships with service providers, who in this case are tour operators (Lee and Xue, 2020).

Studies conducted in Tanzania (Matolo and Salia; 2017; Kazururu, 2014; Mlozi and Pesämaa, 2013; Mallya, 2013; Mlozi *et al.*, 2012; Okello, 2009) did not specifically address the influence of specific factors on tourists' satisfaction and eventually destination loyalty. For instance, Mlozi and Pesämaa (2013) focused on tourists' destination choices. Other studies focused on the determinants of place identity and

dependence among international tourists (Mlozi *et al.* (2012), determinants of tourists' length of stay (Kazuzuru, 2014), determinants of tourist spending in Tanzania (Kazuzuru, 2018) and dimensions for positioning tourists' destination (Mallya, 2013). Although a study by Okello (2009) focused on tourists' satisfaction in relation to attractions referring to the Northern circuit in Tanzania, it did not examine determinants of loyalty to destinations like national parks. Another study by Matolo and Salia (2017) focused on SENAPA but its objective was to compare tourists' expectations with actual experiences and thus did not address issues of destination loyalty. It is against this background; therefore, this study was conducted to assess the determinants of tourist destination loyalty at Serengeti National Park focusing on such factors as service quality, destination image, perceived value and satisfaction.

1.2 Statement of the problem

The Government of Tanzania (GOT) through the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism (MNRT) has made a number of efforts to boost inflow of international tourists with aims of increasing earnings and creation of employment. For example, through the National Second Five Year Development Plan (NDP II 2016/2021), the GOT introduced strategies geared towards strengthening training on hotel and tourism hospitality, increasing number of tourism products and increasing number of beds (URT, 2016). Similarly, the government through Tanzania National Parks made efforts to diversify tourists' products including balloon and walking safaris, among others (MNRT, 2021).

Nonetheless, Tanzania's annual international tourists' arrivals and receipts were consistently lower than other countries in Africa. For example, in 2018 Tanzania's share of tourism receipts in the region was 6.4% compared to 23.3% for South Africa and 20.4% for Morocco (UNWTO, 2019). Specifically, the performance of Serengeti National Park, which is the most famous tourists' destination in Tanzania (MNRT, 2019), was poor compared to similar parks in the East African region. For instance, the park received fewer visitors per square kilometre than Maasai Mara National Park in Kenya (TANAPA, 2017; KBS, 2017). Given that performance of tourism sector depends, largely, on tourists' loyalty to specific destinations, it was imperative to conduct a study to investigate the antecedents of international tourists' loyalty to SENAPA.

Literature revealed that there is paucity of literature on the antecedents of tourists' destination loyalty in Tanzania. Existing few previous studies focused on determinants of tourists' destination choices (Mlozi and Pesämaa, 2013) determinants of tourists spending (Kazuzuru, 2018), dimensions of positioning tourists' destination (Mallya, 2013) and on the extent to which international tourists met their travel expectation while visiting SENAPA. There was, therefore, a need to investigate how selected factors like service quality, destination image, perceived value and satisfaction influenced tourists' loyalty to SENAPA.

1.3 Objectives of the study

The overall objective of this study was to assess the antecedents of international tourists' destination loyalty to Serengeti National Park in the Northern part of Tanzania.

1.3.1 Specific objectives

Specifically, the study intends to achieve the following objectives.

- (i) To assess tourists' satisfaction with quality of services offered in the park.
- (ii) To assess the influence of destination image and service quality on tourists' perceived value.
- (iii) To assess the effects of destination image, perceived value and service quality on tourists' satisfaction.
- (iv) To assess the determinants of tourists' loyalty to Serengeti National Park as a destination.

1.4 Hypotheses

This study endeavoured to test the following null hypotheses

H₁: Tourists were not satisfied with quality of tangibles at the park

H₂: Tourists were not satisfied with reliability of services

H₃: Tourists were not satisfied with employees' responsiveness

H₄: Tourists were not satisfied with employees' assurance in services' delivery

H₅: Tourists were not satisfied with employees' empathy

H₆: Destination image does not influence tourists' perceived value

H₇: Service quality does not influence tourists' perceived value

H₈: Perceived value does not influence tourists' satisfaction

H₉: Service quality does not influence tourists' satisfaction

H₁₀: Destination image does not influence tourists' satisfaction

H₁₁: Perceived value does not mediate relationship between service quality and satisfaction

H₁₂: Service quality does not influence tourists' destination loyalty

H₁₃: Destination image does not influence tourists' destination loyalty

H₁₄: Perceived value does not influence tourists' destination loyalty

H₁₅: Tourists' satisfaction does not influence tourists' destination loyalty

H₁₆: Satisfaction does not mediate relationship between service quality and destination loyalty

H₁₇: Satisfaction does not mediate relationship between destination image and destination loyalty

H₁₈: Satisfaction does not mediate relationship between perceived value and destination loyalty

1.5 Rationale for the study

This study was important and timely for a number of reasons. Although there was rich literature on the relationships between tourists' destination loyalty and service quality (Jeong *et al.*, 2019; Priporas *et al.*, 2017; Kim *et al.* 2015), destination loyalty and perceived value (Kim and Uysal, 2015; Chiu *et al.*, 2014; Sun *et al.*, 2013; Kim *et al.*, 2013; Um *et al.*, 2006), destination loyalty and destination image (Atay *et al.*, 2020; Moon and Han, 2018; Türkmen *et al.*, 2018) as well as destination loyalty and satisfaction (Mainolfi and Marino, 2020; De Nisco *et al.*, 2017; Wu, 2016), none of those studies was conducted in Africa. It was specifically noted that the drivers of tourists' destination loyalty in Tanzania were not yet scientifically documented. The current study endeavoured to fill the available knowledge gap using SENAPA as case study. In particular, the study addressed the link between service quality and tourists' satisfaction, the determinants of tourists' satisfaction and later on the determinants of tourists' loyalty.

In terms of methodological approach, this study managed to construct a predictive model on how destination image, perceived value, service quality and satisfaction influenced international tourists' loyalty to SENAPA; something which was missing in all previous studies conducted in Tanzania. To that end, a robust approach of using Covariance-Based Structural Equation Modelling (CB-SEM) technique was adopted.

Furthermore, the findings of this study have implications to the Tanzania's National Tourism Policy (MNRT, 1999) as they may be used as input in the assessment of extent to which the objectives of National Tourism Policy (URT, 1999) have been achieved. Particularly, the findings may provide valuable contribution to policy makers on extent to which the first objective of the aforementioned policy which is "to increase revenue and contribution of tourism to foreign currency earnings and the GDP" was likely to have been achieved. In addition, the findings may provide inputs to the implementation of National Five-Year Development Plan (NFYDP II) 2016/17 – 2021 whose one of sector targets is concerned with creating mechanism for "aggressive promotion and marketing of Tanzania as a unique tourist destination" (URT, 2016:60).

1.6 Literature Review

1.6.1 Conceptual definitions

1.6.1.1 Service quality

Service quality is defined as discrepancy between customer's expectation and perceived experience with a product or service (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1985). It is brilliance of services as evaluated by purchaser (Zeithaml, 1988) or the difference between the perception (after availing services) and expectations (before availing the services) of the customers (Wang and Shiel, 2006). In the tourism context, service quality is the extent to which visitors' perceived experience exceeded their expectations.

Satisfaction is generally defined as a post-purchase construct that is related to how much a customer likes or dislikes a service or product after experiencing it (Wilson and Christella, 2019). Customer satisfaction is the extent to which products or services provided meet or surpass customer expectations (Kotler and Armstrong, 2018) or the difference between perceived experience and expectations (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1988). In the context of this study, tourists' satisfaction is the difference between expectation and actual experience after visiting a particular destination, which in this case is SENAPA. Largely, therefore, this paper adopts a definition by Parasuraman *et al.* (1988) where satisfaction is the difference between perceived experience (P) and expectations (E) before visiting SENAPA.

1.6.1.3 Destination image

Destination image is defined as sum of beliefs, ideas and impressions that a visitor has towards a certain destination or place (Assaker and Hallak, 2013). According to Echtner and Ritchie (2003), tourists' destination is a package of tourism facilities and services which is composed of a number of multi-dimensional attributes. It is the general impression that a tourist has about a destination (Rynes, 1991). It constitutes attractive features which provide the motivations and the magnetism necessary to persuade an individual to visit a determined place (Alhemoud and Armstrong, 1996).

1.6.1.4 Perceived value

Perceived value is defined as customer utility, perceived benefits relative to sacrifice, psychological price, worth and quality (Woodruff, 1997). It is the trade-off between price and quality, with a concept of value-for-money (Sweeney and Soutar, 2001). It is also defined as consumer's overall assessment of the utility of product based on perception of what is received and what is given (Bajs, 2015) or the trade-off between perceived benefits and costs incurred (Kotler and Keller, 2012). Grewal *et al.* (1998) identified two separate components of perceived value namely acquisition and transaction values. According to these authors, acquisition value constitutes perceived net gains from the products or services acquired by customers while perceived transaction value pertains to the perceived psychological satisfaction gained from getting a good deal.

1.6.1.5 Destination loyalty

Loyalty to a brand or service may be defined to include three aspects namely repurchase intention, willingness to recommend the product or services to others, and having positive word-of-mouth towards it (Cossío-Silva *et al.*, 2019; Almeida-Santana and Moreno-Gil, 2018; Yoon *et al.*, 2017). In the tourism sector, and thus in the context of this study, destination loyalty is defined to involve three aspects which are individual tourist's intention to revisit the same destination in the future; willingness of an individual tourist to recommend destination to a friend or family member; and holding favourable attitude towards a destination which is referred to as a positive word-of-mouth.

1.7 Theoretical guide

This study was guided by four theories including Expectancy Disconfirmation Theory (EDT), Means-End Theory (MET), the Equity Theory (ET) and the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB). The EDT was borrowed to guide explanation about extent to which tourists were satisfied with quality of services offered at Serengeti National Park (SENAPA). MET was adapted to explain how tourists' perceived value was derived from service quality and destination image. The ET guided the study in explaining how specific factors influenced tourists' satisfaction while TPB was borrowed to inform the explanation about how selected factors influenced the tourists' loyalty to the park. Detailed explanation about how each of those theories were applied in this study is provided in the following sub-sections.

1.7.1 Expectancy disconfirmation theory

Expectancy Disconfirmation Theory (EDT) states that consumers form satisfaction judgments by evaluating extent to which actual product or service exceed their expectations (Van Ryzin, 2013; Ekinici *et al.*, 2007; Oliver, 1980). Disconfirmation is the difference between expected performance and perceived performance of services or products (Bhattacharjee and Premkumar, 2004). Expected performance pertains to pre-purchase period and it constitutes what the customer desires about specific product or service. Perceived performance comes after the consumption of a product or service and it constitutes an evaluation whether or not the expectations were met.

Depending on the nature of the difference, disconfirmation can either be positive, neutral or negative. Positive disconfirmation occurs when customer's perception about quality of service or product is better than the expectation. Conversely, a negative disconfirmation occurs when customer's perceived quality of service or product is worse than what was expected. According to this theory, positive disconfirmation leads to customer satisfaction while negative disconfirmation leads to dissatisfaction with service or product (Van Ryzin, 2013). Relationships among expectations (E), perceived Performance (P), disconfirmation and satisfaction are diagrammatically presented in Figure 1.

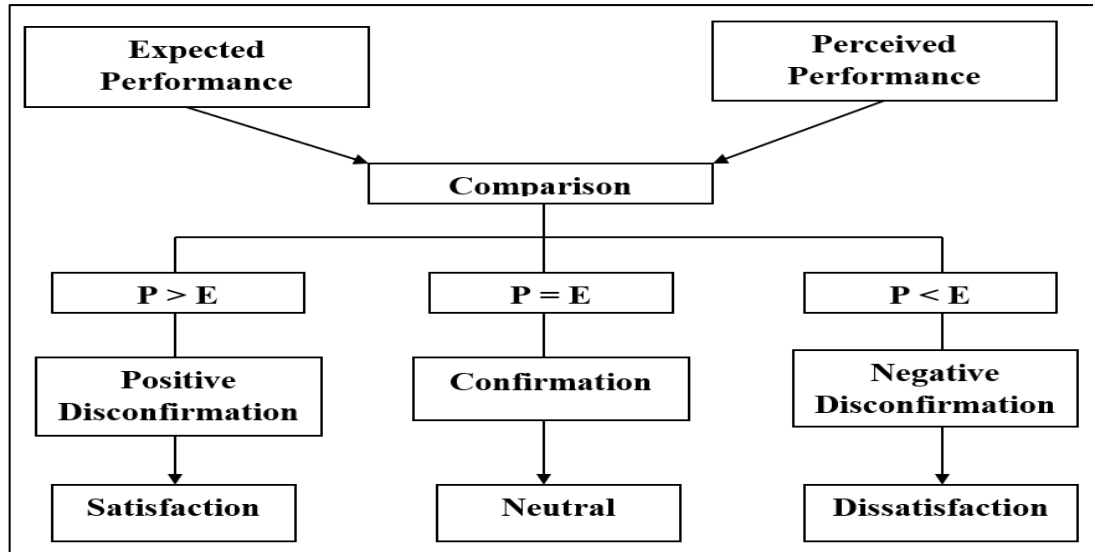


Figure 1: Diagrammatic demonstration of expectancy disconfirmation theory

Source: Adopted from Oliver, 1980

This study borrowed EDT to guide explanation about extent to which the international tourists were satisfied with quality of services offered to them while visiting SENAPA. In the context of this study, tourists were satisfied if they experienced higher quality of services than their expectations before visiting the park. This is when there was positive disconfirmation between perceived experience and expectations on the five dimensions of service quality which were tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy.

Literature shows that EDT was used in various field to guide studies designed to determine customer satisfaction based on pre-purchase quality expectations and post-purchase experience. Specifically, the theory was used in marketing (Meirovich *et al.*, 2020), information technology (Salahshour *et al.*, 2017), repurchase behaviour and retention (Picazo-Vela, 2011), airline industry (Ban and Kim, 2019) and tourism (Agyeiwaah *et al.*, 2016).

1.7.2 Means-End-Theory

The Means-End Theory (MET) posits that values are dominant factors in the pattern of consumer purchase (Gutman, 1981). The proponents of this theory observe that the way consumers relate to products can be represented by a hierarchical model of three interconnected levels: product attributes, consequences of use and personal values (Saadatfard, 2014; Leão and Mello, 2003; Lin, 2002; Reynolds and Gutman, 1982). According to this theory, consumers see products or services as a means to important

ends and thus their choices of specific products or services facilitate achievement of desired end-states (Leão and Mello, 2003; Mulvey, *et al.*, 1994; Gutman, 1981). This theory assumes that consumers associate their decision and behaviour with goal achieved that is derived by multiple consumption values (Huber *et al.*, 2001). Those value can be social, emotional, functional or financial (Sheth *et al.*, 1991).

MET connects the tangible attributes of a product (*the means*) to highly abstract and intangible personal and emotional values (*the ends*) (Olson and Reynolds, 2001). The ‘means–end’ approach to customer perceived value treats perceived value as a one-dimensional construct that is simply measured as a trade-off between benefit and sacrifice (Zeithaml, 1988), quality and price (Monroe, 1990) or the difference between customer’s perceived benefits and customer’s perceived costs (Day, 1990).

This study adapted MET to guide assessment of influence of destination image and service quality on tourists’ perceived value. In this study, tourists’ perceived value was defined as a trade-off between perceived benefits and cost incurred (Kotler and Keller, 2009). The costs incurred by tourists in terms of time, money and effort can be grouped as ‘the means’ while the outcome of value evaluation based on actual tourists’ experience in the park constitute an intangible and emotional aspect which may be referred to as ‘the ends’ Thus, the theory provided a good ground for assessing tourists’ perceived value while visiting SENAPA.

1.7.3 The Equity Theory

The Equity Theory (ET) originated from Adams Equity Theory which is based on input-output ratio in employees rewards (Adams, 1963). The theory posits that satisfaction exists when consumers perceived their output-input ratio as being fair (Swan and Oliver, 1989). According to this theory, parties to an exchange will feel equitably treated and thus satisfied, if in their minds, the ratio of their outcomes to inputs is fair (Oliver and DeSarbo, 1988). Whether a person feels equitably treated or not may depend on various factors including the price paid, the benefits received, the time and effort expended during the transaction and the experience of previous transactions (Woodruff *et al.*, 1983). In the context of tourism, the equity theory suggests that tourists compare perceived input and output (gains) in a social exchange. In this theory tourists are dissatisfied if they perceive that what they gain is less than their input in terms of time, money and other costs (Reisinger and Turner, 1997).

This study adopted Equity Theory to guide explanation on the influences of service quality, destination image and perceived value on tourists' satisfaction. In this study equity was achieved when individual tourist's perceived benefits of visiting Serengeti outweighed the costs and efforts invested in a trip to SENAPA. Similarly, equity was achieved when perceived quality of services exceeded tourists' expectation. The choice of the ET also took into account the fact that it had been borrowed by several previous studies which examined customer satisfaction (Lim, 2020; Chen *et al.*, 2019; Pai *et al.*, 2018). The central argument in these studies is that when customers feel that they are equitably treated during an exchange with products or services, they feel satisfied.

1.7.4 Theory of Planned Behaviour

Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) expounds that the intention to perform certain behaviour is the proximal cause of such behaviour (Shim *et al.*, 2001). According to Ajzen (1985), the TPB is built on assumption that people are likely to perform a particular type of behaviour if they believe that such behaviour will lead to a particular and valuable outcome; if their important referents will value and approve the behaviour; and if they have the necessary abilities, resources, and opportunities to carry out such behaviour.

This study adopted TPB to guide explanation about determinants of tourists' destination loyalty. In the context of tourism, and thus of this study, planned behaviour is concerned with the propensity for tourists who have visited SENAPA to demonstrate behaviour which will lead to loyalty in terms of planning a revisit trip, recommending the park to friends and relatives as well as saying positive things about it. The above three assumptions of TPB are real in the context of this study because a tourist will remain loyal to SENAPA if a previous trip to the park lead to valuable outcomes, if the people (friends and relatives) approve the park as a unique destination based on positive things said about it, or if they have enough resources and opportunity to make a revisit trip.

Literature shows that this theory was commonly used to predict behavioural intention (loyalty) in the tourism sector (Abbasi *et al.*, 2021; Ashraf *et al.*, 2019; Jeong *et al.*, 2019; Kaplan *et al.*, 2015; Brown *et al.*, 2010; Nunkoo and Ramkissoon, 2010; Hayes, 2008). For example, Kaplan *et al.* (2015) used the theory to explore behavioural aspects behind travellers' intention to use urban-bike sharing in

Denmark. Similarly, Jeong *et al.* (2019) borrowed the theory to examine the influence of destination image on tourists' satisfaction and on destination loyalty in South Korea. Also, Hayes (2008) used the theory to guide investigation of tourists' behaviour at the Westland National Park in New Zealand while Nunkoo and Ramkissoon (2010) used it to predict tourists' intention to repetitively consume genetically modified foods in Mauritius.

1.8 Empirical literature

1.8.1 Service quality and tourists' satisfaction

Service quality is critical if customers are to be satisfied and eventually retained. Studies show that there is positive relationship between service quality and tourist satisfaction (Jeong *et al.*, 2019; Sangpikul, 2018; Han and Hyun, 2015; Wu and Li, 2015; Cheng *et al.*, 2014). Mostly, those studies revealed that services of high-quality influenced satisfaction among tourists who visited different destinations. For instance, findings of a study by Wu and Li (2015) involving visitors to the Museums of Macau in China revealed that service quality enhanced satisfaction. Similarly, evidences from another study conducted in Malaysia showed that tourists who enjoyed services of high quality in hotels were more likely to be satisfied (Cheng *et al.*, 2014). Similarly, evidences from another study conducted in South Korea on sport tourism revealed that quality of services influenced satisfaction of tourist attending sport occasions (Jeong *et al.*, 2019).

Literature also revealed that several specific studies assessed customer satisfaction using SERVQUAL model. These were studies that had adopted Parasuraman (1985) approach of measuring customer satisfaction by considering the difference between expectations and actual perception of services after a visit to specific destination. A study conducted in Serbian involving customers of travel agencies revealed that tangibility, reliability, responsiveness and empathy had significant effect on customer satisfaction (Marinković *et al.*, 2011). According to this study, assurance had no significant effect on tourists' satisfaction. Similarly, Kouthouris and Alexandris (2005) applied SERVQUAL model to determine customer behavioural intentions in tourism industry. In this study, empathy, responsiveness, assurance and tangibility were found to influence tourists' satisfaction and thus could predict their future revisit intention. Specifically, the findings showed that there was positive disconfirmation in

those four dimensions of service quality signifying that tourists were satisfied. Ibrahim *et al.* (2015) conducted a study to assess the impact of service quality on customer satisfaction in Maldives Tourism Industry using SERVQUAL and found that three dimensions including responsiveness, tangibles and reliability had significant impact on tourists' satisfaction. Mohamed (2007) assessed tourists' satisfaction with service quality of travel agents in Egypt and found that customer expectations of service quality exceeded perceived experience on five dimensions namely responsiveness, reliability, empathy, resources and corporate image, and tangibility. Specifically, results of regression analysis revealed that responsiveness, reliability and tangibility had significant positive effect on customer satisfaction. Yet, another study Mowla (2019) on the impact of service quality on customers in Bangladesh tourism industry revealed that four dimensions including reliability, responsiveness, empathy and tangibles had significant effect on customer satisfaction. Specifically, reliability had a negative effect while the rest of the three dimensions had positive effect. The study also showed that assurance had no significant effect on customer satisfaction.

It is apt to note that some studies conducted in hotel industry, which is one of major tourists' attraction, using SERVQUAL model revealed mixed findings. A study conducted in Kenya using paired t-test revealed that perceived quality of services (actual services) was less than customers' expectations on all five dimensions namely tangibility, empathy, reliability, assurance and responsiveness (Kariru and Aloo, 2014). In the light of expectancy disconfirmation theory, those findings indicated that customers were not satisfied with service quality in the surveyed hotel. On the contrary, however, a study conducted in Vietnam hotel industry found that four dimensions of SERVQUAL model including reliability, responsive, assurance and empathy had positive significant effect of customer satisfaction (Minh *et al.*, 2015). In this study tangibles did not have significant effect on satisfaction.

Given the above background, it is evident that service quality is determinant of tourists' satisfaction. This study used SERVQUAL model suggested by Parasuraman (1988) to assess tourist's satisfaction with service at Serengeti National Park. Based on the five dimensions of services quality which included tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy; the study intended to test the following five null hypotheses.

H₁: Tourists were not satisfied with quality of tangibles at the park

H₂: Tourists were not satisfied with reliability of services

H₃: Tourists were not satisfied with employees' responsiveness

H₄: Tourists were not satisfied with employees' assurance in services' delivery

H₅: Tourists were not satisfied with employees' empathy

1.8.2 Perceived value, service quality and destination image

Relationship between destination image and perceived value in the tourism sector is addressed by a number of studies. Literature shows that destination image is positively related to perceived value (Kim and Park, 2017; Lin and Wang, 2012; Phillips *et al.*, 2011; Öztürk and Qu, 2008). A study by Öztürk and Qu (2008) revealed that destination image positively affects perceived value at the Maiden's Tower destination. A study conducted in China involving tourists who visited Macau region revealed that destination image had positive effect on perceived value among the international tourists (Joseph, 2018). Another study by Phillips *et al.* (2013) in North Dakota Midwestern United States revealed that destination image had direct positive effect on visitors' perception of value and revisit intention. This study also showed that destination image influenced satisfaction and loyalty in terms of positive recommendations.

Similarly, Cheng and Lu (2013) found a positive relationship between the image of Green Island of Taiwan and the tourists' perception of the value of the trip. A study by Kim *et al.* (2013) on 581 tourists likewise established that the image of Orlando Island in the USA influenced perceived value among vocational tourists. In hospitality fields, empirical evidences showed that destination image was positively correlated with perceived value (Sun *et al.*, 2013). In the festival research context, Fu *et al.* (2018) found that historical re-enactment, social interactions, event design and physical facets attributes contributed differently to the perceived value of destination and perceived benefits influenced perceived value among participants of historical re-enactment festival in the Midwestern United States. Some studies confirmed that destination image had significant positive effect on perceived value among student travellers (Kim and Park, 2017; Lin and Wang, 2012). Considering the above empirical evidences, this study hypothesized that:

H₆: Destination image does not influence tourists' perceived value

Tourism literature shows that service quality is one of the common predictors of perceived value with positive effect (Xiaoting *et al.*, 2020; Oriade and Schofield, 2019; Suhartanto *et al.*, 2019; Al-Ansi and Han, 2019; García-Fernández *et al.*, 2018). Particularly, findings of Chinese study showed that service quality has significant and positive effect on perceived value among tourists (Xiaoting *et al.*, 2020). Oriade and Schofield (2019) conducted a study on the role of service quality and perceived value in the Midlands region United Kingdom and found that perceived service quality has a direct and positive effect on perceived value. Similarly, a study conducted in Mauritius for the purpose of establishing the relationships and impacts of service quality, perceived value, customer satisfaction, and image revealed that service quality had positive effect on perceived value (Hu *et al.*, 2009). Furthermore, Chen and Chen (2010) explored an integrated model that included experience quality, perceived value, satisfaction and behavioural intentions for heritage tourists and found that service quality influenced perceived value. Yet findings of a recent study by García-Fernández *et al.* (2018) who examined relationships among perceived quality, service convenience, perceived value, satisfaction and future intentions revealed that perceived service quality was a significant predictor of perceived value. Based on the above evidences, this study puts forth the following null hypothesis.

H₇: Service quality does not influence tourists' perceived value

1.8.3 Satisfaction, Destination Image, Service Quality and Perceived Value

Literature shows that perceived value is predictor of customer satisfaction with positive effect (Williams *et al.*, 2017; Kim and Park, 2017; Bajs, 2015; Mai and Luan, 2015; Chen and Tsai 2007; Williams and Souter, 2009). Chen and Tsai (2007) examined the relationships between perceived value, satisfaction and loyalty with reference to rural tourism in Spain and their results revealed that perceived value had a positive effect on tourist satisfaction and loyalty. Some evidences found positive correlation between perceived value and satisfaction among tourists (Kim and Park, 2017). Specifically, Bajs (2015) found that perceived value had positive effect among tourists who visited Dubrovnik in Croatia. Also, findings of a study conducted in Vietnam revealed that perceived value had strong positive effect on satisfaction of tourists who visited Nam Cat Tien National Park, Vietnam (Mai and Luan, 2015). Furthermore, a comparative study involving Japanese and Western tourists showed

that perceived value was a predictor of satisfaction among Japanese and Western tourists who visited different destinations in Japan (Williams *et al.*, 2017). In this study, the tourists from Japan attached more importance to emotional and novelty values while their counterparts from Western countries attached more importance to value for money. Another similar study conducted to assess relationships among value, satisfaction and behavioural intention in adventure tourism revealed that there was strong positive correlation between perceived value and satisfaction in Australia (Williams and Souter, 2009). Particularly, this study showed that value-for-money was a positive predictor of tourists' satisfaction. Given the above empirical evidences, this study established the following null hypothesis.

H₈: Perceived value does not influence tourists' satisfaction

Various empirical evidences show that service quality is a predictor of satisfaction (Jeong *et al.*, 2019; Sangpikul, 2018; Han and Hyun, 2015; Wu and Li, 2015; Cheng *et al.*, 2014). Wu and Li (2015) conducted a study on a sample of visitors to the Museums of Macau in China and revealed that service quality is critical to customer satisfaction. Cheng *et al.* (2014) found that tourists who experienced high levels of service quality from a hotel in Malaysia were likely to have high levels of satisfaction. According to this study, satisfied customers were found to hold favourable corporate image towards the hotel. Similarly, Sangpikul (2018) found that tourists' travel experiences with service value, service facilities, safety, and cleanliness positively affected their satisfaction in Phuket, Bangkok. Yet, a study on a sporting industry in South Korea revealed that services quality influenced tourists' satisfaction (Jeong *et al.*, 2019).

It is observed that while most of the above studies focused on relationship between service quality and satisfaction in what can be described as leisure tourism, similar findings were also obtained by studies conducted in other forms of tourism. For example, a study by Han and Hyun (2015) focusing on medical tourism revealed that perceived quality of services influenced satisfaction of tourists. Drawing from a number of evidences presented above, it is clear that there is a link between service quality and customer satisfaction in the tourism sector. Those evidences point to the fact that services of good quality influenced tourists' satisfaction at different destinations. Based on the evidences of the aforementioned studies as well as evidence from several other studies conducted across service industries (Nunkoo *et*

al., 2019; Alnawas and Hemsley-Brown, 2019; Nunkoo *et al.*, 2019; Nunkoo *et al.*, 2017; Oh and Kim, 2017), this paper established the following null hypothesis.

H₉: Service quality does not influence tourists' satisfaction

Several empirical evidences show that destination image is a predictor of customer satisfaction (Swart *et al.*, 2018; Prayag *et al.*, 2017; Allameh *et al.*, 2015). Swart *et al.* (2018) assessed the satisfaction of event tourists and the probability of their repeat visitation in the 2014 Rio World Cup. The findings of this study revealed that the image of the destination had a positive and significant impact on the satisfaction of tourists. Similarly, Allameh *et al.* (2015) conducted a study to assess factors affecting attendance to sport tourism and found that destination image, service quality and perceived value had positive effects on satisfaction. Yet, Prayag *et al.* (2017) conducted an integrative model linking tourist's emotional experiences, perceived overall image, satisfaction and intention to recommend and discovered that favourable assessment of overall image has a direct impact on satisfaction. Drawing from those evidences, this study puts forth the following null hypothesis;

H₁₀: Destination image does not influence tourists' satisfaction

Some further empirical evidences showed that perceived value mediated the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction (Hapsari and Dean, 2016; Ryu and Han, 2010). For instance, Hapsari and Dean (2016) found that service quality was an antecedent of satisfaction but the relationship is mediated through perceived value. Similarly, Ryu and Han (2010) investigated the influence of quality of food, service quality and physical environment on customer satisfaction and found that perceived value mediated the relationship between service quality and satisfaction. Given the mediation effect described above, this paper puts forth the following hypothesis.

H₁₁: Perceived value does not mediate relationship between service quality and satisfaction

1.8.4 Loyalty, satisfaction, perceived value, service quality and destination image

Empirical evidences show that service quality is a predictor of tourists' loyalty (Jeong *et al.*, 2019; Priporas *et al.*, 2017; Kim *et al.* 2015). For instance, a study conducted in South Korea found that quality of services experienced by tourists influenced their satisfaction and eventually their loyalty in terms of future intention for revisit trips (Jeong *et al.*, 2019). Another study conducted in South Korea revealed that overall

quality of services influenced destination revisit intentions among elderly tourists (Kim *et al.*, 2015). Similarly, a study conducted in Thailand involving international tourists who visited Phuket Island revealed that there was positive relationship between service quality and loyalty (Priporas *et al.*, 2017).

It is noted, however, that service quality does not necessarily lead to customer loyalty. For example, evidence from a study conducted by Sangpikul (2018) in Bangkok revealed that service quality had positive effect on satisfaction but did not have significant effect on their loyalty. Similarly, a study conducted in Bangladesh revealed that perceived quality of services did not influence loyalty of tourists to Cox's Bazar Beach (Hossain *et al.*, 2015). Based on those evidences the following null hypothesis was established.

H₁₂: Service quality does not influence tourists' destination loyalty

Literature shows that destination image has a positive effect on tourists' loyalty to specific destinations (Atay *et al.*, 2020; Moon and Han, 2018; Türkmen *et al.*, 2018). Evidence from a study conducted in Turkey revealed that personal destination image had positive effect on tourists' loyalty in one of the famous cultural heritage centres called Pamukkale – Hierapolis (Atay *et al.*, 2020). Particularly, tourists to that destination demonstrated that they were willing to make revisit trips in the future. Similar findings were also obtained by Türkmen *et al.* (2018) showing that there was positive relationship between destination image and loyalty. It is of interest to note that tourists' do create destination image based on their experiences. This view is supported by Moon and Han (2018) as well as Loureiro, (2014) who observed that tourists who are contented with overall experience in terms of having feelings enjoyment and a sense of escapism are likely to have a positive attitude toward a destination and intend to revisit the destination. Several other studies revealed that destination image influenced tourist' revisit intention (Qu *et al.*, 2011; Seabra *et al.*, 2007) and positive word-of-mouth (Zhang *et al.*, 2014; Pandža Bajs, 2013; Kim *et al.*, 2012). Given the above evidences, this study puts forth the following null hypothesis:

H₁₃: Destination image does not influence tourists' destination loyalty

Studies show that perceived value is a predictor of tourists' loyalty (Kim and Uysal, 2015; Chiu *et al.*, 2014; Sun *et al.*, 2013; Kim *et al.*, 2013; Um *et al.*, 2006). It is observed that perceived value has significant influence of tourists' revisit intention

(Um *et al.*, 2006). Similarly, some evidences show that perceived value influences loyalty through revisit intention and positive word-of-mouth (Kim and Uysal, 2015; Chen and Chen, 2010). Based on those evidences, this study hypothesizes that:

H₁₄: Perceived value does not influence tourists' destination loyalty

Satisfaction is yet another factor to consider while examining the determinant of tourists' loyalty to a destination. According to Bang and Hai (2019) tourists are said to be satisfied when post-travel experience exceeds pre-travel expectations. Satisfaction constitutes pleasant feelings resulting from enjoyment experienced during the travel compared to prior-expectations (Le and Dong, 2017; Akhoondnejad, 2016). Evidences show that there is relationship between tourists' satisfaction and destination loyalty (Mainolfi and Marino, 2020; De Nisco *et al.*, 2017; Wu, 2016). For example, Wu (2016) showed that satisfaction influenced tourists' choice of destination, level of consumption of services and products as well as revisit intention to Taiwan Tourism Welcome Centre. Mainolfi and Marino (2020) examined variables that influenced tourists' behavioural intention in the event "*Luci d'Artista*" (Artist's lights), a special event that takes place at Christmas time in the city of Salerno in the Southern Italy. This study revealed that satisfaction was a direct antecedent of loyalty in terms of revisit intention. De Nisco *et al.* (2017) conducted a study in Italy and found that satisfaction among international tourists had significant effect on their loyalty to specific destination in terms of revisit intention and positive word-of-mouth. Yet, another evidence suggests that tourists who are satisfied with experiences of a destination in terms of entertainment and attraction are likely to remain loyal to the same (Ramseook-Munhurrun *et al.*, 2015). Given the above empirical evidences, this study puts forth the following null hypothesis.

H₁₅: Tourists' satisfaction does not influence tourists' destination loyalty

Further literature shows that satisfaction mediates the relationship between destination image, perceived value and service quality on the one hand and loyalty on the other hand. For example, a number of studies conducted in the tourism industry revealed that satisfaction mediated the relationship between destination image and loyalty (Atay *et al.*, 2020; Mahadzirah, Ab-Ghani and Nasir, 2019). Another study conducted in Turkey tourist industry focusing on Pamukkale-Hierapolis site revealed that tourists' satisfaction partially mediated the relationship between destination image and loyalty to that specific site (Atay *et al.*, 2020). Similarly, Mahadzirah *et al.* (2019) found that destination image had both direct and indirect effects on loyalty and

further noted that satisfaction was a partial mediator of relationship between destination image and loyalty. One observation that can be drawn from the above literature is that favourable destination image results into higher level of tourist satisfaction which in turn leads to destination loyalty.

More evidences from different service industries show that satisfaction mediates the relationship between destination image and loyalty to a specific destination (Subrahmanyam, 2017; Kim *et al.*, 2013; Chen and Chen, 2010). Accordingly, evidences show that satisfaction mediates the relationship between service quality and destination loyalty (Wu and Cheng, 2018; Su *et al.*, 2016; Kim *et al.*, 2013). In this context tourists who experience services of good quality are likely to be satisfied and the satisfied tourists are likely to remain loyal to the destination. Furthermore, evidences from several studies (Lai *et al.*, 2009; Yang and Peterson, 2004; Cronin *et al.*, 2000) indicated that customer satisfaction mediated the relationship between perceived value and loyalty. Literally, this means that tourists' who are satisfied because benefits of making a trip are more than the costs incurred are likely to remain loyal to the same destination. Given the above evidences on the mediation role of satisfaction, this study puts forth the following three null hypotheses;

H₁₆: Satisfaction does not mediate relationship between service quality and destination loyalty

H₁₇: Satisfaction does not mediate relationship between destination image and destination loyalty

H₁₈: Satisfaction does not mediate relationship between perceived value and destination loyalty

1.9 Research gaps

Studies showed that there is positive relationship between service quality and tourist satisfaction (Jeong *et al.*, 2019; Sangpikul, 2018; Han and Hyun, 2015; Wu and Li, 2015; Cheng *et al.*, 2014). However, there were few, if any, studies conducted in Africa and Tanzania in particular. Geographically, those studies were conducted in China (Wu and Li, 2015), Malaysia (Cheng *et al.*, 2014) and South Korea (Jeong *et al.*, 2019). Literature further showed studies that had used SERVQUAL model in assessing international tourists' satisfaction in Tanzania were missing. A few studies which adopted the model were conducted in Serbia (Marinković *et al.*, 2011), in Maldives (Ibrahim *et al.*, 2015) in Egypt (Mohamed, 2006) and in Bangladesh

(Mowla, 2019). It was also observed that similar studies conducted in the East Africa region were missing. For example, although Kariru and Aloo (2014) adopted SERVQUAL mode, their study focused on hotel industry and thus did not exclusively deal with the international tourists. The current study intended to fill this literature gap by assessing the international tourists' satisfaction with quality of services at Serengeti National Park. Other than filling the knowledge gap, this study was unique because, different from many previous studies, it adopted the Expectancy Disconfirmation Theory (EDT). According to EDT, satisfaction is the difference between tourists' expectations and perceived experience (Parasuraman, 1988). The theory was therefore, the best in examining tourists' satisfaction with each of the five dimensions of service quality which were tangibility, reliability, assurance, responsiveness and empathy.

Several studies had addressed the relationship between destination image (DI) and perceived value (PV) (Kim and Park, 2017; Lin and Wang, 2012; Phillips *et al.*, 2011; Özturk and Qu, 2008). However, none of those studies was conducted in Tanzania or other African country. Those studies were conducted in China (Joseph, 2018), United States of America (Fu *et al.*, 2018; Kim *et al.*, 2014; Phillips *et al.*, 2013) and Taiwan (Cheng and Lu, 2013). Similarly, while several studies had addressed the relationship between service quality and perceived value (Xiaoting *et al.*, 2020; Oriade and Schofield, 2019; Suhartanto *et al.*, 2019; Al-Ansi and Han, 2019 García-Fernández *et al.*, 2018), there was paucity of literature about Tanzanian tourism sector. The previous studies were mainly conducted in Asia and Europe. The current study intended to fill this literature gap by assessing the influence of service quality and destination image on international tourists' perceived value focusing at SENAPA.

Literature revealed that most of previous studies addressing the relationships between perceived value and tourists' satisfaction (Kim and Park, 2017; Williams *et al.*, 2017; Bajaj, 2015; Mai and Luan, 2015; Williams and Souter, 2009; Chen and Tsai, 2007) between destination image and satisfaction (Swart *et al.*, 2018; Prayag *et al.*, 2017; Allameh *et al.*, 2015); and between service quality and satisfaction (Jeong *et al.*, 2019; Sangpikul, 2018; Han and Hyun, 2015; Wu and Li, 2015; Cheng *et al.*, 2014) were conducted in Europe, Asia and America. There was scarcity of literature about the determinants of tourists' satisfaction in Tanzania and Africa at large. Specifically,

no study had been conducted to determine the effects of service quality, destination image and perceived value on the international tourists' satisfaction. The current study fills the above knowledge gap by assessing the influence of service quality, destination image and perceived value on the international tourists' satisfaction in SENAPA. In addition, the study examined the mediation effect of perceived value in the relationship between service quality and satisfaction; an aspect that was rarely considered in previous tourism studies.

Furthermore, literature showed that several studies had addressed the relationship between quality of services and destination loyalty (Jeong *et al.*, 2019; Priporas *et al.*, 2017; Kim *et al.* 2015). A number of other studies investigated the influence of perceived value on tourists' destination loyalty (Kim and Uysal, 2015; Chiu *et al.*, 2014; Sun *et al.*, 2013; Kim *et al.*, 2013; Um *et al.*, 2006) as well as link between image of the destination and loyalty (Atay *et al.*, 2020; Moon and Han, 2018; Türkmen *et al.*, 2018). Similarly, a number of studies examined the relationship between tourists' satisfaction and destination loyalty (Mainolfi and Marino, 2020; De Nisco *et al.*, 2017; Wu, 2016). However, a surprising fact is that none of those studies was conducted in Africa despite the fact that the continent attracts millions of tourists per year. It was specifically noted that the drivers of tourists' destination loyalty in Tanzania were not yet scientifically documented. The current study endeavoured to fill the available knowledge gap using SENAPA as case study.

Generally, the reviewed literature showed that there is rich literature about determinants of destination tourists' destination loyalty. However, there is dearth of empirical evidences on the determinants of international tourists' destination loyalty in Tanzania. A few studies on tourism sector in Tanzania (Matolo and Salia; 2017; Kazururu, 2014; Mlozi and Pesämaa, 2013; Mallya, 2013; Mlozi *et al.*, 2012; Okello, 2009) did not specifically focus on the determinants of tourists' destination loyalty. Instead, those studies focused on determinants of tourists' destinations choice (Mlozi and Pesämaa (2013), the determinants of place identity and dependence among international tourists (Mlozi *et al.* (2012), determinants of tourists' length of stay (Kazuzuru, 2014), determinants of tourist spending in Tanzania (Kazuzuru, 2018) and dimensions for positioning tourists' destination (Mallya, 2013). Although a study by Okello (2009) focused on tourists' satisfaction in relation to attractions in the Northern circuit in Tanzania, it did not address issues of destination loyalty.

Similarly, while a study by Matolo and Salia (2017) focused on SENAPA, its objective was to compare tourists' expectations with actual experiences. It is thus noted that while tourists' loyalty is crucial for performance of any destination, there was scanty literature on its determinants in the context of Tanzania.

1.10 The conceptual framework

Critical review of literature revealed that destination loyalty can be affected by the level of customer satisfaction. In this study, the ultimate dependent variable is destination loyalty which is expressed through three aspects namely intention to revisit, recommendation to others and positive word-of-mouth (Dekimpe *et al.*, 1997; Zeithmal, *et al.*, 1996; Dick and Basu 1994; Cronin and Taylor, 1992). However, there are several other dependent variables due to interrelationships between and among variables as indicated in the hypothesized model presented in Fig 2. For instance, perceived value is a dependent variable with respect to service quality and destination image. Also, satisfaction is a dependent variable with respect to such predictors as destination image, perceived value, and service quality. The relationships among independent and dependent variables are presented hereunder.

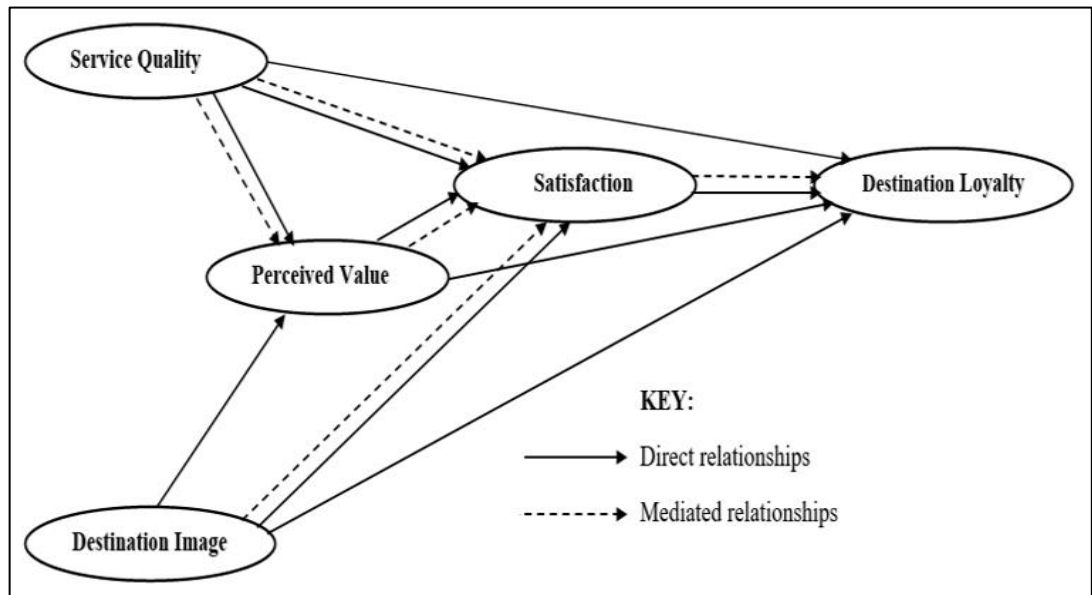


Figure 2 : Conceptual model showing relationships among variables

In the above conceptual framework loyalty is predicted by service quality (Jeong *et al.*, 2019; Priporas *et al.*, 2017), destination image (Atay *et al.*, 2020; Moon and Han, 2018; Türkmen *et al.*, 2018), perceived value (Kim and Uysal, 2015; Chiu *et al.*, 2014) and satisfaction (Mainolfi and Marino, 2020; De Nisco *et al.*, 2017; Wu, 2016). Literature further shows that perceived value is predicted by destination image (Kim

and Park, 2017; Öztürk and Qu, 2008) and service quality (Xiaoting *et al.*, 2020; Oriade and Schofield, 2019; García-Fernández *et al.*, 2018). At this level, perceived value is a dependent variable while service quality and destination image are independent variables. At another level, tourists' satisfaction is influenced by perceived value (Kim and Park, 2017; Bajs, 2015), service quality (Jeong *et al.*, 2019; Sangpikul, 2018; Han and Hyun, 2015) and destination image (Swart *et al.*, 2018; Prayag *et al.*, 2017).

In addition, literature shows that perceived value mediated the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction (Hapsari and Dean, 2016). In this case, tourists are satisfied not only because they are provided with services of high quality but also because of value obtained during their visits compared to costs incurred. Furthermore, evidences show that satisfaction mediates the relationships between service quality, destination image and perceived value on the one hand and destination loyalty on the other (Wu and Cheng, 2018; Subrahmanyam, 2017; Su *et al.*, 2016; Kim *et al.*, 2013; Lai *et al.*, 2009). Based on these relationships it appears that high levels tourists' satisfaction enhances their loyalty to a specific destination.

1.11 General Methodology

1.11.1 Research philosophy

This study was guided by positivism research paradigm. The positivists believe that reality is objective and measurable (Mukherji, 2000). According to Orlikowski and Baroudi (1991: 5) a study is positivistic if it has a proof of formal propositions, quantifiable measurements of variables, testing of hypotheses, and drawing inferences from the sample to a specified population about a phenomenon. This study adopted positivism paradigm because it was set to test a set of a *priori* hypotheses derived from literature. This approach is typical of positivism philosophical paradigm which seeks to test theoretical assumptions through observable and empirical methods (Petty *et al.*, 2012).

1.11.2 Research design

This study was guided by an explanatory research design. The emphasis of this research design is on studying a problem so as to explain the relationship between variables or testing whether one event can cause another (Saunders *et al.*, 2003; Creswell, 2003). This design is considered the best because the study intended to

search for causal relationship among sets of independent and dependent variables. Particularly, the study intended to examine how such factors as service quality, destination image, perceived value and satisfaction affected tourists' loyalty of SENAPA.

1.11.3 Study location

This study was conducted in Serengeti National Park (SENAPA) which is located in the northern part of Tanzania. The Park, which covers a total of 14 763 km², was named a World Heritage Site and Biosphere Reserve in 1981 (Sinclair and Arcese, 1995). SENAPA was selected because it is the most popular international tourists' destination in Tanzania. For example, 34% of tourists who came to Tanzania in 2019 visited Serengeti National Park, compared to almost 25% and 19 % who visited Tarangire and Manyara parks respectively (MNRT, 2019). It was thus expected that SENAPA would generate valid and enough information that could be used to assess tourists' destination loyalty compared to other parks in Tanzania.

1.11.4 Sampling and sample size

Target population were the international tourists who visited SENAPA between March and September in 2019 within which moderate and high number of tourists' inflow were experienced. The study adopted non-probability convenience sampling technique whereby the researcher involved tourists who were accessible and willing to participate in the study. The selection of respondents was done at the three exit gates of the park that are Naabi, Kogatende and Seronera.

Given that the researcher intended to deploy Structural Equation Modelling (a large sample technique) as the main analytical method, there was a need to involve a relatively large sample size (Awang, 2015). Nonetheless, while the literature shows that there is no consensus about how large should the sample size be, some scholars recommend use of observation to estimated parameter ratio ($n:q$) ratio (Kline, 2015). For example, Kline (2015) recommends that the $n:q$ ratio should be 20:1 i.e., 20 observations (participants) for each estimated parameter in the questionnaire. Others have suggested that the $n:q$ ratio can be as low as 10:1 (Schreiber *et al.*, 2006) or 5:1 (Bentler and Chou, 1987). This study adopted an $n:q$ ratio of 19:1 with the intention of having as many respondents as possible (Kline, 2015). The study involved five variables namely destination image, service quality, perceived value, satisfaction and

destination loyalty. A total of 58 parameters including 24 for destination image, 22 for service quality, six for perceived value, three for satisfaction, and other three for destination loyalty were used. Using 19:1 ratio, and given that there were 58 parameters, the minimum sample size would be 1 102 respondents. However, to the advantage of the research, 1 148 respondents returned correctly filled copies of the questionnaire. The average response rate for this study was 85 percent.

1.11.5 Source and method of data collection

This study relied on primary data collected by using a structured questionnaire. During data collection, respondents were asked to rate their opinions using a bipolar, seven-point Likert scale where: 1 = very strongly disagree and 7 = very strongly agree. Use of seven-point scale was intended to provide respondents with wider choice and thus be more realistic in assessing their levels of satisfaction (Gallarza and Saura, 2006).

Service quality was measured using a standard SERVQUAL questionnaire suggested by Parasuraman (1988). The tool focused on 5 dimensions of service quality including tangibility (four items), reliability (five items), responsiveness (four items), assurance (four items), and empathy (five items). Thus, a total of 22 items were used to assess service quality (Appendix 1). SERVQUAL questionnaire was used due to its high diagnostic power in pinpointing areas for managerial interventions in the event of service quality pitfalls and the same had been used in several previous similar studies (Jain and Gupta, 2004).

Data on perceived value was collected by using six items grouped under two dimensions which were financial value (three items) and overall value (three items). Overall value involved three items aimed at determining extent to which visitors considered their experience at the park to be uniquely rewarding. Three statements grouped under financial value intended to determine extent to which costs incurred by individual tourists matched with the value of services (enjoyment) experienced. It is important to note that similar items had been used in several previous similar studies (Dedeoğlu 2019; Chaulagain *et al.*, 2019; Wu, 2016; Tosun *et al.*, 2015; Kim *et al.*, 2013). Destination image was operationalized differently depending, mostly, on the context of specific studies (Dedeoğlu, 2019; Chaulagain *et al.*, 2019; Wu, 2016; Tosun *et al.*, 2015). Specific variables involved in those studies were accommodation, travel environment, natural attractions, entertainment and events, historic attractions,

infrastructure, accessibility, relaxation, leisure activities, price and value, cleanliness, language of communication (Chi and Qu, 2008); natural attraction, entertainment, accessibility to the destination, level of service quality and cultural attraction (Wu, 2016); accommodation, local transport, cleanliness, hospitality, leisure activities, language of communication and airport services (Tosun *et al.*, 2015); and transport, cleanliness, amenities, language of local people, hospitality, and leisure activities (Dedeoğlu, 2019). This study adopted a total of 24 items which were selectively adopted from previous studies. The items were grouped into six constructs including natural attraction, cultural attractions, accessibility, facilities or amenities, price and value, and social settings. Each of those six constructs involved four items.

Information about tourists' satisfaction was collected using three statements. Those statements were concerned with overall satisfaction with SENAPA, satisfaction with SENAPA on comparison to prior expectations and satisfaction with SENAPA considering time and efforts invested. Similarly, data on tourists' loyalty was collected using three statements which focused on the three aspects of loyalty that are revisit intention, willingness to recommend the park to friends and relatives, and positive word-of-mouth.

1.11.6 Data analysis

Paired sample t-test was used to assess extent to which tourists were satisfied with service quality. Based on the Expectancy Disconfirmation Theory (EDT), tourists' satisfaction was the difference between expectation and perceived experience. It was measured by subtracting expectation scores from performance scores (i.e., $Q = P - E$) as proposed by Parasuraman *et al.* (1985). Positive value indicated that tourists were satisfied with given aspect of service quality while negative value meant that they were not. Covariance-Based Structural Equation Modelling (CB-SEM) technique using Analysis of Moment Structure (AMOS) software was used for the analyses of data for second, third and fourth objective. As a procedural requirement, those analyses involved some stages. In the first stage, an Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was conducted to identify constructs with factor loading higher than 0.6 that would be included in the further analysis (Hair *et al.*, 2010). In the second stage, measurement (hypothetical) model was developed; the process which involved performing Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was used to validate measurement (hypothetical) model. Psychometric

properties of the measurement model were evaluated by computing composite reliability, convergent and discriminant validity. In the third stage, structural models were constructed. During this stage, Maximum Likelihood (ML) estimation algorithm was employed to test the model constructs since the data were assumed continuous and multivariate normal for a large data set. Promax rotation method was used due to its speed and suitability for large data set (Gorsuch, 1983). In order to establish goodness of model fit, the study involved such fit indices as chi-square with p-value (χ^2), normed chi-square (χ^2/df), root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), goodness of fit index (GFI), average goodness of fit index (AGFI) and comparative fit index (CFI). Literature suggest that, at least one fit index should be used from each of the three categories of indices namely absolute, incremental and parsimony fit indices (Awang, 2015).

1.11.7 Reliability and validity

Internal consistence of the questionnaire was assessed by computing Cronbach's alpha value for each dimension. The values were higher than 0.70 (Brunner and Süß, 2005). Reliability of measurement model was assessed using composite reliability (CR). All CR value were greater than threshold of 0.60 meaning that the measurement model was reliable (Hair *et al.*, 2010). Convergent validity was checked by computing Average Variance Extracted (AVE). AVE values were higher than 0.50 thus indicating that there was convergent validity (Hair *et al.*, 2017). Discriminant validity was established using Fornell and Larcker criterion which requires the square root of the AVE values for each paired construct to be greater than correlations between them (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). In this study, AVE values for each of the paired constructs were greater than their corresponding squared correlation values between them.

1.12 Limitations of the Study

In terms of coverage, this study was conducted in Serengeti National Park, which is one of the 22 national parks found in Tanzania. The results of this study can hardly be generalized to the rest of the national parks in Tanzania. Another shortfall is that the study adopted a non-probability sampling technique. It is understood that use of randomized sampling techniques could probably add value to the findings obtained. However, given the nature of the study, it would be difficult to obtain enough number of filled questionnaire. In this study, randomization would involve collecting visitors'

emails and use something like table of random numbers to select the needed sample size. Definitely, such arrangement would take years to obtain enough filled copies of questionnaire that would warrant use of Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) as analytical technique. It was therefore, easier and practicable to distribute questionnaire at the exit gates.

Lack of qualitative data was another limitation of this study. It is understood that information from key informant interviews would complement the quantitative information collected through the questionnaire. However, the researcher did not manage to hold interviews with tourists at the park's exit gates because they were in rush of continuing with their journeys to other destinations or to the airport. In attempts to offset this limitation, the researcher managed to prepare detailed questionnaire, distribute and collect back a large number of copies of questionnaire. Also, the researcher used some secondary data in attempts to bring the aspect of triangulation into the study. Another shortfall of this is that it only involved the international but not domestic tourists. Lastly, the study did not pay attention to the international tourists' social and demographic characteristics in attempt to make the questionnaire not too long to fill. Lack of that information made it impossible for the researcher to differentiate different groups of tourists with respect to their loyalty to SENAPA.

1.13 Organization of the Thesis

This thesis is organized in three chapters. Chapter one covers general overview of the study forming foundation of the total thesis thus covering background to the research problem, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, specific objectives, hypotheses, rationale for the study, literature review, conceptual definitions, theoretical guide, empirical literature, research gaps, conceptual framework, general methodology (research philosophy and research design, study location, sampling and sample size, source and method of data collection, data analysis, reliability and validity) and limitations of the study. Chapter two presents two accepted and two published journal articles addressing the first, second, third and fourth objectives of the study. Chapter three presents summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations. It is a general chapter where the reflection of the theories used in the research are found.

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CHAPTER TWO**ACCEPTED AND PUBLISHED PEER REVIEWED ARTICLES**

Matolo, R.J., Salia, P.J. & Ndibalema, V.G. (2021). International Tourists' Satisfaction with Service Quality at Serengeti National Park in Tanzania. *Journal of Co-operative and Business Studies*. Accepted (see appendix 5)

Matolo, R.J., Salia, P.J. & Ndibalema, V.G. (2021): Influence of Destination Image and Service Quality on International Tourists Perceived Value in Serengeti National Park, Tanzania. *East African Journal of Social and Applied Sciences*. Accepted (see appendix 6)

Matolo, R.J., Salia, P.J. & Ndibalema, V.G. (2021): Determinants of International Tourists Satisfaction in Tanzania: Evidences from Serengeti National Park. *Accountancy and Business Review*. 13 (1): 1-22

Matolo, R.J., Salia, P.J. & Ndibalema, V.G. (2021). Determinants of International Tourists' Destination Loyalty: Empirical Evidence from Serengeti National Park in Tanzania. *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure*, 10(3):821-838. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.46222/ajhtl.19770720-134>

INTERNATIONAL TOURISTS' SATISFACTION WITH SERVICE QUALITY AT SERENGETI NATIONAL PARK IN TANZANIA

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ABSTRACT

Quality of service is undeniably an important aspect to consider while assessing performance of any tourist destination. Visitors who experience quality services tend to be satisfied and may remain loyal to the specific destination. This study assessed tourists' satisfaction with service quality at Serengeti National Park (SENAPA) located in the northern part of Tanzania. The study adopted a cross-sectional research design and it involved 1,148 respondents who were international tourists. Data were collected by using structured questionnaire adapted from SERVQUAL tool. Paired sample t-test was used to assess extent to which tourists were satisfied with service quality. Generally, the findings revealed that tourists were satisfied with quality of tangibles found at SENAPA, reliability of service providers, responsiveness as well as empathy of service providers. Findings also showed that tourists were not satisfied with the assurance dimension of service quality which was concerned with service providers' knowledge, courtesy, and ability to inspire trust and confidence to visitors. The study observes that although the international tourists were satisfied with most of service quality aspects, some aspects of customer care services among services providers in SENAPA were still poor. The study calls for improved customer care services among services providers at SENAPA by regularly training the employees.

Key words: Tourists, Service quality, Satisfaction, Serengeti

1. INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

Globally, international tourism is one of the major sources of economic growth to virtually all economies across the globe. According to the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTCC) the sector accounted for 10.3% of the global Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and 10.4% of total employment in 2019 (WTTC, 2020). In Tanzania, tourism is an unquestioned source of economic growth. According to the Bank of Tanzania (BOT), the sector contributed to 17% of GDP while accounting for about 25% of export revenue (BOT, 2017). In the near past, international tourists' inflow to Tanzania has been on the increase especially before the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020. For example, evidence from Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism (MNRT) indicated that the number of arrivals increased from 612,754 tourists in 2005 to 1,527,230 in 2019 (MNRT, 2019).

Most of the international tourists to Tanzania visit Serengeti National Park (SENAPA). For instance, 34% of tourists who came to Tanzania in 2019 visited the

park compared to 24.9% and 19.2% who visited Tarangire and Manyara National Parks respectively (MNRT, 2019). Thus, SENAPA is one of the key attractions for international tourists compared to other destinations in Tanzania. However, evidences suggest that SENAPA receives fewer visitors per square kilometre than other surrounding parks with similar characteristics like Maasai Mara National Park in Kenya (TANAPA, 2017; Bhandari, 2014; KBS, 2017). Although this phenomenon could be explained by various factors, it is pertinent to question whether the international tourists who visited SENAPA were satisfied with quality of services offered in the park.

Customer satisfaction is defined as extent to which products or services provided meet or surpass customer expectations (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018). In the tourism sector, satisfaction is when a tourist's perceived experience with services offered at a specific destination exceed his/her expectation. Service quality is defined as discrepancy between customer's expectation and perceived experience with a product or service (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1985). It is brilliance of services as evaluated by purchaser (Zeithaml, 1988). In the tourism context, service quality is the extent to which visitors' perceived experience exceeded their expectations.

Quality of service is unquestionable attractive factor for tourists to visit specific destination. The rationale for provision of high-quality services in the tourism sector is based on the conviction that such services are likely to lead to customer satisfaction (Dhingra *et al.*, 2020; Sanjar *et al.*, 2020). Studies show that there is positive relationship between service quality and tourist satisfaction (Jeon *et al.*, 2020; Sangpikul, 2018; Han & Hyun, 2015; Wu & Li, 2015; Cheng *et al.*, 2014). Mostly, those studies revealed that services of high-quality influenced satisfaction among tourists who visited different destinations. For instance, findings of a study by Wu & Li (2015) involving visitors to the Museums of Macau in China revealed that service quality enhanced satisfaction. Similarly, evidences from another study conducted in Malaysia showed that tourists who enjoyed services of high quality in hotels were more likely to be satisfied (Cheng *et al.* 2014). Further evidences from Thailand whereby quality of service facilities, safety and cleanliness positively affected tourist's satisfaction in the city of Phuket. Evidences from another study conducted in South Korea on sport tourism revealed that quality of services influenced satisfaction of tourist attending sport occasions (Jeong *et al.*, 2019). Literature also revealed few

specific studies assessed customer satisfaction using SERVQUAL model (Mowla, 2019; Ibrahim *et al.*, 2015; Marinković *et al.*, 2011; Mohamed, 2006). These were studies that had adopted Parasuraman (1985) approach of measuring customer satisfaction by considering the difference between expectations and actual perception of services after a visit to specific destination. A study conducted in Serbia involving customers of travel agencies revealed that tangibility, reliability, responsiveness and empathy had significant effect on customer satisfaction (Marinković *et al.*, 2011). Another study focusing on Maldives Tourism Industry revealed that three dimensions including responsiveness, tangibles and reliability had significant impact on tourists' satisfaction (Ibrahim *et al.*, 2015). Mohamed (2006) assessed tourists' satisfaction with service quality of travel agents in Egypt and found that customer expectations of service quality exceeded perceived experience on five dimensions namely responsiveness, reliability, empathy, resources and corporate image, and tangibility. Specifically, results of regression analysis revealed that responsiveness, reliability and tangibility had significant positive effect on customer satisfaction. Yet, another study Mowla (2019) on the impact of service quality on customers in Bangladesh tourism industry revealed that four dimensions including reliability, responsiveness, empathy and tangibles had significant effect on customer satisfaction. Specifically, reliability had a negative effect while the rest of the three dimensions had positive effect. The study also showed that assurance had no significant effect on customer satisfaction.

As indicated in above, there was a rich literature on relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction. Some of the previous studies used SERVQUAL model in the assessment of relationships between service quality and tourists' satisfaction in different destinations. However, this study was conducted because apparently empirical evidences about relationship between service quality and international tourists' satisfaction in Tanzania were missing. Given that the SERVQUAL model used in this study had five dimensions namely tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy, the study intended to test the following five null hypotheses.

H1: Tourists were not satisfied with quality of tangibles in the park

H2: Tourists were not satisfied with reliability of services

H3: Tourists were not satisfied with service providers' responsiveness

H4: Tourists were not satisfied with service providers' assurance in services' delivery

H5: Tourists were not satisfied with service providers' empathy

2. THEORETICAL GUIDE

This paper was guided by Expectancy Disconfirmation Theory (EDT). The theory states that consumers form satisfaction judgments by evaluating extent to which actual product or service exceed their expectations (Van Ryzin, 2013; Ekinici *et al.*, 2007; Oliver, 1980). Disconfirmation is the difference between expected performance and perceived performance of services or products (Bhattacharjee & Premkumar, 2004). Expected performance pertains to pre-purchase period and it constitutes what the customer desires about specific product or service. Perceived performance comes after the consumption of a product or service and it constitutes an evaluation whether or not the expectations were met.

Depending on the nature of the difference, disconfirmation can either be positive, neutral or negative. Positive disconfirmation occurs when customer's perception about quality of service or product is better than the expectation. Conversely, a negative disconfirmation occurs when customer's perceived quality of service or product is worse than what was expected. According to this theory, positive disconfirmation leads to customer satisfaction while negative disconfirmation leads to dissatisfaction with service or product (Van Ryzin, 2013). Relationships among expectations (E), perceived Performance (P), disconfirmation and satisfaction are diagrammatically presented in Figure 1.

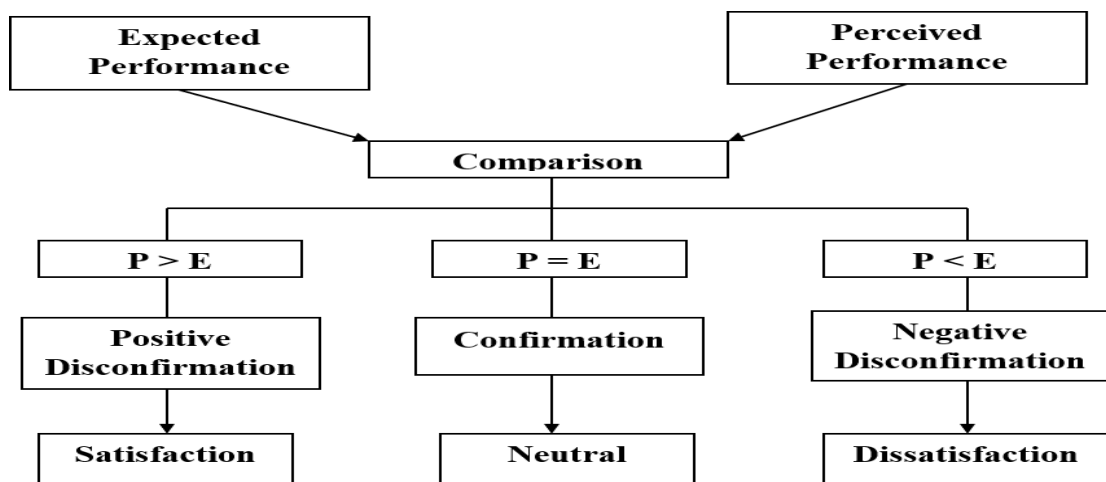


Figure 1: Diagrammatic demonstration of expectancy disconfirmation theory

Source: Adopted from Oliver, 1980

This study borrowed EDT to guide explanation about extent to which the

international tourists were satisfied with quality of services offered to them while visiting SENAPA. In the context of this study, tourists were satisfied if they experienced higher quality of services than their expectations before visiting the park. This is when there was positive disconfirmation between perceived experience and expectations on the five dimensions of service quality which were tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy. Literature shows that EDT was used in various field to guide studies designed to determine customer satisfaction based on pre- purchase quality expectations and post-purchase experience. Specifically, the theory was used in marketing (Meirovich *et al.*, 2020), information technology (Salahshour *et al.*, 2017), repurchase behaviour and retention (Picazo-Vela, 2011), airline industry (Ban & Kim, 2019) and tourism (Agyeiwaah *et al.*, 2016).

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a cross-sectional research design. The study was conducted in SENAPA which is located in the Northern Part of Tanzania. SENAPA was chosen because it is one of major tourists' destination in Tanzania. Target population were tourists who visited SENAPA between March and September 2019. The study adopted convenience sampling technique and 1,148 respondents were included. The study relied on primary data collected by using standard SERVQUAL questionnaire proposed by Parasuraman *et al.* (1988). The tool focused on five dimensions of service quality which include tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy. Tangibility involved physical facilities, equipment and appearance of personnel. Reliability was operationalized as ability of service providers to perform the promised service dependably and accurately. Responsiveness was taken as willingness to help customers and provide prompt service while assurance constituted knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to inspire trust and confidence. Lastly, empathy constituted caring and individualized attention that service providers extended to the tourists including such aspects as access, communication and understanding of customer needs.

The SERVQUAL tool involved 22 items that were intended to measure expectations and perceptions of tourists across the aforementioned five service quality dimensions. This tool was selected because it had been used in previous similar studies that assessed tourists' satisfaction with quality of services in different destinations in the

globe (Mowla, 2019; Ibrahim *et al.*, 2015; Marinković *et al.*, 2011; Mohamed; 2006). During data collection, respondents were required to rate their opinions in a seven-point Likert scale; where 1 = very strongly disagreed and 7 = very strongly agreed. A seven-point scale was selected because it would provide respondents with wider options of rating their opinions (Gallarza & Saura, 2006).

Paired sample t-test was used to compare expectation of tourist before visiting the park with perceived performance on specific items of service quality during their trips in the park. Positive mean difference between perceived and expected performance, which was also referred as positive disconfirmation, indicated that tourists were satisfied. Accordingly, negative mean difference indicated that tourist was dissatisfied. Reliability tests were conducted to check for internal consistency for constructs under each of the five dimensions of service quality. The values for tangibility (0.762), reliability (0.919), responsiveness (0.769), assurance (0.767) and empathy (0.840) were above the suggested threshold of 0.6 (Memon *et al.*, 2020); meaning that there was high consistency among statements use measure those constructs.

3. FINDINGS

As indicated earlier, paired t-test was used to determine whether or not tourists were satisfied with service quality experienced at SENAPA. Service quality was measured using five dimensions of above-mentioned instrument which included tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy. Findings on the mean difference between expectations and perceived service quality among tourists on each of the five service quality dimensions are presented in the subsequent sections below.

4.1 Tangibility and Satisfaction

Findings showed that there were positive disconfirmations for all four constructs that were used; meaning that tourists' perceived quality of tangible were higher than expectations. Specifically, those differences were significant for two constructs including one on possession of up-to-date equipment ($t = 7.373$; $p < 0.001$) and another on visual appealing of physical facilities at the park ($t = 4.114$; $p < 0.001$). The results further indicated that mean difference for the rest of the two constructs related to employees' dressing and neatness, and appearance of physical facilities were positive but not statistically significant.

Table 1: Tourists' expectations and perceived quality of tangibles (n = 1,148)

| Attribute | Perceived mean (P) | Expectation mean (E) | Mean difference (P – E) | SD | t | Sig. |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|--------------|--------------|-----------------|
| Presence of up-to-date equipment | 5.24 | 4.76 | 0.483 | 2.222 | 7.373 | 0.000 |
| Appealing physical facilities | 5.28 | 5.03 | 0.251 | 2.066 | 4.114 | 0.000 |
| Well dressed and neat employees | 5.41 | 5.31 | 0.099 | 1.948 | 1.727 | 0.084 |
| Physical facilities match services | 5.43 | 5.35 | 0.086 | 1.909 | 1.531 | 0.126 |
| Summated mean scores | 5.341 | 5.111 | 0.230 | 1.543 | 5.050 | 0.000*** |

*** Significance at 0.000, ** Significant at 0.001, * Significant at 0.05

Findings on Table 1 showed that on average perceived quality of tangibles including physical facilities, equipment and appearance of personnel at the park was significantly higher than tourists' expectation ($t = 5.050$, $p < 0.001$). The findings, therefore, revealed presence of positive disconfirmation which implied that tourists were satisfied with quality of tangibles at the park. These findings lead to rejection of the first null hypothesis (H1) which stated that *"tourists' were not satisfied with quality of tangibles in the park"*.

4.2 Reliability and Satisfaction

Findings showed that there were significant positive disconfirmations for four out of the five statements used to measure quality of reliability of services. Positive and significant differences between perceive quality and respective tourists' expectations were obtained in statements related to employees' sympathy and reassurance ($t = 2.849$, $p = 0.004$), dependability of firms offering services at the park ($t = 4.816$, $p < 0.001$), timeliness of services as promised ($t = 2.315$, $p = 0.021$), and firms' ability to accurately keep records ($t = 2.189$, $p = 0.029$).

Table 2: Tourists' expectations and perceived reliability of services (n =1,148)

| Attribute | Perceived mean (P) | Expectation mean (E) | Mean difference (P – E) | SD | t | Sig. |
|--|--------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|--------------|--------------|-----------------|
| Firms fulfil their promises timely | 5.639 | 5.563 | 0.077 | 1.657 | 1.567 | 0.117 |
| Employees are sympathetic and reassuring | 5.735 | 5.592 | 0.143 | 1.699 | 2.849 | 0.004** |
| Service providers are dependable | 5.828 | 5.589 | 0.240 | 1.685 | 4.816 | 0.000*** |
| Services are timely as promised | 5.748 | 5.620 | 0.128 | 1.874 | 2.315 | 0.021* |
| Customer records are kept accurately | 5.736 | 5.620 | 0.116 | 1.794 | 2.189 | 0.029* |
| Summated mean scores | 5.738 | 5.561 | 0.177 | 1.360 | 4.405 | 0.000*** |

*** Significance at 0.000, ** Significant at 0.001, * Significant at 0.05

Based on the summated mean score values, perceived reliability of services provided was significantly higher than expectations of tourists ($t = 4.405$, $p < 0.001$). This finding implied that there was positive disconfirmation which was an indication that tourists were satisfied with reliability of services. The finding led to rejection of the second null hypothesis (H2) which stated that *"tourists' were not satisfied with reliability of services"*.

4.3 Responsiveness and Satisfaction

Findings presented in Table 3 showed that there were positive differences between tourists' perceived responsiveness of employees and their respective expectations on three out of four items used. Statistically, significant differences were found on two items including employees' provision of information to customers on exact time of delivering services ($t = 6.851$, $p < 0.001$) and on promptness of services from employees ($t = 2.798$, $p = 0.005$).

Table 3: Tourists' expectations and perceived responsiveness of services (n = 1,148)

| Attribute | Perceived mean (P) | Expectation mean (E) | Mean difference (P - E) | SD | t | Sig. |
|--|--------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|--------------|--------------|----------------|
| Employees tell customers exactly when services will be offered | 5.294 | 4.842 | 0.451 | 2.232 | 6.851 | 0.000*** |
| Employees provide prompt service | 4.808 | 4.591 | 0.217 | 2.627 | 2.798 | 0.005** |
| Employee's willingness to help customers | 4.469 | 4.357 | 0.111 | 2.922 | 1.293 | 0.196 |
| Employees respond promptly to customer's requests | 4.236 | 4.280 | -0.044 | 2.770 | -0.533 | 0.594 |
| Summated mean score | 4.702 | 4.518 | 0.184 | 1.940 | 3.214 | 0.001** |

*** Significance at 0.000, ** Significant at 0.001, * Significant at 0.05

Generally, findings revealed that there was positive disconfirmation between tourists' expectations and perceived quality of employees' responsiveness. This difference was statistically significant ($t = 3.214$, $p = 0.001$) indicating that tourists were satisfied with quality of services on the aspect of responsiveness, which constituted willingness to help customers and provide prompt service. Given this finding, the third null hypothesis (H3) which stated that "*tourists were not satisfied with service providers' responsiveness*" was rejected.

4.4 Assurance and Satisfaction

Results presented in Table 4 there was positive disconfirmation on only one out of four constructs used to assess quality of services on the aspect of assurance. This was indicated by statistically significant difference between tourists' expectations and perceived experience on the feelings that employees got adequate support from their firms ($t = 2.548$, $p = 0.011$). Mean differences for the three other three constructs were statistically insignificant. Although the findings revealed negative disconfirmation on two items that are employees' trustworthiness and safety during transaction with employees, the differences between perception and expectation were not statistically significant.

Table 4: Tourists' expectations and perceived assurance in services' provision (n = 1,148)

| Attribute | Perceived mean (P) | Expectation mean (E) | Mean difference (P - E) | SD | T | Sig. |
|--|--------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Employees are trustworthy | 4.757 | 4.761 | -0.004 | 2.848 | -0.052 | 0.959 |
| Customers feel safe while transacting with employees | 4.936 | 5.035 | -0.099 | 2.776 | -1.212 | 0.226 |
| Employees are polite | 5.176 | 5.036 | 0.140 | 2.671 | 1.779 | 0.075 |
| Service providers support employees to offer the best services | 5.367 | 5.164 | 0.203 | 2.699 | 2.548 | 0.011* |
| Summated mean score | 4.702 | 4.518 | 0.060 | 1.942 | 1.045 | 0.296 |

*** Significance at 0.000, ** Significant at 0.001, * Significant at 0.05

As shown in Table 4, summated mean difference between expected and perceived assurance was positive but statistically insignificant ($t = 1.045$, $p = 0.296$). The findings imply that tourists were not satisfied with assurance of with service quality on the aspect of assurance. The findings, therefore, lead to acceptance of the fourth null hypothesis (H4) which stated that “*tourists' were not satisfied with service providers' assurance in services' delivery*”

4.5 Empathy and Satisfaction

Findings in Table 5 showed that there were positive and statistically significant mean differences between expectations and perceptions of tourists for all five constructs that were used to assess empathy. In other words, there were positive disconfirmations in all of those five items.

Table 5: Tourists' expectations and perceived empathy of services' providers (n = 1,148)

| Attribute | Perceived mean (P) | Expectation mean (E) | Mean difference (P - E) | SD | T | Sig. |
|--|--------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|--------------|--------------|-----------------|
| Service providers give individualized attention to each customer | 5.178 | 4.679 | 0.499 | 2.670 | 6.335 | 0.000*** |
| Employees give personal attention to each customer | 4.903 | 4.458 | 0.445 | 2.789 | 5.408 | 0.000*** |
| Employees know what real needs of customers are | 4.641 | 4.249 | 0.392 | 2.810 | 4.727 | 0.000*** |
| Service providers have customers' best interest at heart | 4.432 | 4.076 | 0.356 | 2.679 | 4.507 | 0.000*** |
| Service providers operate at hours convenient to all customers | 4.247 | 3.963 | 0.285 | 2.641 | 3.654 | 0.000*** |
| Summated mean score | 4.680 | 4.285 | 0.395 | 2.048 | 6.542 | 0.000*** |

*** Significance at 0.000, ** Significant at 0.001, * Significant at 0.05

Summated mean score showed that perceived quality of element of assurance exceeded tourists' expectation before visiting the park. This was evidenced in statistically significant positive disconfirmation ($t = 6.542$, $p < 0.001$) which indicated that tourists were satisfied. This specific finding leads to rejection of the fifth (H5) null hypothesis which stated that “*tourists were not satisfied with service providers' assurance in services' delivery*”

empathy". Given the context of empathy used in this study, the findings implied that tourists experienced better care, individualized attention from service providers than they expected prior to their visit to the park.

5. DISCUSSION

This study was guided by the Expectancy Disconfirmation Theory (EDT) which assumes that customers are satisfied with service quality when the outcome of their evaluation results into positive disconfirmation that is perceived quality exceeds the expected quality (Van Ryzin, 2013; Ekinci *et al.*, 2007; Oliver, 1980). The findings of this study revealed that there was positive disconfirmation in four out of five dimensions of service quality that were reliability, tangibility, responsiveness and empathy. In the context of EDT, the tourists were satisfied with quality of tangibles, reliability of services as well as service providers' responsiveness and empathy during service delivery. It is also noted that tourists were not satisfied with assurance dimension of service quality. The findings are supported by those of a study conducted in Serbian involving customers of travel agencies whose findings also showed that tangibility, reliability, responsiveness and empathy had significant effect on customer satisfaction (Marinković *et al.*, 2011).

In this study, quality of tangibles was assessed by presence of up-to-date equipment, appealing physical facilities, well-dressed and neatness of employees, and presence of physical facilities that matched with services provided. However, mean differences for neatness of employees and presence of physical facilities that matched services provided were not statistically significant (see Table 1). This means that employees' neatness was not at an appreciable quality. Similarly, service providers did not use facilities that matched the types of services offered. In other words, it could be said that service providers lacked relevant facilities that could be used to provide services.

Findings showed that tourists were satisfied with reliability of service providers at SENAPA. Specifically, they appreciated employees' sympathy, their dependability, timely provision of services and their ability to keep customer records accurately. Nevertheless, mean difference between expectations and perceived performance on the ability of firms to fulfil promises timely was statistically insignificant (see Table 2). This means that tourists' judgment of ability of service provider to fulfil promises was below their expectation. It was also observed that generally tourists were

satisfied with assurance dimension of service quality which constituted willingness to help customers and provide prompt service. However, mean differences between expectation and perceived performance for two aspects that related to willingness to help customers and prompt response to customers' requests were not statistically significant (see Table 3). More specifically, mean difference on promptness of employees was negative meaning that tourists' expectations exceeded perceived performance. These findings, therefore, imply that some aspects of customer care at SENAPA were not of appreciable quality.

Lastly, findings also showed that tourists were not satisfied with assurance of service providers. This was evidenced in the statistically insignificant summated mean difference for assurance dimension of service quality (see Table 4). It is worth noting that assurance, which in the context of this study related to courtesy of employees and their ability to inspire trust and confidence, was missing among service providers at SENAPA. Finding is similar to that of a previous study conducted in Serbian which showed that while tangibility, reliability, responsiveness and empathy had significant effect on customer satisfaction, assurance did not (Marinković *et al.*, 2011).

6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Generally, tourists were satisfied with most aspects of service quality. However, a number of aspects of service quality were below tourists' expectations. Some of those aspects include unappreciable neatness of service providers, lack of relevant service provision facilities, untimely fulfilment of promised services, and general poor promptness of service providers. Furthermore, service providers lacked assurance meaning that they did not have knowledge, courtesy, and ability to inspire trust and confidence to visitors. Based on those findings, this study concludes that some aspects of customer care services at SENAPA were still poor.

This study makes the following recommendations. First, SENAPA management should strive to improve quality of physical facilities and equipment used to match the global standards. This can be achieved by modernizing the available structures or by putting up new ones with higher standards than ones that are currently available using TANAPA ISO 9001:2015. Second, service providers in SENAPA (tour companies, hotel and lodge operators) should use relevant modern service provision facilities which meet the demands of their customers. They also should improve neatness of employees by providing them with uniforms and other relevant attires. Third, service providers

should train their employees on customer care services so as to improve their promptness during services' delivery, courtesy, and ability to inspire trust and confidence to visitors.

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Influence of Destination Image and Service Quality on International Tourists' Perceived Value in Serengeti National Park, Tanzania

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Abstract

Perceived value, which is an outcome of tourists' evaluation of costs and benefits of a trip, is crucial for sustained destination performance. This paper examined the influence of destination image and service quality on perceived value among international tourists visiting Serengeti National Park (SENAPA). The study, was guided by cross-sectional research design. A non-probability convenience sampling technique was used to select 1,148 respondents among international tourists who visited the park from March to September in 2019. Data were collected at the park's exit gates using a survey questionnaire. Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) technique was used in the analysis. Findings revealed that destination image had positive and significant effect on perceived value. This implied that tourists' perceived image of destination played a decisive role in tourists' perceived value. Similarly, service quality was found to have positive and statistically significant effect on perceived value. Tourists' perceived value was contributed by both perceived image and quality of services offered to them while in the park. The study calls for continued efforts to maintain the good image of the park through advertisements of its attractive features to the international communities. SENAPA administration in collaboration with owners of hotels and lodges in the park should improve quality of services in order to make tourists realize value for their trips.

Key words: Destination Image, Service Quality, Perceived Value, Serengeti

1. Introduction

Travel and Tourism is among the world's leading industry in terms of contribution to economic growth. According to World Travel & Tourism Council, the sector accounted for 10.3% of global GDP and 330 million jobs; equivalent to 10.4% of total employment in 2019 (WTTC, 2020). Largely, contribution of tourism in the economic growth was realized through employment creation, improved currency exchange earnings, stimulation of capital investment and increased revenue (WTTC, 2020). In Tanzania, evidences from Bank of Tanzania (BOT) and National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) show that tourism sector contributed to 17% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and it accounts for 25% of total export revenue and to more than 11% of total employment (NBS & BOT, 2017). Mostly, tourism in Tanzania is based on wildlife viewing (Okello *et al.*, 2009). For example, 34% of tourists

who came to Tanzania in 2019 visited Serengeti National Park, compared to 24.9% and 19.2% who visited Tarangire and Manyara parks respectively (MNRT, 2019). Nevertheless, some evidences suggest that SENAPA performs poorer than other destinations with similar ecosystem in the East African region. The Park received fewer tourists per square kilometre than Masai Mara (TANAPA, 2017; KBS, 2017). Given this background, one question should be answered is whether or not tourists who visit Serengeti National Park obtain value for money for their trips. This question is imperative because tourists' propensity to visit a specific destination may be affected by perceived value; among other factors.

Perceived value, which refers to the overall assessment of benefits enjoyed by visiting specific destination compared to costs, is influenced by destination image and service quality (Terblanche, & Taljaard, 2018). Destination image is crucial for marketing and it constitutes beliefs, ideas and impressions that a visitor has towards a certain destination or place (Assaker & Hallak, 2013). According to Pike *et al.* (2010), image of destination influences tourists' decision to choose specific place to visit and in turn may influence future behavioural intention in terms of re-visit intention. Thus, given the competitive nature of tourists' destinations, maintaining good image of a tourist destination is vital. Effective destination marketing aimed at transmitting favourable image to the target market is important for sustained tourism performance (Las-Casas & Silverio, 2015).

Perceived value is also influenced by service quality (Chang and Wang, 2011). In the tourism industry, service quality is the difference between tourists' expectations prior to a visit and perceived experience after visit (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1985). Provision of services of good quality is important since it may positively influence tourists' perceived value and eventually their future behavioural intentions. It is of interest to note that effective marketing of a tourist destination cannot be separated from provision of high-quality services. In the context of this study, tourists who enjoy quality of services provided are expected to perceive more benefits of their visit to Serengeti National Park compared to cost incurred. It is clear that the importance of perceived value in the performance of a tourist destination cannot be overstated. Nonetheless, it is worth noting that previous studies in the tourism sector in Tanzania (Matolo & Salia, 2017; Kazururu, 2014; Kazururu, 2018; Mallya, 2013; Mlozi and Pesämaa, 2013; Mlozi *et al.*, 2011) scantily addressed relationships between perceived value on the one hand and service quality and destination image on the other hand. For instance, Mlozi and Pesämaa (2013) focused on tourists' destination choices while others focused on the determinants of place identity and

dependence among international tourists (Mlozi *et al.*, 2012), determinants of tourists' length of stay (Kazuzuru, 2014), determinants of tourist spending in Tanzania (Kazuzuru, 2018) and dimensions for positioning tourists' destination (Mallya, 2013). Yet, a study by Matolo and Salia (2017) compared tourists' expectations with actual experiences at Serengeti National Park but did not address the antecedents of perceived value. The need to understand tourist's perceived value was based on the fact that all endeavours to market or improve quality of services at the park may be futile if visitors did not realize value for money after completion of their trips. Thus, the objective of this study was to examine the antecedents of perceived value at Serengeti National Park focusing specifically on the influence of service quality and destination image.

2. Theoretical Guide

This paper adopted the Means-End Theory (MET). The theory posits that values are dominant factors in the pattern of consumer purchase (Gutman, 1981). The proponents of this theory observe that the way consumers relate to products can be represented by a hierarchical model of three interconnected levels which are product attributes, consequences of use, and personal values (Saadatfard, 2014; Kaminski & Prado, 2005; Leão & Mello, 2003; Lin, 2002; Reynolds & Gutman, 1982). According to this theory, consumers see products or services as a means to important ends and thus their choices of specific products or services facilitate achievement of desired end-states (Gutman, 1981; Leão & Mello, 2003; Mulvey, Olson, Celsi, & Walker, 1994). This theory assumes that consumers associate their decision and behaviour with goal achieved that is derived by multiple consumption values (Huber *et al.*, 2001). Those values can be social, emotional, functional or financial (Sheth *et al.*, 1991).

MET connects the tangible attributes of a product (*the means*) to highly abstract and intangible personal and emotional values (*the ends*) (Olson and Reynolds, 2001). The 'means-end' approach to customer perceived value treats perceived value as a one-dimensional construct that is simply measured as a trade-off between benefit and sacrifice (Zeithaml, 1988), quality and price (Monroe, 1990) or the difference between customer's perceived benefits and customer's perceived costs (Day, 1990). This study adapted MET to guide assessment of influence of destination image and service quality on tourists' perceived value. In this study, tourists' perceived value was defined as a trade-off between perceived benefits and cost incurred (Kotler & Keller, 2009). The costs incurred by tourists in terms of time, money and efforts can be grouped as tangible attributes (or 'the means') while the outcome of value evaluation based on actual tourists' experience in the park constitute an intangible and emotional aspect which may be referred to as 'the ends'. Thus, the theory provided a good ground for assessing tourists' perceived value while visiting SENAPA.

3. Empirical Literature and Hypotheses

The perceived value has been widely defined as the trade-off between price and quality, with a concept of value-for-money (Sweeney & Soutar, 2001). It is the difference between the money paid for the service or product and the amount a consumer actually wants to pay (Kuo *et al.*, 2009). It is consumer's overall assessment of the utility of product based on perception of what is received and what is given (Bajs, 2015) or the trade-off between perceived benefits and costs incurred (Kotler & Keller, 2012). Destination image is defined as sum of beliefs, ideas and impressions that a visitor has towards a certain destination or place (Assaker & Hallak, 2013). According to Echtner and Ritchie (2003) the image constitutes visitor's attitude towards destination attributes. Relationship between destination image and perceived value in the tourism sector is addressed by a number of studies. Literature shows that destination image is positively related to perceived value (Kim & Park, 2017; Lin & Wang, 2012; Phillips *et al.*, 2011; Öztürk & Qu, 2008). A study by Öztürk and Qu (2008) revealed that destination image positively affects perceived value at the Maiden's Tower destination. A study conducted in China involving tourists who visited Macau region found in the south coast of China revealed that destination image has positive effect on perceived value among the international tourists (Joseph, 2018). Another study by Phillips *et al.*, (2013) in North Dakota Midwestern United States revealed that destination image had direct positive effect on visitors' perception of value and re-visit intention.

This study also showed that destination image influenced satisfaction and loyalty in terms of positive recommendations. Similarly, Cheng and Lu (2013) found a positive relationship between the image of Green Island of Taiwan and the tourists' perception of the value of the trip. Likewise, a study by Kim *et al.* (2013) on 581 tourists established that the image of Orlando Island in the USA influenced perceived value among vocational tourists. In hospitality fields, empirical evidences showed that destination image was positively correlated with perceived value (Sun *et al.*, 2013). In the festival research context, event attributes and perceived benefits influenced perceived value among participants of historical re-enactment festival in the Midwestern United States (Fu *et al.*, 2018). Some studies confirmed that destination image had significant positive effect on perceived value among student travellers (Kim & Park, 2017; Lin & Wang, 2012). Considering the above empirical evidences, this study hypothesized that:

H₁: SENAPA destination image does not influence tourists perceive value

Service quality may be defined as discrepancy between customer's expectation and perception about product or series (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1985). It is brilliance of a services as evaluated by purchaser (Zeithaml, 1988). In the tourism context service quality in the extent to which visitors' perceived experience exceeded their expectations. Tourism literature

shows that service quality is one of the common predictors of perceived value with positive effect (Oriade & Schofield, 2019; García-Fernández *et al.*, 2018; Xiaoting *et al.*, 2020; Suhartanto *et al.*, 2019; Al-Ansi and Han, 2019).

Empirical evidence from a study conducted in China showed that service quality has significant and positive effect on perceived value among tourists (Xiaoting *et al.*, 2020). Oriade and Schofield (2019) conducted a study on the role of service quality and perceived value in the Midlands region United Kingdom and found that perceived service quality has a direct and positive effect on perceived value. Similarly, a study conducted in Mauritius for the purpose of establishing the relationships and impacts of service quality, perceived value, customer satisfaction, and image revealed that service quality had positive effect on perceived value. (Hu *et al.*, 2009). Furthermore, Chen and Chen (2010) explored an integrated model that included experience quality, perceived value, satisfaction and behavioural intentions for heritage tourists and found that service quality influenced perceived value. Yet findings of a recent study by García-Fernández *et al.* (2018) who examined relationships among perceived quality, service convenience, perceived value, satisfaction and future intentions revealed that perceived service quality was a significant predictor of perceived value. Based on the above evidences, this study puts forth the following second null hypothesis.

H₂: Service quality at SENAPA does not influence tourists' perceived value

4. Methodology

This study adopted a cross-sectional research design. Target population were tourists who visited SENAPA between March and September 2019. The study adopted non-probability convenience sampling technique including respondents who happened to be most accessible during the period of data collection. Specifically, the process involved picking the tourists who were willing to participate in the study at the park's exit gates. The study intended to use Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) in the analysis and thus there was a need to involve a relatively large sample size. Although there is no consensus about what large sample size means, scholars recommend use of observation to estimated parameter ratio ($n:q$) ratio (Kline, 2015; Schreiber *et al.*, 2006). Kline (2015) recommended that the $N:q$ ratio should be 20 to 1, or 20 observations (participants) for each estimated parameter in the model. Others have suggested that the $n:q$ ratio can be as low as 10 to 1 (Schreiber *et al.*, 2006) or 5 to 1 (Bentler & Chou, 1987). This study adopted a recommendation made by Kline (2015) using a ratio of 19:1 with the intention of having as many respondents as possible. The study involved a total of 44 parameters including 22 for service quality, 16 for destination image and six for perceived value were used. Using the suggestion by Kline (2015) the minimum sample size for this study would be 880. However, to the advantage of

the research, 1,148 respondents returned correctly filled copies of the questionnaire.

4.1 Source and Method of Data Collection

This study relied on primary data collected by using a structured questionnaire. The service quality was measured using a standard SERVQUAL questionnaire suggested by Parasuraman (1988). This tool focused on 5 dimensions of service quality including tangibility (physical facilities, equipment, and appearance of personnel), reliability (ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately), responsiveness (willingness to help customers and provide prompt service), assurance (knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to inspire trust and confidence), and empathy (caring and individualized attention the firm provides for its customers). Data on perceived value was collected by using six items grouped under two dimensions which were financial value (three items) and overall value (three items). Overall value involved three items aim at determining extent to which visitors considered their experience at the park to be uniquely rewarding. Three statements grouped under financial value intended to determine extent to which prices incurred by individual tourists matched with the value of services (enjoyment) experienced. It is important to note that similar items had been used in several previous similar studies (Dedeoğlu 2019; Chaulagain *et al.*, 2019; Wu, 2016; Tosun *et al.*, 2015; Kim *et al.*, 2013).

Various scholars have operationalized destination image differently depending on the contexts of specific studies (Dedeoğlu 2019; Chaulagain *et al.*, 2019; Wu, 2016; Tosun *et al.*, 2015; Chi & Qu, 2008). Variables used in those studies were accommodation, travel environment, natural attractions, entertainment and events, historic attractions, infrastructure, accessibility, relaxation, leisure activities, price and value, cleanliness, language of communication (Chi & Qu, 2008); natural attraction, entertainment, accessibility to the destination, level of service quality and cultural attraction (Wu, 2016); accommodation, local transport, cleanliness, hospitality, leisure activities, language of communication and airport services (Tosun *et al.*, 2015); and transport, cleanliness, amenities, language of local people, hospitality, and leisure activities (Dedeoğlu, 2019). This study used a total of 16 items selected from previous studies (Dedeoğlu 2019; Chaulagain *et al.*, 2019; Wu, 2016; Tosun *et al.*, 2015; Chi & Qu, 2008) in the assessment of destination image. Those items were grouped in five categories including social setting (four items), cultural attractions (four items), natural attractions (three items), amenities (three items), and accessibility (two items). During data collection, respondents were asked to rate their opinions using a 7-point Likert scale where; 1 = very strongly disagree and 7 = very strongly agree. Seven-point Likert scale was preferred because it provided respondents with wider choice and thus made them more realistic in assessing their levels of satisfaction (Gallarza & Saura, 2006).

4.2 Data Analysis

Data analysis involved two stages. In the first stage, an Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was conducted to identify constructs with highest factor loading to be included in the further analysis. According to Hair *et al.*, (2010) variables with factor loading above 0.60 can be included in analysis. Based on the EFA results, service quality items were reduced from 22 to 16. Accordingly, items used to measure destination image were reduced from 24 to 16. All six items used to assess perceived value were maintained. Thus, a total of 38 items were considered for confirmatory factors analysis (CFA) for construction of measurement model. The measurement model was developed and fit indices were established. Also, psychometric properties of the measurement model were evaluated by computing composite reliability, convergent and discriminant validity (Brunner & Süß, 2005; Netemeyer *et al.*, 2003; Fornell & Lacker, 1981). Based on model fit indices and other properties mentioned above, measurement model was evaluated to be acceptable.

In the second stage, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was conducted in order to establish structural relationships among service quality, destination image and perceived value. To that end, covariance-based Structural Equation Modelling (CB-SEM) technique using Analysis of Moment Structure software (AMOS) was applied. Maximum Likelihood (ML) estimation algorithm was employed to test the model constructs since the data were assumed continuous and multivariate normal for a large data set. Promax rotation method was used due to its speed and suitability for large data set (Gorsuch, 1983). In order to establish goodness of model fit, the study involved at least one index from each of three categories of indices namely absolute fit, incremental fit and parsimonious fit indices (Shi *et al.*, 2018; Awang, 2015). Absolute fit indices were chi-square with p-value (χ^2), root mean square approximation (RMSEA) and goodness of fit index (GFI). Incremental fit indices included average goodness of fit index (AGFI) and comparative fit index (CFI). One parsimonious fit index called normed chi-square (χ^2/df) was used.

5. Findings and Discussions

As explained in section 4, data on the three key variables included in this study namely service quality, destination image and perceived value were collected using Likert scale seven-points. Results in Table 1 present mean scores on each of the 38 statements (constructs) used in the analysis. In these results, mean scores less than 4.0 indicate that respondents disagreed while those with scores higher than 4.0 indicate that they agreed with given statement. Scores around 4.0 indicated that respondents held neutral opinions.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics for constructs involved in the study

| Variable/dimension | Mean | SD |
|---------------------------------|-------------|-----------|
| <i>Service quality</i> | | |
| Empathy (4 items) | 4.283 | 2.291 |
| Tangibility (4 items) | 5.435 | 1.780 |
| Reliability (3 items) | 5.313 | 1.675 |
| Assurance (3 items) | 5.020 | 2.095 |
| Responsiveness (2 items) | 5.165 | 1.851 |
| <i>Destination image</i> | | |
| Social Setting (4 items) | 4.545 | 2.167 |
| Cultural Attractions (4 items) | 4.985 | 2.015 |
| Natural Attractions (3 items) | 5.290 | 1.912 |
| Amenities (3 items) | 5.220 | 2.005 |
| Accessibility (2 items) | 5.375 | 1.872 |
| <i>Perceived value</i> | | |
| Overall value (3 items) | 6.210 | 1.241 |
| Financial value (3 items) | 5.477 | 1.435 |

Findings in Table 1 showed that respondents agreed with 13 out of 16 statements used to measure service quality while they held neutral opinions about knowledge of employees about real needs of customers, service providers having customers' best interest at heart, and service providers operating at convenient hours to all customers. Similarly, they agree with 15 out of 16 statements used to assess destination image although they held neutral opinion about hospitality and friendliness of local people. Results about perceived value were a little bit different. Respondents strongly agreed with three out of six statements used to assess perceived value.

5.1 Effects of Destination Image and Service Quality on Perceived Value

The relationships among perceived value, service quality and destination image were established through Structural Equation Modelling (SEM). This process was preceded by validation of hypothesized (measurement) model. Value for Average Variance Extracted (EVA) were higher than 0.50 showing that those constructs exhibited convergent validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Internal reliability was achieved by obtaining Cronbach's Alpha value higher than 0.70 (Brunner & Süß, 2005). The results thus indicated that latent constructs used had attained internal consistency. Reliability of measurement model was assessed using composite reliability (CR). All CR value were greater than threshold of 0.60 meaning that the measurement model was reliable (Hair *et al.*, 2010). Detailed results on properties of measurement model are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Psychometric properties of measurement model

| Construct/Dimension | Cronbach's α | Composite Reliability (CR) | Average Variance Extracted (AVE) |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <i>Service quality</i> | | | |
| Empathy (4 items) | 0.917 | 0.930 | 0.710 |
| Tangibility (4 items) | 0.895 | 0.910 | 0.655 |
| Reliability (3 items) | 0.873 | 0.880 | 0.712 |
| Assurance (3 items) | 0.85 | 0.860 | 0.675 |
| Responsiveness (2 items) | 0.838 | 0.841 | 0.726 |
| <i>Destination image</i> | | | |
| Social Setting (4 items) | 0.910 | 0.926 | 0.697 |
| Cultural Attractions (4 items) | 0.913 | 0.943 | 0.715 |
| Natural Attractions (3 items) | 0.885 | 0.894 | 0.739 |
| Amenities (3 items) | 0.837 | 0.847 | 0.651 |
| Accessibility (2 items) | 0.857 | 0.859 | 0.859 |
| <i>Perceived value</i> | | | |
| Overall value (3 items) | 0.892 | 0.892 | 0.735 |
| Financial value (3 items) | 0.866 | 0.869 | 0.690 |

In line with findings in Table 2, a measurement model [$\chi^2 = 4259.218$, $p < 0.001$; ($\chi^2/df = 4.775$; RMSEA = 0.059; GFI = 0.922; AGFI = 0.935; CFI = 0.962)] was developed.

Diagrammatically, the measurement model on relationships among service quality (SQ), destination image (DI) and perceived value (PV) is presented in Fig.1.

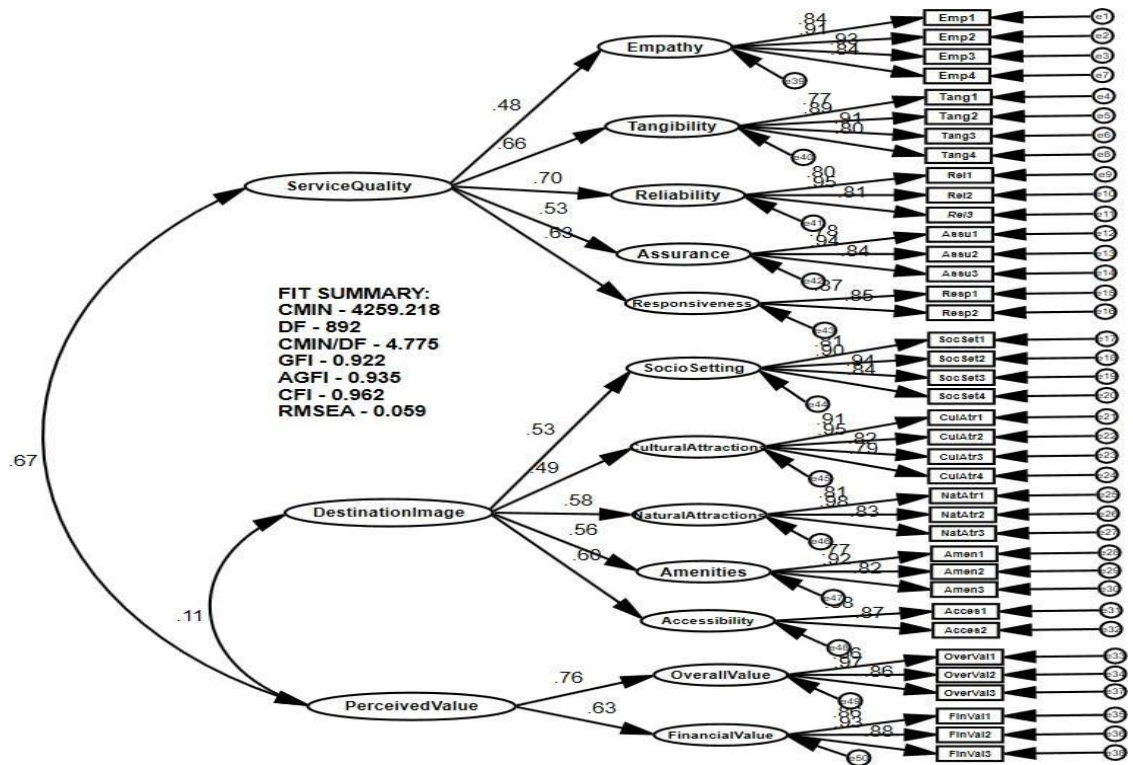


Figure 1: Measurement model on destination image, service quality and perceived value

Table 3: Summary of SEM results on variable relationships

| Hypothesis | Path | Estimate | S.E. | C.R. | R ² | P | Label |
|----------------|-----------------|----------|-------|--------|----------------|----------|--------|
| H ₁ | DI \square PV | 0.724 | 0.037 | 19.567 | 0.630 | 0.000*** | Accept |
| H ₂ | SQ \square PV | 0.325 | 0.023 | 14.130 | 0.630 | 0.000*** | Accept |

*** Significant at $p < 0.001$

Findings on Fig 2 and Table 3 revealed that destination image was found to have positive and significant effect on perceived value ($\beta = 0.724$, $p < 0.001$). This variable (DI) accounted for a variance of 63% of perceived value. The findings therefore, reject the first null hypothesis (H₁) which stated that “SENAPA destination image does not influence perceived value”. In other words, the image created by tourist about SENAPA contributed to making them realize value for money for cost incurred in their trips. This happened when tourist evaluation of benefits obtained exceeded money and efforts spent. The results are supported by previous empirical evidences which showed that destination image had positive effect on perceive value (Phillips *et al.*, 2011; Bigne *et al.*, 2009; Özturk and Qu, 2008).

It is important to realize that destination image constituted five attributes including social setting, cultural setting, natural attraction, amenities and accessibility as shown in Fig.1. It is also observed that all those five dimensions had positive effect on destination image (i.e., had positive and significant beta values). In other words, tourists realized value because of appreciable social and cultural setting as well as natural attraction due to the beautiful natural scenery. Social setting involved such aspects as personal safety, cleanliness of environment, hospitality and friendliness of local people as wells reasonable prices for shopping of local products and services. The cultural aspects that were of interest in this study included local foods, variety of local products that promote culture and unique customs and traditions of local people.

Findings further showed that service quality had positive and statistically significant effect on perceived value ($\beta = 0.325$, $p < 0.001$, $R^2 = 0.63$). The results, therefore, lead to rejection of the second null hypothesis (H₂) which stated that “service quality at SENAPA does not influence tourists’ perceived value”. The results imply that services of good quality made tourists realize value for money for their trips. The results are in line with those of numerous previous studies which also showed that service quality was a positive predictor of perceived value (Chang and Wang, 2011; Edward & Sahadev, 2011).

It is worth noting that in this study service quality was assessed using five dimensions (sub

constructs) including tangibility, reliability, assurance, responsiveness and empathy. As shown in Fig.1, all these five dimensions were positive predictors of service quality by having significant and positive beta values. Impliedly therefore, tourists' perceived value was influenced by those five dimensions of service quality. As already indicated in Table 1, tourists' perceived value was due to quality of *tangibles* including physical facilities, equipment, and appearance of personnel in terms of neatness. Value was also achieved given that services were *reliable* meaning that service providers had ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately influenced. Similarly, tourists realized value because of willingness to help customers and provide prompt service (*responsiveness*), knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to inspire trust and confidence (*assurance*) and caring and individualized attention given to each of them (*empathy*).

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

The findings showed that tourists' perceived value was influenced by destination image and service quality. Impliedly, tourists' evaluation of benefits enjoyed by visiting Serengeti National Park was influenced by the pre-conceived image of the park as well as quality of services offered. In other words, tourists realized value for their trips when their experiences in the park were met with services of good quality. They too realized value when they ended up with positive confirmation of their pre-conceived image about the park which was conveyed to them through various advertisement channels.

Given that tourism is a very competitive business which requires continuous marketing and infrastructure improvement, SENAPA should strive to maintain its good image through marketing. This can be achieved through advertisements and promotions of attractive features found in the park in the international media like British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), ALJAZEERA and Cable News Network (CNN), international tourism exhibitions and social medias; among others. Related to that, SENAPA and owners of lodges and hotels in the park should jointly strive to improve quality of services so as to make visitors realize value for their trips. This can be achieved by improving tangibles like physical facilities, equipment and appearance of personnel. It can also be achieved by improving employees' empathy which constitutes knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to inspire trust and confidence to the tourists. There is also a need to improve customer care services focusing on courtesy of service providers.

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Determinants of International Tourists' Satisfaction: Evidence from Serengeti National Park in Tanzania

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Abstract

This study was conducted to assess determinants of international tourists' satisfaction at Serengeti National Park (SENAPA) in Tanzania. The study adopted cross-sectional research design and it involved 1,148 tourists who visited the park between March and September in 2019. Data were collected by a structured survey questionnaire and were analysed using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) technique. Findings revealed that service quality (SQ) had a positive significant effect on tourists' satisfaction (SAT). Similarly, destination image (DI) and perceived value (PV) were found to be positive predictors of tourists' satisfaction. Further findings showed that the effects of service quality and destination image on tourists' satisfaction were maximized when mediated through perceived value. The study concluded that the international tourists left the park with feelings of satisfaction due to good quality of services, reasonable prices as well as good image of the park that included natural and cultural attractions. In order to ensure that tourists are always satisfied, SENAPA management should strive to sustain provision of services of good quality at competitive rates that would make visitors realize value-for-money for their trips.

Key words: Determinants, Tourists, Satisfaction, Serengeti, Tanzania

I. Introduction

Tourism is among the world's leading industries in terms of its contribution to economic growth. According to World Tourism and Travel Council (WTTC), the sector contributed to 10.3% of the global GDP and to 10.4% of total employment in 2019 (WTTC, 2020). Tourism sector grew steadily from 2010 to 2018 in terms of international arrivals and receipts. Evidences from World Tourism Organization revealed that international arrivals

increased from around 1,000 tourists in 2010 to 1,402 in 2018 (UNWTO, 2019). Accordingly, tourism receipts increased from around US \$ 520 billion in 2010 to US \$ 1,451 billion in 2018. The report further indicated that during this period, growth was realized across all continents. In terms of tourism receipts in 2018, Europe enjoyed the largest share of US \$ 570 billion followed by Asia (US \$ 435 billion), America (US \$ 334 billion), the Middle East (US \$ 73 billion) and Africa (US \$ 38

Billion). Africa, therefore, received the least share of tourism receipts.

In Africa, international tourists' arrivals grew from 50.4 million in 2010 to 61.1 million in 2018 while tourism receipts increased from US \$ 30,447 billion in 2010 to 38,400 billion in 2018 (UNWTO, 2019). Regionally, Sub-Saharan Africa enjoyed 72.2% of all tourism receipts to the African continent (UNWTO, 2019). In Tanzania, tourism sector experienced a steady growth in the past two decades before the eruption of COVID-19 in early 2020. Evidences from Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism (MNRT) indicate that the number of those arrivals increased from 612,754 tourists in 2005 to 1,527,230 in 2019 (MNRT, 2019). Accordingly, international visitors' receipts increased from US\$ 823.05 to US \$ 2,612.8 million in 2019 (MNRT, 2019).

Serengeti National Park (SENAPA) is one of the most famous destinations among international tourists to Tanzania. Evidence suggests that 34% of tourists who came to Tanzania in 2019 visited Serengeti National Park, compared to 24.9% and 19.2% who visited Tarangire and Manyara parks respectively (MNRT, 2019). Thus, SENAPA is one of the key attractions for international tourists compared to other destinations in Tanzania. Nonetheless, Tanzania's annual international arrivals and receipts were consistently lower than other countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. For example, in 2018 Tanzania's share of tourism receipts in the region was 6.4% compared to 23.3%

for South Africa and 20.4% for Morocco (UNWTO, 2019). Given this background, this study raises a question about whether or not tourists who visited Tanzania were satisfied with products and services provided to them.

Customer satisfaction is the extent to which products or services provided meet or surpass customer expectations (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018). In the context of tourism, satisfaction is the extent to which a tourist meets his/her travel expectations. It is observed that customer satisfaction is central if any business firm is to make customers feel that services or products offered are valuable (Zameer *et al.*, 2015). Generally, satisfied customers tend to remain loyal to products and services that can satisfy their needs and wants (MohdSuki, 2017). In the tourism context, satisfied tourists are likely to remain loyal to such destinations; the fact that guarantees better performance of tourism sector in that location in the future.

Literature shows that tourists' satisfaction is influenced by various factors including quality of services (Li *et al.*, 2021; Sangpikul, 2018; Wu & Li, 2015), destination image (Bang & Hai, 2019; Swart *et al.*, 2016) and perceived value (Kim and Park, 2017; Bajs, 2015). Destination image is crucial for marketing and it constitutes beliefs, ideas and impressions that a visitor has towards a certain destination or place (Assaker & Hallak, 2013). In the tourism context, image of destination is said to influence a tourist's decision to visit specific location (Pike *et al.*, 2010).

Quality of

services, which refers to an outcome of specific tourist's evaluation of the difference between pre-visit expectations and post-visit experience (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1985), is at the core of every tourism-related business. Customers who receive services of high quality are likely to be satisfied with their trips (Puri & Singh, 2021). Equally important, perceived value which pertains to visitor's evaluation of costs and benefits of a trip (Shen, 2016) is an important factor to consider while managing any tourism-related business. Owners and managers of tourism related business need to ensure that services offered as closely tied up with value for money attached to them.

It is worth attention that while there is a plethora of previous studies about the tourism sector in Tanzania (Kazuzuru, 2018; Matolo & Salia, 2017; Kazururu, 2014; Mallya, 2013; Mlozi and Pesämaa, 2013), little, if any, is known about how tourists' satisfaction is determined by such factors as services quality, perceived value and destination image. For instance, Mlozi and Pesämaa (2013) focused on tourists' destination choices. Other studies focused on determinants of tourists' length of stay (Kazuzuru, 2014), determinants of tourist spending in Tanzania (Kazuzuru, 2018) and dimensions for positioning tourists' destination (Mallya, 2013). Another study by Matolo and Salia (2017) focused at SENAPA but its objective was to compare tourists' expectations with actual experiences. This study did not address specific determinants of tourists' satisfaction.

Given the above background, this study was conducted with the purpose of examining the determinants of tourists' satisfaction in Serengeti National Park. Specifically, the study was intended to determine how such factors as destination image, service quality, and perceived value influenced tourists' satisfaction in the park. Knowledge about how those three factors affect tourists' satisfaction is useful to the management of SENAPA and other stakeholders providing different services to the international tourists who visit the park. It is pertinent to note that if visitors left the park with feelings of dissatisfaction because of poor quality of services or because they did not realize value-for-money during their trips, then, they are unlikely to plan for revisit trips or recommend the same to friends and relatives. Ultimately, if it so happens, the performance of the park in terms of number of international tourists' inflow will, obviously, be adversely affected.

II. Literature Review

This study was guided by the Equity Theory. This theory originated from Adams Equity Theory which is based on input-output ratio in employees rewards (Adams, 1963). The theory posits that satisfaction exists when consumers perceived their output-input ratio as being fair (Swan & Oliver, 1989). According to this theory, parties to an exchange will feel equitably treated (thus, satisfied), if in their minds, the ratio of their outcomes to inputs is fair (Oliver & DeSarbo, 1988). Whether a person feels equitably treated or not may depend on various factors including the price paid, the benefits received, the time and effort expended during the transaction and the experience

of previous transactions (Woodruff *et al.*, 1983). In the context of tourism, the equity theory suggests that tourists compare perceived input- output (gains) in a social exchange. In this theory tourists are dissatisfied if they perceive that what they gain is less than their input in terms of time, money and other costs (Reisinger & Turner, 1997).

The study adopted Equity Theory because it closely explains the nexus between perceived value, which is essentially about value-for- money, and tourists' satisfaction. Also, the theory gives a fairly good explanation of the nexus between service quality and tourists' satisfaction. In this study equity was achieved when individual tourist's perceived benefits of visiting Serengeti outweighed the costs and efforts invested in a trip to SENAPA. Similarly, equity was achieved when perceived quality of services exceeded tourists' expectation. This theory was also adopted by several previous studies which examined customer satisfaction (Lim, 2020; Chen *et al.*, 2019; Pai *et al.*, 2018). The central argument in these studies is that when customers feel that they are equitably treated during an exchange with products or services, they feel satisfied.

Empirical literature and hypotheses

Customer satisfaction is defined as extent to which products or services provided meet or surpass customer expectations (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018). In the context of tourism, and thus of this study, a satisfied tourist is one whose perceived quality of services surpasses his/her expectations before visiting specific destination. Perceived

value is defined as consumer's overall assessment of the utility of product based on perception of what is received and what is given (Zeithaml, 1988) or the trade-off between perceived benefits and costs incurred (Kotler & Keller, 2012). In the context of this study, satisfaction is an outcome of evaluation of benefits of a visit to SENAPA compared to the costs incurred by a tourist.

Literature shows that perceived value is predictor of customer satisfaction with positive effect (Kim & Park, 2017; Bajs, 2015; Mai & Luan, 2015). Chen and Tsai (2007) examined the relationships between perceived value, satisfaction, and loyalty with reference to rural tourism in Spain and their results revealed that perceived value had a positive effect on tourist satisfaction and loyalty. Some evidences found positive correlation between perceived value and satisfaction among tourists (Kim & Park, 2017). Specifically, Bajs (2015) found that perceived value had positive effect among tourists who visited Dubrovnik in Croatia. Also, findings of a study conducted in Vietnam revealed that perceived value had strong positive effect on satisfaction of tourists who visited Nam Cat Tien National Park, Vietnam (Mai & Luan, (2015). Furthermore, a comparative study involving Japanese and Western tourists showed that perceived value was a predictor of satisfaction among Japanese and Western tourist who visited different destinations in Japan (Williams *et al.*, 2017). In this study, tourist from Japan attached more importance to emotional and novelty values while their counterparts from Western countries

attached more importance to value for money. Another similar study conducted to assess relationships among value, satisfaction and behavioural intention in adventure tourism revealed that there was strong positive correlation between perceived value and satisfaction in Australia (Williams & Souter, 2009). Particularly, this study showed that value-for-money was a positive predictor of tourists' satisfaction. Given the above empirical evidences, this study established the following first null hypothesis.

H₁: Perceived value does not influence tourists' satisfaction

Destination image is defined as sum of beliefs, ideas and impressions that a visitor has towards a certain destination or place (Assaker & Hallak, 2013). Several empirical evidences show that destination image is a predictor of customer satisfaction (Prayag *et al.*, 2017; Swart *et al.*, 2016; Allameh *et al.*, 2015). Swart *et al.* (2016) assessed the satisfaction of event tourists and the probability of their repeat visitation in the 2014 Rio World Cup. The findings of this study revealed that the image of the destination had a positive and significant impact on the satisfaction of tourists. Similarly, Allameh *et al.* (2015) conducted a study to assess factors affecting attendance to sport tourism and found that destination image, service quality and perceived value had positive effects on satisfaction. Yet, a study on an integrative model linking tourist's emotional experiences, perceived overall image, satisfaction and intention to recommend revealed that favourable assessment of overall image has a direct impact on satisfaction

(Prayag *et al.*, 2017). Drawing from those evidences, this study puts forth the following second null hypothesis;

H₂: Destination image does not influence tourists' satisfaction

Service quality may be defined as discrepancy between customer's expectation and perception about product or series (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1985). It is brilliance of services as evaluated by purchaser (Zeithaml, 1988). In the tourism context, service quality is the extent to which visitors' perceived experience exceeded their expectations. Various empirical evidences show that service quality is a predictor of satisfaction (Jeong *et al.*, 2019; Sangpikul, 2018; Han & Hyun, 2015; Wu & Li, 2015; Cheng *et al.*, 2014). Wu and Li (2015) conducted a study on a sample of visitors to the Museums of Macau in China and revealed that service quality is critical to customer satisfaction. Cheng *et al.* (2014) found that tourists who experienced high levels of service quality from a hotel were more likely to have high levels of satisfaction in Malaysia. According to this study, satisfied customers were found to hold favourable corporate image towards the hotel. Similarly, Sangpikul (2018) found that tourists' travel experiences with service value, service facilities, safety, and cleanliness positively affected their satisfaction in Phuket, Bangkok. Yet, a study on a sporting industry in South Korea revealed that services quality influenced tourists' satisfaction (Jeong *et al.*, 2019).

It might be important to observe that while most of the above studies focused on relationship between service quality and satisfaction in what can be described as

leisure tourism, similar findings were also obtained by studies conducted in other forms of tourism. For example, a study by Han & Hyun (2015) focusing on medical tourism revealed that perceived quality of services influenced satisfaction of tourists. Drawing from a number of evidences presented above, it is clear that there is a link between service quality and customer satisfaction in the tourism sector. Those evidences point to the fact that services of good quality influenced tourists' satisfaction at different destinations. Based on the evidences of the aforementioned studies as well as evidenced from several other studies conducted across services industries (Teeroovengadum, 2020; Alnawas & Hemsley-Brown, 2019; Nunkoo *et al.*, 2019; Nunkoo *et al.*, 2017; Oh & Kim, 2017), this study established the following third null hypothesis.

H₃: Service quality does not influence tourists' satisfaction

Some further empirical evidences showed that perceived value mediated the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction (Hapsari *et al.*, 2016; Ryu & Han, 2010). For instance, Hapsari *et al.*, (2016) found that service quality was an antecedent of satisfaction but the relationship is mediated through perceived value. Similarly, Ryu and Han (2010) investigated the influence of quality of food, service quality and physical environment on customer satisfaction and found that perceived value moderated the relationship between service quality and satisfaction. Given the mediation effect described above, this study puts forth the following fourth hypothesis.

H₄: Perceived value does not mediate relationship between service quality and satisfaction

Based on the above review of literature, it is clear service quality, perceived value and destination image are predictors of satisfaction. It is also evident that perceived value mediates the relationships between service quality tourists' satisfaction. The aforementioned four hypotheses are summarized in Fig. 1. Dotted line represents the mediated effect of service quality through perceived value to satisfaction

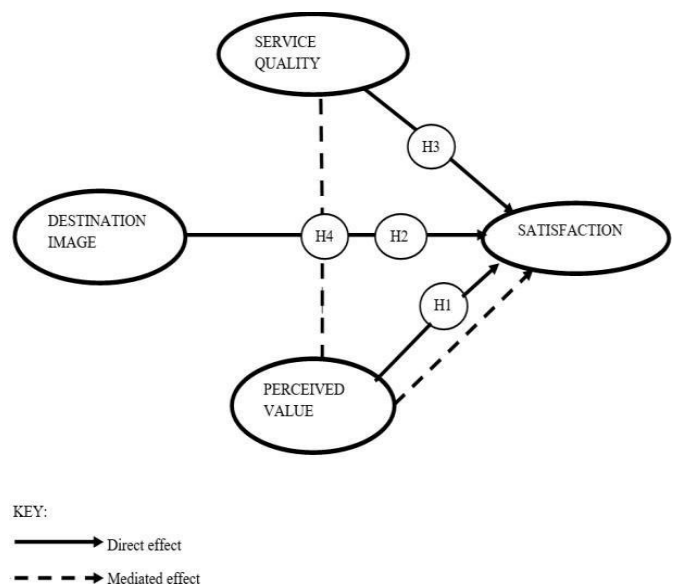


Figure 1: Hypothesized relationships among variables.

III. Methodology

This study adopted a cross-sectional research design. Study population constituted international tourists who visited SENAPA between March and September 2019; duration which is considered as pick season for tourists' inflows to the park. The study adopted non-probability convenience sampling technique whereby the researcher involved only the tourists who were accessible and willing to participate in the study at the park's existgates. Given that the researcher intended

to deploy Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) as the main analytical method, there was a need to involve a relatively large sample size (Awang, 2015). Nonetheless, while the literature shows that there is no consensus about how large should the sample size be, some scholars recommend use of observation to estimated parameter ratio (n:q) ratio (Kline, 2015). For example, Kline (2015) recommends that the n:q ratio should be 20:1 i.e., 20 observations (participants) for each estimated parameter in the questionnaire. Others have suggested that the n:q ratio can be as low as 10:1 (Schreiber *et al.*, 2006) or 5:1 (Bentler & Chou, 1987).

This study adopted a recommendation made by Kline (2015) using a ratio of 19:1 with the intention of having as many respondents as possible. The study involved four variables namely perceived value, destination image, service quality and satisfaction. A total of 55 parameters including 22 for service quality, 24 for destination image, six for perceived value and three for satisfaction were used. Deploying the suggested n:q ratio above, the minimum sample size for this study should be 1,100 respondents. However, to the advantage of the research, 1,148 respondents who returned correctly filled copies of the questionnaire. The average response rate was 85 percent.

Data collection

Primary data were collected by using a structured questionnaire. Data on service quality were collected by using the SERVQUAL tool suggested by Parasuraman (1988). The tool

consisted of 22 items and it focused on five dimensions of service quality including tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. Data on perceived value were collected by using six items grouped under two dimensions which were financial value (three items) and overall value (three items). Overall value involved three items aim at determining extent to which visitors considered their experience at the park to be uniquely rewarding. Three statements grouped under financial value intended to determine extent to which prices incurred by individual tourists matched with the value of services (enjoyment) experienced. It is important to note that similar items had been used in several previous similar studies (Dedeoğlu 2019; Chaulagain *et al.*, 2019; Kim *et al.*, 2017; Wu, 2016; Tosun *et al.*, 2015).

Destination image had been operationalized differently depending, mostly, on the context of specific studies (Dedeoğlu 2019; Chaulagain *et al.*, 2019; Wu, 2016; Tosun *et al.*, 2015). Specific variables involved in those studies were accommodation, travel environment, natural attractions, entertainment and events, historic attractions, infrastructure, accessibility, relaxation, leisure activities, price and value, cleanliness, language of communication (Chi & Qu, 2008); natural attraction, entertainment, accessibility to the destination, level of service quality and cultural attraction (Wu, 2016); accommodation, local transport, cleanliness, hospitality, leisure activities, language of communication and airport services (Tosun *et al.*, 2015); and transport, cleanliness, amenities, language of local people, hospitality,

and leisure activities (Dedeoğlu, 2019). This study adopted 24 items which were selectively adopted from previous studies. The items were grouped into six constructs including natural attraction, cultural attractions, accessibility, facilities or amenities, price and value, and social settings.

Lastly, tourists' satisfaction was measured by three statements. Those statements were concerned with overall satisfaction with SENAPA, satisfaction with SENAPA on comparison to prior expectations and satisfaction with SENAPA considering time and efforts invested. During data collection, respondents were asked to rate their opinions using a seven-point Likert scale where: 1 = very strongly disagree and 7 = very strongly agree. Use of seven-point scale was intended to provide respondents with wider choice and thus be more realistic in assessing their levels of satisfaction (Gallarza & Saura, 2006).

The study also relied on secondary data obtained from the official websites of National Parks in Africa. The data comprised information about park entry fees for Maasai Mara National Park in Kenya, Kruger National Park in the Republic of South Africa, Toubkal National Park in Morocco and Serengeti National Park in Tanzania. This information was used in the discussion while comparing the competitiveness of SENAPA with other parks in the region. Another useful source of secondary data was SafariBookings; a website which provides information about annual ranks of

the best tour destinations around the globe.

Data analysis

Descriptive statistical analysis techniques like mean and standard deviation (SD) were used to express respondents' rated opinions about extent to which they agreed or disagreed with specific statements that were used to collect information on each variable use in the study. Summated mean scores for each dimension under respective variables were computed. Scores above 4.0 implied that respondents agreed while those below 4.0 indicated that they disagreed. Scores around 4.0 meant that respondents held neutral opinion.

An Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was conducted to identify items with highest factor loading to be included in the further analysis. According to Hair et al. (2010) items with factor loading above 0.60 can be included in analysis. Based on the EFA results, service quality items were reduced from 22 to 16. Accordingly, items used to measure destination image were reduced from 24 to 16. All six items used to assess perceived value and the three items used to tourists' satisfaction were maintained. Thus, a total of 41 items were considered for construction of measurement model.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was used to validate measurement (hypothetical) model. Psychometric properties of the measurement model were evaluated by computing composite reliability, convergent and discriminant validity. In order to

establish goodness of model fit, the study involved such fit indices as chi-square with p-value (χ^2), root mean square approximation (RMSEA), goodness of fit index (GFI), average goodness of fit index (AGFI), comparative fit index (CFI) and normed chi-square (χ^2/df). As suggested by Awang(2015), at least one fit index was selected from each of the three categories of indices namely absolute fit, incremental fit and parsimonious fit indices. Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) technique was deployed in the construction of structural or empirical model. During this process, maximum Likelihood estimation algorithm was employed to test the model constructs since the data were assumed continuous and multivariate normal for a large data set. Promax rotation method was used due to its speed and suitability for large data set (Gorsuch, 1983). Similar model fit indices as ones used to evaluate and validate the measurement model above were used in the assessment of structural model.

IV. Findings and Discussion

Respondents were asked to rate their opinions regarding extent to which they agreed with sets of given statement that were used to measure service quality, destination image, perceived value and satisfaction on a seven-point Likert scale. Rated results of every given statement were converted into summated mean scores under respective dimension. Descriptive findings showing how respondents rated their opinions are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Mean scores for rated opinions

| Variable/dimension | Mean | SD |
|--------------------------|-------|-------|
| <i>Service quality</i> | | |
| Empathy | 4.283 | 2.291 |
| Tangibility | 5.435 | 1.780 |
| Reliability | 5.313 | 1.675 |
| Assurance | 5.020 | 2.095 |
| Responsiveness | 5.165 | 1.851 |
| <i>Destination image</i> | | |
| Social Setting | 4.545 | 2.167 |
| Cultural Attractions | 4.985 | 2.015 |
| Natural Attractions | 5.290 | 1.912 |
| Amenities | 5.220 | 2.005 |
| Accessibility | 5.375 | 1.872 |
| Price and value | 4.341 | 1.924 |
| <i>Perceived value</i> | | |
| Overall value | 6.210 | 1.241 |
| Financial value | 5.477 | 1.435 |
| <i>Satisfaction</i> | 5.560 | 1.689 |

Generally, findings on Table 4 revealed that respondents agreed with most of statements used to measure the key variables used in this study. For instance, summated mean scores for four out of five dimensions of service quality were above 5 indicating that respondents agreed with given statements regarding the quality of tangibles, reliability of services, assurance and responsiveness of employees. Mean score for empathy dimension was around 4 indicating that respondents held neutral opinions about statements regarding caring and individualized attention given to each of them by the employees.

Destination image constituted five sub-constructs. Mean scores for all those five sub-constructs were around 5 meaning that respondents agreed with all 24 statements used to assess destination image. Scores for the two sub-constructs that were used to assess

perceived value were above 5. This means that respondents agreed with all six statements used to assess perceived value. Similarly, respondents agreed with all three statements used to measure tourists' satisfaction given that the mean score was above 5.

Effects of destination image, service quality and perceived value on satisfaction

Procedurally, the process of determining the effects of destination image, perceived value and service quality on tourists' satisfaction involved two stages which were validation of measurement model and the construction of

structural model. In the first stage, measurement model was evaluated by computing composite reliability, convergent and discriminant validity. Internal consistency of all measures of the four constructs used in this study at EFA stage was ascertained by Cronbach's alpha values which were above threshold of 0.7 (Brunner & Süß, 2005). Values for composite reliability were above 0.6 indicating that the construct were reliable. AVE values were higher than 0.50 thus indicating that there was convergent validity (Hair *et al.*, 2017). Detailed results on psychometric properties of measurement model are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Psychometric properties of measurement model

| Construct/Dimension | Cronbach's α | CR) | AVE) |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------|-------------|
| <i>Service quality</i> | | | |
| Empathy (4 items) | 0.917 | 0.930 | 0.710 |
| Tangibility (4 items) | 0.895 | 0.910 | 0.655 |
| Reliability (3 items) | 0.873 | 0.880 | 0.712 |
| Assurance (3 items) | 0.85 | 0.860 | 0.675 |
| Responsiveness (2 items) | 0.838 | 0.841 | 0.726 |
| <i>Destination image</i> | | | |
| Social Setting (4 items) | 0.910 | 0.926 | 0.697 |
| Cultural Attractions (4 items) | 0.913 | 0.943 | 0.715 |
| Natural Attractions (3 items) | 0.885 | 0.894 | 0.739 |
| Amenities (3 items) | 0.837 | 0.847 | 0.651 |
| Accessibility (2 items) | 0.857 | 0.859 | 0.859 |
| <i>Perceived value</i> | | | |
| Overall value (3 items) | 0.892 | 0.892 | 0.735 |
| Financial value (3 items) | 0.866 | 0.869 | 0.690 |
| <i>Satisfaction (3 items)</i> | 0.887 | 0.860 | 0.677 |

Discriminant validity was established using Fornell–Larcker criterion which requires the square root of the AVE values for each construct to be greater than its correlations with other constructs (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). In other words, the AVE for each of the paired constructs should be greater than the squared correlation

between them. As shown on Table 3 below, the AVE values (bracketed) for each of the paired constructs was greater than their corresponding squared correlation value between them. This indicates that conditions for discriminant validity in the validation of measurement model were met.

Table 3: Establishment of discriminant validity using Fornell - Lacker criterion

| Correlated constructs | | AVE Values | Squared correlation (r^2) | Discriminant validity (AVE > r^2) |
|-----------------------|------------------------|----------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Satisfaction | <--> Destination Image | (0.661, 0.604) | 0.003 | Established |
| Destination Image | <--> Service Quality | (0.604, 0.556) | 0.001 | Established |
| Satisfaction | <--> Perceived Value | (0.661, 0.552) | 0.053 | Established |
| Satisfaction | <--> Service Quality | (0.661, 0.556) | 0.057 | Established |
| Perceived Value | <--> Service Quality | (0.552, 0.556) | 0.163 | Established |
| Perceived Value | <--> Destination Image | (0.552, 0.604) | 0.003 | Established |

Based on selected model fit indices (Awang, 2015), results indicated that measurement model was appropriate ($\chi^2 = 3359.360$ ($p < 0.001$, $\chi^2_{df} = 4.834$; GFI = 0.961; AGFI = 0.944; CFI = 0.977; RMSEA = 0.058). According to the literature chi-square (χ^2) is sensitive to a large sample size and thus a significant p-value can be tolerated (Garson, 2009). RMSEA value below 0.08 indicate good fit (Garson, 2009). It is also noted that GFI, AGFI, and CFI value of 0.9 and above show good fit of a model (Schreiber *et al.*, 2006). Results indicated that value of χ^2_{df} was 4.834 and it was within the threshold which according to the literature is < 5.0 (Kline, 2005). Diagrammatically, the measurement model is presented in Fig. 1 below.

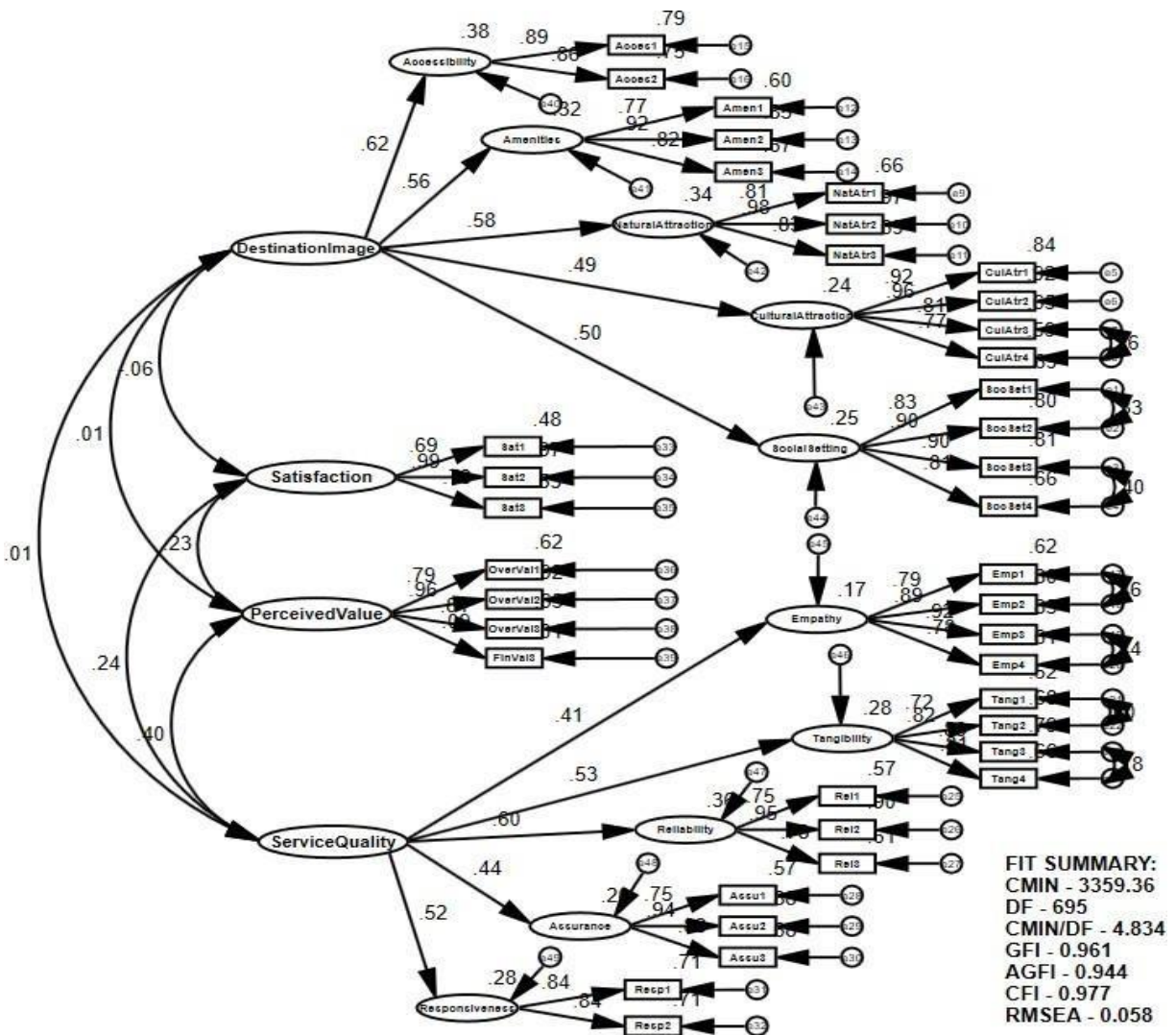


Figure 1: Measurement model

In the second stage, structural model was constructed to show the structural relationships and effects of destination image, service quality and perceived value on tourists’ satisfaction. To that end, Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) technique was applied using AMOS software and the results of analysis revealed that the empirical (structural) model was acceptable [$\chi^2 = 3804.598$; $p < 0.001$; $\chi^2/df = 4.140$; GFI = 0.928; AGFI =

0.913; CFI = 0.946; RMSEA = 0.070]. The structural relationships among those four variables are presented in Fig.2 below.

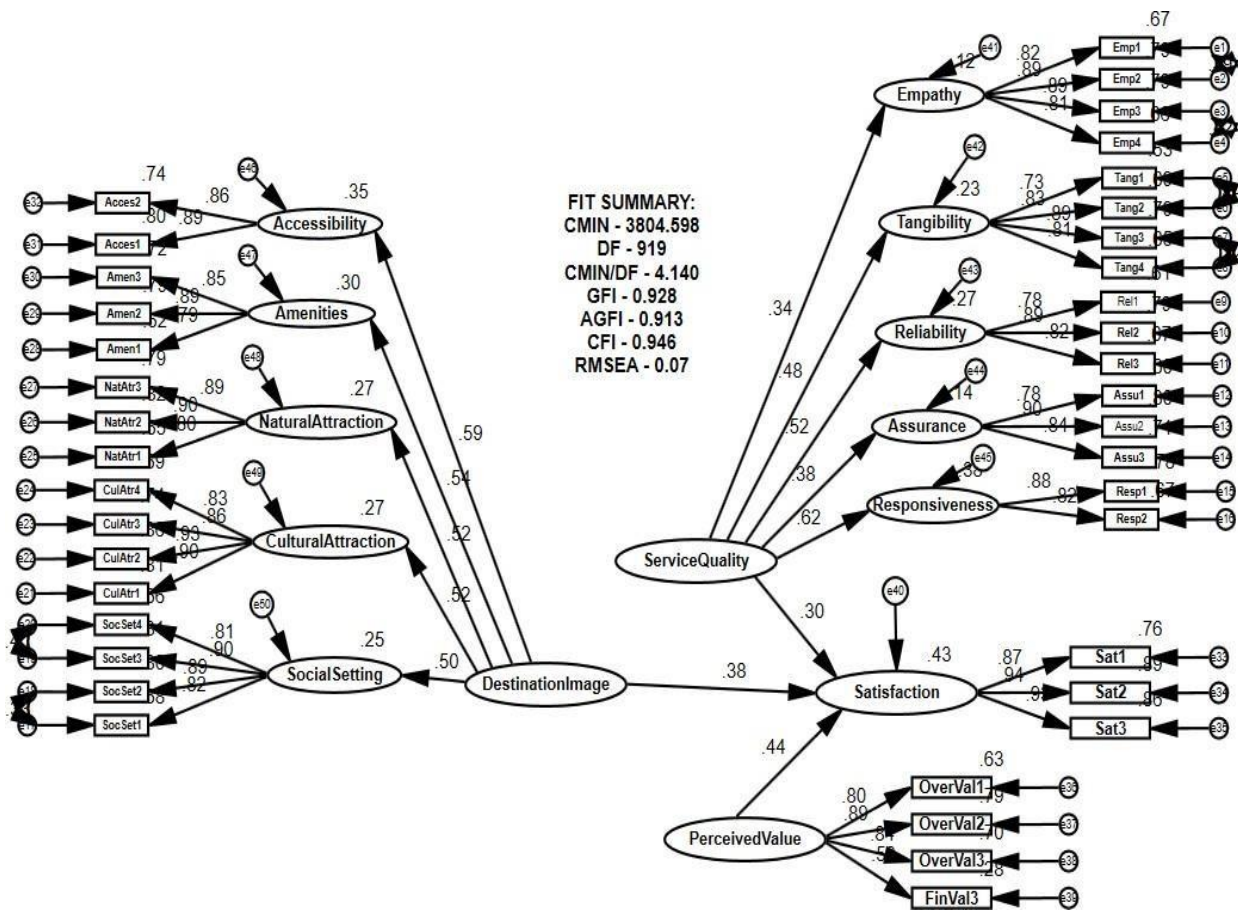


Figure 2: Structural model on relationships among SQ, DI, PV and SAT

Findings in Fig. 2 indicate that service quality (SQ), destination image (DI) and perceived value (PV) were predictors of tourists’ satisfaction

(SAT). The three variables mentioned above accounted for 43% of tourists’ satisfaction. Details about direct effect of each of those variables on satisfaction are presented in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Summary of SEM results on effects of DI, SQ and PV on satisfaction

| Hypothesis | Effect | Estimate (β) | S.E. | C.R. | R ² | P | Label |
|----------------|----------|--------------|-------|--------|----------------|----------|--------|
| H ₁ | PV → SAT | 0.442 | 0.037 | 11.946 | 0.432 | 0.003** | Reject |
| H ₂ | SQ → SAT | 0.304 | 0.041 | 7.415 | 0.432 | 0.000*** | Reject |
| H ₃ | DI → SAT | 0.381 | 0.039 | 9.769 | 0.432 | 0.012* | Reject |

*** Significant at p < 0.001; **Significant at p < 0.01, * Significant at p < 0.05

Perceived value and satisfaction

Findings in Fig. 3 and Table 4 revealed that perceived value predicted tourist's satisfaction ($\beta = 0.442$, $p < 0.01$, $R^2 = 0.432$). Specifically, perceived value had a positive effect to tourist satisfaction. Based on this finding, the first hypothesis which stated that "perceived value did not influence tourists' satisfaction" was rejected. This finding implies that tourists' evaluation of costs and benefits of their trip to SENAPA influenced their overall satisfaction. In other words, if a tourist perceived that the benefits of his or her visit to SENAPA outweighed the costs incurred in terms of financial resources and efforts, then he or she was satisfied. This is to say that travel costs and associated costs matter if a tourist has to be satisfied. Findings of several previous studies in the tourism sector support this study by showing that there was linear relationship between perceived value and tourists' satisfaction (Kim & Park, 2017; Bajs, 2015; Mai & Luan, 2015). Those studies showed that perceived value positively affected tourists' satisfaction.

Cost incurred by a tourist during a trip matter in determining tourists' satisfaction. This means that the per-head costs of park entry may have implications on the overall satisfaction of visitors. It is therefore imperative for tour industries like national parks to consider park entry fees and set them at reasonable prices. Nevertheless, a cross examination of park entry fees for some famous national parks in African revealed that Tanzania had competitive park entry fees. For example,

current entry fees to Serengeti National Park for non-residents (adults) of the East African Community was US \$ 70 per an adult person (TANAPA, 2021) compared to US \$ 80 for Maasai Mara National Park in Kenya. Similarly, entry fees for Serengeti were cheaper than US \$ 89.9 for Toubkal National Park in Morocco (GANP, 2021) and US \$ 84.8 for Kruger National Park in the Republic of South Africa (SANPark, 2021). Serengeti's competitive park entry fees could be said to have contributed to visitors' satisfaction and thus the need to continue keeping those rates competitively lower than other destinations in Africa cannot be overstated.

Destination image and satisfaction

Destination image (DI) was found to have significant effect on tourists' satisfaction ($\beta = 0.381$, $p < 0.05$, $R^2 = 0.432$). Given this finding, the second null hypothesis which stated that "destination image does not influence tourists' satisfaction" was rejected. The implication of this particular finding is that confirmation of beliefs, ideas and impressions that visitor had towards Serengeti made the tourists' satisfied. More elaborate, tourists felt satisfied after they found out that the beauty of Serengeti that was conveyed to them through advertisements or through positive word of mouth (WOM) from friends and relatives was real. These findings are in line with those of several previous studies (Prayag *et al.*, 2017; Swart *et al.*, 2016; Allameh *et al.*, 2015).

It is worth noting that SENAPA is one of the most famous tour destinations on the African continent and the globe at large. The Park is also famous because of huge numbers of diverse wildlife as well

as its unique migration of wildebeest twice each year. In the recent past, Serengeti has been named as one of the best national parks. Safari Bookings, which is the largest online marketplace for Africansafari tours, conducted an in-depth analysis of 2,373 safari bookings and established that SENAPA was the best safari parks and tour destination in Africa for 2021. The Park was also selected as the best destination on the continent in 2018 and 2015 (SafariBookings, 2021).

In this study, destination image included such aspects as social settings, cultural attractions, natural attractions, good amenities, and easy accessibility. The fact that Serengeti is one of the best destinations for tourism in Africa implicitly means that the park was able to maintain its good image. For example, the park maintained good social environment by implementing community projects like construction of primary school classes, bridges, boreholes drilling, and health centres. Those corporate social responsibility efforts made the community around feel at ease with visitors. The Park also continued to promote attractive natural attractions by implementing Tourism Investment Manual 2019-2024 which was introduced by Tanzania National Parks (TANAPA) in 2019. The manual guides investors in the park on matters that will sustain the beautiful flora and fauna. Efforts were also made to improve accessibility to the park. For example, Serengeti can be easily accessed through tarmac roads from Arusha, Mwanza and

Mara regions. The Park can also be accessed by using chartered flights which may land in any of the seven air strips constructed at different locations in the park. Inside the park, tourists can travel easily by using regularly maintained 769 kilometres of gravel road network.

Service quality and satisfaction

Findings further showed that service quality (SQ) had a significant effect on tourists' satisfaction (SAT) ($\beta = 0.304$, $p < 0.001$, $R^2 = 0.432$).

Specifically, that effect was positive. The findings, therefore, lead to rejection of the third null hypothesis of this study which stated that "service quality did not influence tourists' satisfaction". The finding implies that tourists were satisfied by their trips because of good services experienced at Serengeti. Various previous empirical evidences support the finding showing that service quality influenced tourists' satisfaction with their experiences while visiting different destinations (Jeong *et al.*, 2019; Sangpikul, 2018; Han & Hyun, 2015; Wu & Li, 2015; Cheng *et al.*, 2014).

An important point to note is that all five dimensions namely tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy had positive effect on service quality (see Fig. 2 above). Impliedly, those five dimensions of service quality contributed to the positive influence of service quality on satisfaction. However, as shown in Table 1, respondents indicated that quality of some of items was not appreciable. This was reflected in by summated mean score of around 4 on the empathy dimensions of service quality. The interpretation of this particular finding is that the

tourists' held neutral opinion about quality of caring and individualized attention given to each of them by the employees providing services in SENAPA. In other words, it could be said that tourists were not impressed by employees' empathy at Serengeti.

Mediated effect of perceived value in service quality-satisfaction relationship

In order to test for the mediation effect, perceived value was introduced in the relationship between service quality and satisfaction. Results indicated that after perceived value was entered in the model, the direct effect of service quality on satisfaction was still significant ($p < 0.001$) even though beta coefficient (β) for service quality was reduced from 0.30 to 0.27. See Fig. 3 below.

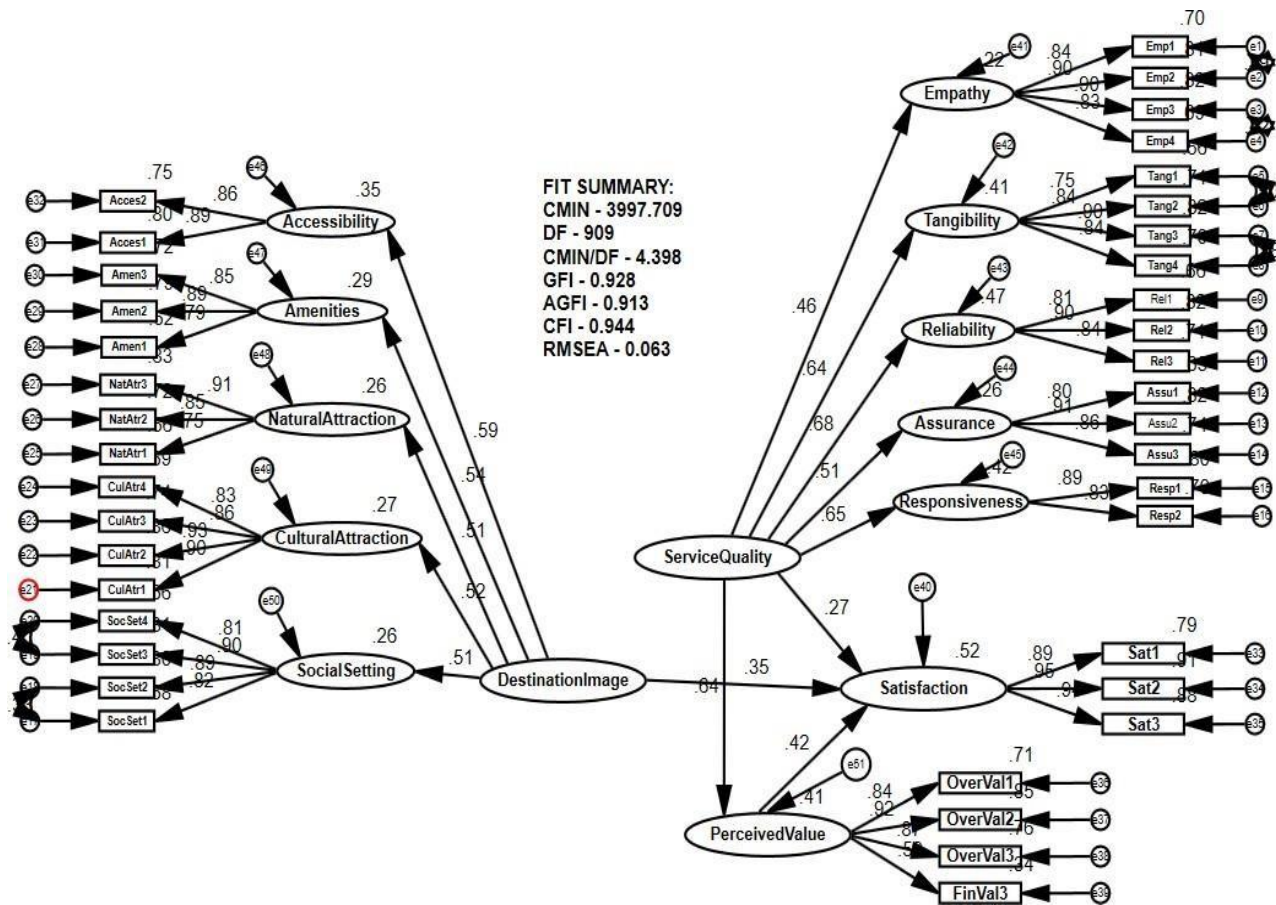


Figure 3: Mediation effect of PV on SQ-SAT relationship

Results in Fig.3 showed that SQ had significant direct effect on satisfaction ($p < 0.001$) before PV was introduced into the model. It was also revealed that SQ had a significant indirect effect on satisfaction after introduction of PV in the model ($p < 0.001$). These findings ascertained that

perceived value (PV) exhibited partial mediation effect on the relationship between service quality (SQ) and tourists' satisfaction (SAT). Estimate details are presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Mediation estimates of perceived value on service quality to satisfaction

| Effect | Estimate (β) | S.E. | C.R. | P | Results |
|-------------------------------|----------------------|-------|--------|----------|--------------------------------------|
| SQ \square SAT | 0.304 | 0.041 | 7.415 | 0.000*** | Significant |
| SQ \square PV \square SAT | 0.268 | 0.014 | 19.143 | 0.000*** | Significant (reject H ₄) |

*** $p < 0.001$

Based on the above finding, the fourth hypothesis which stated that “perceived value does not mediate the relationship between service quality and satisfaction” was also rejected. The findings imply that tourists' satisfaction with service quality could be mediated by perceived value which in this study was defined as the trade-off between costs incurred and benefits achieved by visiting Serengeti National Park. It means that even if quality of services was good, still costs incurred by individual visitor counted in determining their level of satisfaction. As already shown in the literature, this finding is also supported by previous similar findings (Hapsari *et al.*, 2016; Ryu & Han, 2010) which showed that perceived value mediated the relationship between service quality and satisfaction.

V. Conclusions and Recommendations

This study concludes that the international tourists to SENAPA left the park with feelings of satisfaction. Tourists realized value for visiting the park given that benefits enjoyed during their trips outweighed the costs involved. Although the tourists were satisfied with

quality of services at the park, they did not appreciate the empathy of service providers. Tourists' satisfaction was maximized when mediated through service quality and destination image were mediated through perceived value.

The study makes the following recommendations. First, Tanzania National Parks (TANAPA) should strive to keep per-heads costs like entry fees lower than those of competitor parks in Africa. Setting competitor rates will increase perceived value among tourists; something which will in turn influence their satisfaction. Second, service providers in Serengeti National Parks should provide services of good quality to guarantee satisfaction of tourists. This can be achieved by adherence to the best international tour and travel standards that can be learnt from destinations that attract huge numbers of tourists in Africa or elsewhere in the globe. Lastly, management of the park in collaboration with other service providers in the park should strive to provide services of good quality at affordable costs. This is because tourists' satisfaction was maximized when it was

Richard J. Matolo, Paul J. Salia & Vedasto G. Ndibalema mediated through perceived value.

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Determinants of International Tourists' Destination Loyalty: Empirical Evidence from Serengeti National Park in Tanzania

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How to cite this article: Matolo, R.J., Salia, P.J. & Ndibalema, V.G. (2021). Determinants of International Tourists' Destination Loyalty: Empirical Evidence from Serengeti National Park in Tanzania. African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure, 10(3):821-838. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.46222/ajhtl.19770720-134>

Abstract

This study was conducted to assess the determinants of tourists' loyalty to Serengeti National Park (SENAPA) in Tanzania. The study involved 1,148 respondents who were international tourists visiting the park from March to September 2019. Data were collected using a structured survey questionnaire. Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) technique was used in the analysis. Findings revealed that service quality was a positive predictor of tourists' loyalty. Accordingly, destination image and perceived value had positive effects on tourists' destination loyalty. Also, satisfaction was found to have positive effect on destination loyalty. Furthermore, the findings revealed that satisfaction had a partial mediation effect on the relationship between service quality, destination image and perceived value on the one hand and destination loyalty on the other. It was concluded that provision of high-quality services increased tourists' loyalty to the park. Similarly, tourists' satisfaction and realization of value during their trips increased loyalty. The study calls for SENAPA management to strive to maintain high quality of services provided to tourists by introducing service provision charter that would guide the operations of different stakeholders inside the park. Also, the park's management should make efforts that would enhance perceived value among the tourists by reviewing costs of items charged on tourists like park entry fees in view of making them competitive compared to similar parks found in Africa.

Keywords: Determinants, Tourists, Loyalty, Serengeti, Tanzania

Introduction

International tourism is one of the major sources of economic growth in the world. According to the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), tourism accounted for 10.3% of the global Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and 10.4% of total employment in 2019 (WTTC, 2020). In Africa, the sector contributes to 24.3 million African jobs, or 6.7% of total employment while in Tanzania it accounts for 11.7% of GDP (WTTC, 2020). Most of the international tourists to Tanzania visit Serengeti National Park (SENAPA). Evidence from the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism (MNRT) show that SENAPA received 36.3% of all international tourists who visited Tanzania in 2019 compared to 24.9% and 19.2% who went to Tarangire and Manyara parks respectively (MNRT, 2019). SENAPA is, therefore, one of the key attractions for international tourists compared to other destinations in Tanzania. However, 821

evidences show that performance of SENAPA, as a tourists' destination, is poor compared to other parks with a similar ecosystem in the East African region. For instance, the park received fewer visitors per square kilometre compared to Maasai Mara which is in Kenya (TANAPA, 2017; KBS, 2017). Another evidence shows that while Tanzania received 1,527,230 international tourists in 2019 (MNRT, 2019), Kenya received 2,025,206 tourists in the same year (GOK, 2019). Given this evidence, it is plausible to investigate the likelihood of tourists to continue visiting SENAPA in the near future by focusing on their loyalty to the park.

In general terms, loyalty to a product or service refers to customers' behavior for repeated purchases or willingness to recommend the same to friends or family members (Iordanova, 2016). In the tourism context, loyalty may be expressed in terms of revisit intention, willingness to recommend a friend or relative, or having positive word-of-mouth (Almeida- Santana & Moreno-Gil, 2018). Maintaining tourists' destination loyalty is crucial given that it is less costly to retain an existing customer than to attract new ones (Chiu, Zeng & Cheng, 2016). Thus, performance of a tourism sector depends primarily on the volume of international arrivals and associated receipts. Impliedly, performance of this sector largely depends on tourists' loyalty to a specific destination. It is important, therefore, to understand the key determinants of tourists' loyalty so as to introduce measures that can make certain destinations perform better than their competitors.

Literature shows that tourists' loyalty to a destination may be affected by several factors including, but not limited to, service quality (Jeong, Kim & Yu, 2019; Priporas, Stylos, Vedanthachari & Santiwatana, 2017), destination image (Moon & Han, 2018; Türkmen, Atay, & Türkmen, 2018) perceived value (Kim, Kim & Park, 2017; Kim & Uysal, 2015) and satisfaction (Mainolfi & Marino, 2020; De Nisco, Mainolfi, Marino & Napolitano, 2017). Destination image, which is defined as the sum of beliefs, ideas and impressions that a visitor has towards a certain destination or place (Assaker & Hallak, 2013), is crucial for marketing of tourist destination. Tourists who hold a good image of a specific destination are likely to revisit the same or recommend it to friends or relatives. In other words, tourists' destination loyalty may be influenced by destination image. The type of services experienced by tourists may play a decisive role in their future behavioral intentions. Specifically, tourists who enjoy a good quality of services tend to leave a destination with feelings of satisfaction and are likely to remain loyal to it. Similarly, perceived value, which is an outcome cost-benefit analysis regarding value worth for visiting a specific destination (Shen, 2016) is a determinant that may influence tourists' loyalty to the destination (Kim & Uysal, 2015; Kim et al., 2015; Um et al., 2006). Tourists who leave a destination with feelings that what they spent during the trip was less compared to the benefits enjoyed are likely to recommend friends and relatives to visit the same.

Studies that have been conducted in Tanzania did not adequately examine how service quality, destination image, perceived value and satisfaction affected tourists' loyalty to any destination in the country. For example, Mlozi and Pesämaa (2013) focused on tourists' destination choices but not on whether or not tourists were satisfied. Other studies focused on determinants of tourists' length of stay (Kazuzuru, 2014), tourist spending (Kazuzuru, 2018) and dimensions for positioning tourists' destinations (Mallya, 2013). Another study by Matolo and Salia (2017) focused on SENAPA but its objective was to compare tourists' expectations with actual experiences.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the antecedents of tourists' destination loyalty. More specifically, the study examined the effects of service quality, destination image, perceived value and satisfaction on destination loyalty. Furthermore, the study endeavored to assess the mediation effect of satisfaction on the relationship between service quality, destination image and perceived value on the one hand and destination loyalty on the other.

Literature review

Theoretical framework

This paper adopted a Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). The theory expounds that the intention to perform certain behavior is the proximal cause of such behavior (Shim et al., 2001). According to Ajzen (1985), the TPB is built on assumption that people are likely to perform a particular type of behavior if they believe that such behavior will lead to a particular and valuable outcome; if their important referents will value and approve the behavior; and if they have the necessary abilities, resources, and opportunities to carry out such behavior. In the context of tourism, and thus of this study, planned behavior is concerned with the propensity of tourists who have visited SENAPA to demonstrate behavior which will lead to loyalty in terms of planning revisit trips, recommending the park to friends and relatives as well as saying positive things about it. The above three assumptions of TPB are real in the context of this study because a tourist will remain loyal to SENAPA if a previous trip to the park lead to valuable outcomes, if the people (friends and relatives) approve the park as a unique destination based on positive things said about it, or if they have enough resources and opportunity to make a revisit trip.

Literature shows that this theory was commonly used to predict behavioral intention (loyalty) in the tourism sector (Kaplan, Abbasi, Kumaravelu & Dara-Singh, 2021; Jeong et al., 2019; Manca, Nielsen & Prato, 2015; Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2010). For example, Kaplan et al. (2015) used the theory to explore behavioral aspects behind travelers' intention to use urban-bike sharing in Denmark. Similarly, Jeong et al. (2019) borrowed the theory to examine the influence of destination image on tourists' satisfaction and on destination loyalty in South Korea. Also, Nunkoo and Ramkissoon (2010) used it to predict tourists' intention to repetitively consume genetically modified foods in Mauritius.

Literature and hypotheses development

Loyalty to a brand or service may be defined to include three aspects namely repurchase intention, willingness to recommend the product or services to others, and having positive word-of-mouth towards it (Cossío-Silva, Revilla-Camacho & Vega-Vázquez, 2018; Almeida-Santana & Moreno-Gil, 2018; Yoon, Polpanumas & Park, 2017). In the tourism sector, and thus in the context of this study, destination loyalty is defined to involve three aspects which are individual tourist's intention to revisit the same destination in the future; willingness of an individual tourist to recommend destination to a friend or family member; and holding favorable attitude towards a destination which is referred to as a positive word-of-mouth.

Service quality is defined as discrepancy between customer's expectation and perception about product or service (Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry, 1985). In the tourism context, service quality is the extent to which visitors' perceived experience exceeded their expectations. Empirical show that service quality is a predictor of tourists' loyalty (Jeong et al., 2019; Priporas et al., 2017; Kim et al. 2015). For instance, a study conducted in South Korea found that quality of services experienced by tourists influenced their satisfaction and eventually their loyalty in terms of future intention for revisit trips (Jeong et al., 2019). Another study conducted in South Korea revealed that overall quality of services influenced destination revisit intentions among elderly tourists (Kim et al., 2015). Similarly, a study conducted in Thailand involving international tourists who visited Phuket Island revealed that there was positive relationship between service quality and loyalty (Priporas et al., 2017).

It is noted, however, that service quality does not necessarily lead to customer loyalty. For example, evidence from a study conducted by Sangpikul (2018) in Bangkok revealed that service quality had

positive effect on satisfaction but did not have significant effect on their loyalty. Similarly, a study conducted in Bangladesh revealed that perceived quality of services did not influence loyalty of tourists to Cox's Bazar Beach (Hossain, Quaddus & Shanka, 2015). Based on those evidence the following null hypothesis was established:

H1: Service quality does not influence tourists' destination loyalty

Destination image is defined as sum of beliefs, ideas and impressions that a visitor has towards a certain destination or place (Assaker & Hallak, 2013). Literature shows that destination image has a positive effect on tourists' loyalty to specific destinations (Atay et al., 2020; Moon & Han, 2018; Türkmen et al., 2018). Evidence from a study conducted in Turkey revealed that personal destination image had positive effect on tourists' loyalty in one of the famous cultural heritage centers called Pamukkale – Hierapolis (Atay et al., 2020). Particularly, tourists to that destination demonstrated that they were willing to make revisit trips in the future. Similar findings were also obtained by Türkmen et al. (2018) showing that there was positive relationship between destination image and loyalty. It is of interest to note that tourists' do create destination image based on their experiences. This view is supported by Moon and Han (2018) as well as Loureiro (2014) when they observe that tourists who are contented with overall experience in terms of having feelings, enjoyment and a sense of escapism are likely to have a positive attitude toward a destination and intend to revisit the destination. Several other studies revealed that destination image influenced tourists' revisit intention (Qu et al., 2011; Seabra, Abrantes & Lages, 2007) and positive word-of-mouth (Zhang, Fu, Cai & Lu, 2014; Bajaj, 2013; Kim, Holland & Han, 2013). Given the above evidence, this study puts forth the following null hypothesis:

H2: Destination image does not influence tourists' destination loyalty

In the context of tourism, perceived value is an outcome of visitor's evaluation of costs and benefits enjoyed during a trip (Shen, 2016). Studies show that perceived value is a predictor of tourists' loyalty (Kim & Uysal, 2015; Chiu et al., 2014; Kim et al., 2013; Um et al., 2006). It is observed that perceived value has significant influence of tourists' revisit intention (Um et al., 2006). Similarly, some evidences show that perceived value influences loyalty through revisit intention and positive word-of-mouth (Kim & Uysal, 2015; Chen & Chen, 2010). Based on those evidence, this study hypothesises that:

H3: Perceived value does not influence tourists' destination loyalty

Satisfaction is yet another factor to consider while examining the determinant of tourists' loyalty to a destination. According to Bang and Hai (2019), tourists are said to be satisfied when post-travel experience exceeds pre-travel expectations. Satisfaction constitutes pleasant feelings resulting from enjoyment experienced during the travel compared to prior- expectations (Le & Dong, 2017; Akhoondnejad, 2016). Evidence shows that there is relationship between tourists' satisfaction and destination loyalty (Mainolfi & Marino, 2020; De Nisco et al., 2017; Wu, 2016). For example, Wu (2016) showed that satisfaction influenced tourists' choice of destination, level of consumption of services and products as well as revisit intention in Taiwan Tourism Welcome Centre. Mainolfi and Marino (2020) examined variables that influenced tourists' behavioural intention in the event "Luci d'Artista" (Artist's lights), which is a special event that takes place at Christmas time in the city of Salerno in the Southern Italy. This study revealed that satisfaction was a direct antecedent of loyalty in terms of revisit intention. De Nisco et al. (2017) conducted a study in Italy and found that satisfaction among international tourists had significant effect on their loyalty to specific

destination in terms of revisit intention and positive word-of mouth. Yet, another evidence suggests that tourists who are satisfied with experiences of a destination in terms of entertainment and attraction are likely to remain loyal to the same (Ramseook-Munhurrun, Seebaluck & Naidoo, 2015). Given the above empirical evidence, this study puts forth the following null hypothesis:

H4: Tourists' satisfaction does not influence tourists' destination loyalty

Further, literature shows that satisfaction mediates the relationship between destination image, perceived value and service quality on the one hand and loyalty on the other hand. For example, a number of studies conducted in the tourism industry revealed that satisfaction mediated the relationship between destination image and loyalty (Atay et al., 2020; Mahadzirah et al., 2019). Another study conducted in Turkey tourist industry focusing on Pamukkale- Hierapolis site revealed that tourists' satisfaction partially mediated the relationship between destination image and loyalty to that specific site (Atay et al., 2020). Similarly, Mahadzirah et.al. (2019) found that destination image had both direct and indirect effects on loyalty and further noted that satisfaction was a partial mediator of relationship between destination image and loyalty. One observation that can be drawn from the above literature is that favourable destination image results into higher level of tourist satisfaction which in turn leads to destination loyalty.

More evidence from different service industries show that satisfaction mediates the relationship between service quality and loyalty to a specific destination (Subrahmanyam, 2017; Kim et al., 2013; Chen & Chen, 2010). In the context of tourism, services of high quality are expected to lead to tourists' satisfaction (Wu & Cheng, 2017; Su et al., 2016; Kim et al., 2013). It is worth attention that tourists who experience services of good quality are likely to be satisfied and the satisfied tourists are likely to remain loyal to the destination. Furthermore, evidence from several studies (Lai, Griffin, & Babin, 2009; Yang & Peterson, 2004; Cronin, Brady & Hult, 2000) indicated that customer satisfaction mediated the relationship between perceived value and loyalty. Literally, this means that tourists' who are satisfied because benefits of making a trip are more than the costs incurred are likely to remain loyal to the same destination. Given the above evidence on the mediation role of satisfaction, this study puts forth the following three null hypotheses:

H5: Satisfaction does not mediate relationship between service quality and destination loyalty

H6: Satisfaction does not mediate relationship between destination image and destination loyalty

H7: Satisfaction does not mediate relationship between perceived value and destination loyalty

In summary, therefore, the above literature revealed that destination loyalty is influenced by service quality, destination image, perceived and satisfaction. In these relationships, destination loyalty (DL) behaves as a dependent (endogenous) variable while service quality (SQ), destination image (DI), perceived value (PV) and satisfaction (SAT) are predictor (exogenous) variables. Those relationships are shown by full lines in Fig 1. Literature further showed that satisfaction mediates the relationships between service quality and destination loyalty, between destination image and loyalty and between perceived value and loyalty. Those relationships are given by dotted lines in Fig.1. The seven hypotheses presented above are shown as H1 to H7.

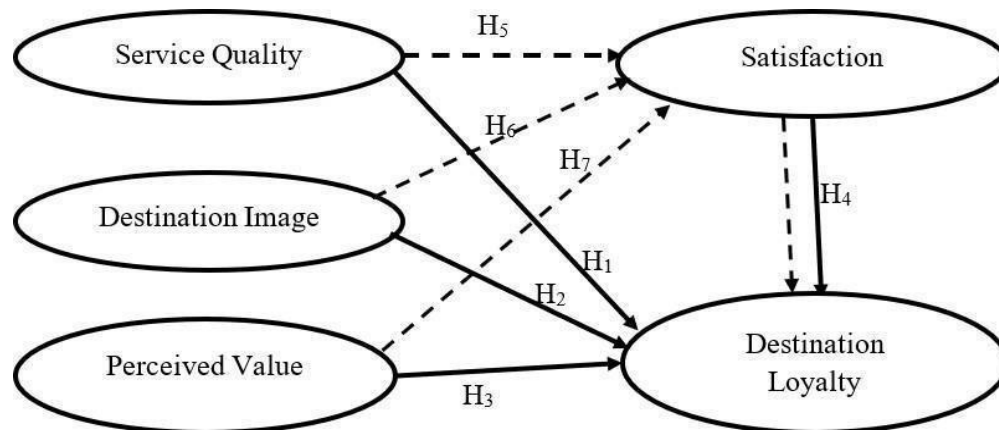


Figure 1: Relationships among key variables

Methodology

This study adopted a cross-sectional research design. The target population were international tourists who visited Serengeti National Park between March and September 2019; a period which covered high season for tourism activities. The study adopted a non-probability convenience sampling technique; the process which involved the selection of tourists who were willing to participate in the study at the part exit points. Given that this study intended to use Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) as the main analytical technique, there was a need to use a large sample size (Awang, 2015). Although there was no academic consensus about what constitutes a large sample size, researchers suggest the use of observations to parameter (n:q) ratio (Kline, 2015; Schreiber, Nora, Stage, Barlow & King, 2006). This study adopted n:q ratio of 19:1 and given that the study involved a total of 58 parameters, the minimum sample size would be 1,102. However, to the advantage of the study, the researcher managed to obtain 1,148 respondents.

Data collection

This study relied on primary data collected by using a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was distributed to tourists who were ready to fill them. The study involved five key constructs namely service quality, destination image, perceived value, satisfaction and destination loyalty. Data on the service quality were collected by using the standard SERVQUAL questionnaire with a total of 22 items as suggested by Parasuraman (1998). Those items were grouped into five dimensions including tangibility (four items), reliability (five items), responsiveness (four items), assurance (four items), and empathy (five items). Data on destination image were collected using a total of 24 items that were carefully selected from previous similar studies (Dedeoğlu, 2019; Wu, 2016; Tosun, Dedeoğlu & Fyall., 2015). The items were grouped into six constructs including natural attraction, cultural attractions, accessibility, facilities or amenities, price and value, and social settings. Each of those six constructs involved four items. Data on perceived value was collected by using six items grouped under two dimensions which were financial value (three items) and overall value (three items). This approach to measuring perceived value was adopted from some similar previous studies (Chaulagain, Wiitala & Fu, 2019; Kim et al., 2013).

Data on the remaining two variables namely satisfaction and destination loyalty were collected as follows. Tourists' satisfaction was measured by three statements. Those statements were concerned with overall satisfaction with SENAPA, satisfaction with SENAPA on comparison to prior expectations and satisfaction with SENAPA considering time and efforts invested. Information about tourists' loyalty was collected using three statements which focused on the three aspects of loyalty that are revisit intention, willingness to recommend the park to friends and relatives, and

positive word-of-mouth. During data collection, respondents were asked to rate their opinions using a seven-point Likert scale where: 1 = Very strongly disagree and 7 = Very strongly agree. Use of seven-point scale was intended to provide respondents with wider choice and thus be more realistic in assessing their levels of satisfaction (Gallarza & Saura, 2006).

Data analysis

Data analysis involved two stages. The first stage involved conducting an Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) so as to identify constructs with high factor loading to be included in the further analysis. Based on the suggested factor loading threshold of 0.60 or above (Hair, Anderson, Tatham & Black, 2010), items used to measure service quality and destination image were reduced from 22 to 16 and from 24 to 16 respectively. All six items used to assess perceived value and the three items used to measure tourists' satisfaction were maintained. Similarly, the three items used to measure tourists' loyalty were retained. In sum, therefore, the original 58 items were reduced to 44 items which were included in the further analysis.

In the second stage, measurement (hypothetical) model was developed. The process involved performing Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). Relevance of the measurement model was assessed by calculating composite reliability, convergent and discriminant validity. Lastly, Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) technique was used to construct an empirical model based on data collected from the field. During this process, the researcher used Maximum Likelihood (ML) estimation algorithm and Promax rotation method were used (Gorsuch, 1983). Goodness of model fit was assessed by a number of indices including chi-square with p-value (χ^2), root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), goodness of fit index (GFI), average goodness of fit index (AGFI), comparative fit index (CFI) and normed chi-square (χ^2/df).

Findings and discussion

Respondents' opinion about constructs used in the study

Respondents were asked to indicate extent to which they agreed with 58 statements used to collect information about the five key variables used in this study namely, service quality, destination image, perceived value, satisfaction and destination loyalty. Given that respondents' opinions were expressed in a seven-point Likert scale, mean scores less than 4 implied that respondents disagreed while those above 4 indicated that they agreed with a given statement. Accordingly, mean scores around 4 meant that they held neutral opinion about given statement.



Table 1: Summated mean scores of measured constructs

| Dimension/construct | Summated mean | SD |
|----------------------------|----------------------|-----------|
| Service Quality | | |
| Tangibility | 5.34 | 1.397 |
| Reliability | 5.56 | 1.611 |
| Responsiveness | 4.52 | 2.203 |
| Assurance | 5.00 | 2.105 |
| Empathy | 4.29 | 2.299 |
| <i>Destination Image</i> | | |
| Natural Attractions | 5.67 | 1.848 |
| Cultural Attractions | 5.37 | 1.793 |
| Accessibility | 5.50 | 1.697 |
| Amenities | 5.40 | 1.662 |
| Price & Value | 5.49 | 1.617 |
| Social Setting | 5.84 | 1.425 |
| <i>Perceived value</i> | 5.93 | 1.338 |
| <i>Satisfaction</i> | 5.56 | 1.689 |
| <i>Destination Loyalty</i> | 5.72 | 1.416 |

It was observed that summated mean scores for four out of five dimensions that were used to measure service quality were above 4 indicating that respondents agreed with given statements about tangibility, reliability, responsiveness and assurance. Mean score for empathy was around 4 indicating that respondents held neutral opinions about statements under this dimension. It was further noted that scores for all dimensions used to measure destination image were above 5 indicating that respondents agreed with statements used to measure them. Similarly, scores for the rest of the three constructs including perceived value, satisfaction and destination loyalty were around six meaning that respondents strongly agreed with statements that were used to measure them.

Determinants of tourists’ destination loyalty

In this study, destination loyalty was determined by four predictor variables including service quality, destination image, perceived value and satisfaction. As a matter of procedural requirement, the process of determining the effects of those four variables on destination loyalty involved two stages which were; (a) validation of measurement model, and (b) construction of structural model. The measurement (hypothetical) model was evaluated by computing composite reliability, convergent and discriminant validity. Internal consistency of variables was ascertained by Cronbach’s alpha values which were above threshold of 0.7 (Brunner & Süß, 2005). Values for composite reliability were above 0.6 indicating that the construct were reliable. AVE values were higher than 0.50 thus indicating that there was convergent validity (Hair et al., 2017). Detailed results on properties of measurement model are presented in Table 2.



Table 2: Properties of measurement model

| Construct/Dimension | Cronbach's α | CR | AVE |
|----------------------------|---------------------|-------|-------|
| <i>Destination image</i> | | | |
| Social Setting | 0.910 | 0.942 | 0.746 |
| Cultural Attractions | 0.913 | 0.955 | 0.763 |
| Natural Attractions | 0.885 | 0.912 | 0.777 |
| Amenities | 0.837 | 0.878 | 0.707 |
| Accessibility | 0.857 | 0.872 | 0.773 |
| <i>Service quality</i> | | | |
| Empathy | 0.917 | 0.949 | 0.744 |
| Tangibility | 0.895 | 0.928 | 0.696 |
| Reliability | 0.873 | 0.890 | 0.730 |
| Assurance | 0.850 | 0.895 | 0.741 |
| Responsiveness | 0.838 | 0.851 | 0.741 |
| <i>Perceived value</i> | | | |
| Satisfaction | 0.887 | 0.795 | 0.666 |
| <i>Destination loyalty</i> | | | |
| | 0.766 | 0.872 | 0.640 |

Based on the above properties, an acceptable [$\chi^2 = 4742.013$; $DF = 983$, $\chi^2/df = 4.742$, $GFI = 0.919$; $AGFI = 0.907$; $CFI = 0.926$; $RMSEA = 0.061$]. All those fit indices were within the acceptable margins. For example, $RMSEA$ value below 0.08 indicated good fit (Garson, 2009). It is also noted that GFI , $AGFI$, and CFI value of 0.9 and above show good fit of a model (Schreiber et al., 2006). Also, χ^2/df value of 4.742 was within the threshold which according to the literature is < 5.0 (Kline, 2005). The fit indices are presented in Fig.2.

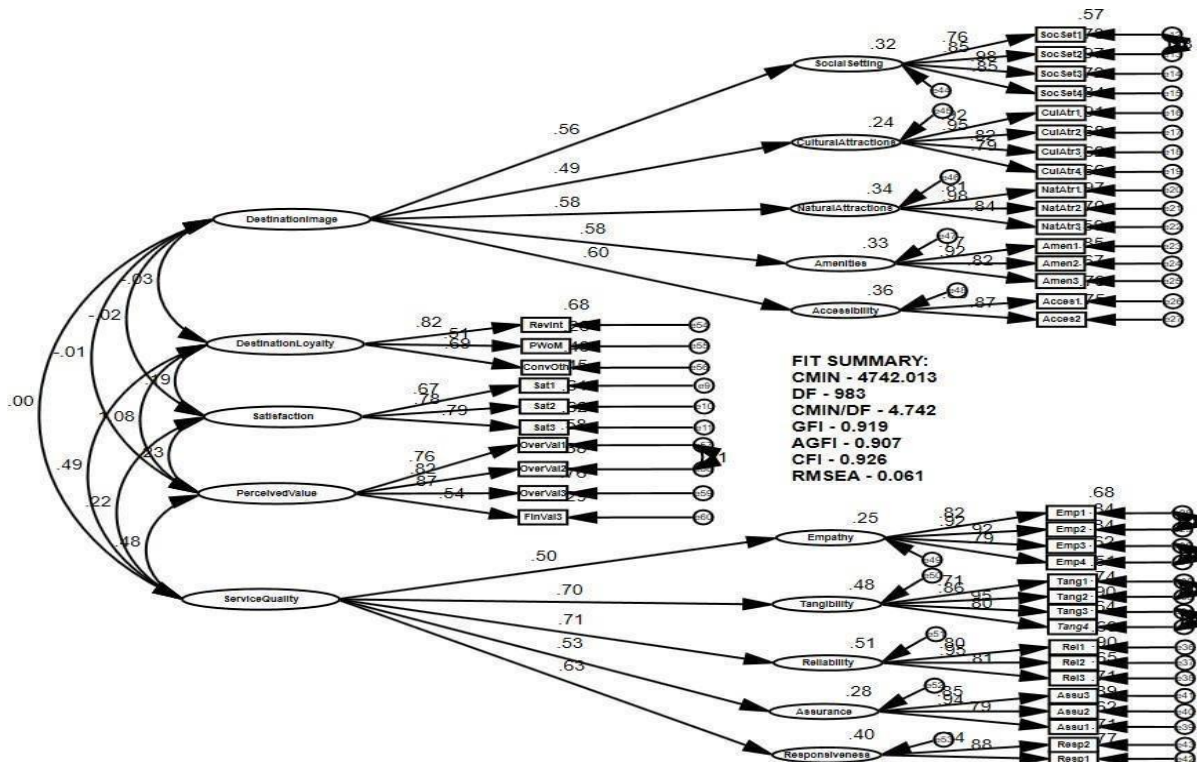


Figure 2: AMOS graphics on properties of measurement model

In the second stage, structural model was constructed to show the structural relationships among the five variables namely service quality, destination image, perceived value, satisfaction and destination loyalty. Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) technique was applied the results of analysis revealed that the empirical model was acceptable [CMIN = 4580.926; CMIN/DF = 4.622; GFI = 0.927; AGFI = 0.914; CFI = 0.955; RMSEA = 0.069]. The details about the structural model are presented in Fig.3.

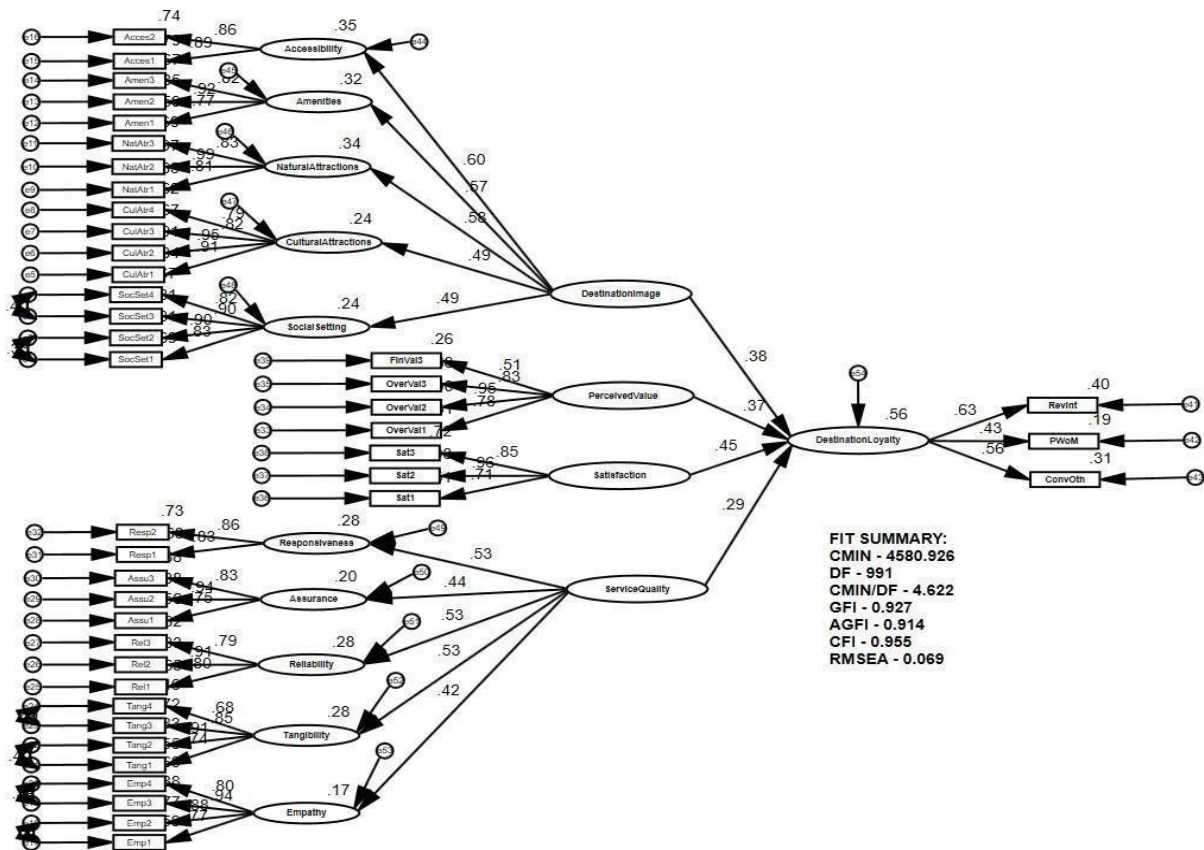


Figure 3: AMOS graphics for determinants of destination loyalty

Findings in Fig. 3 revealed that all four predictors’ variables including service quality (SQ), destination image (DI), perceived value (PV) and satisfaction (SAT) had positive effects on destination loyalty (DL). The positive effects are reflected in the beta (β) value which is associated with the arrows that move from the respective predictor variables to destination loyalty (DL) which is the dependent variable. It was discovered that those four predictor variables accounted for 56% variance of the tourists’ destination loyalty. Further details about how each predictor variable affected the dependent variable are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Summarized estimates for effects of SQ, DI, PV and SAT on DL

| Hypothesis | Direction | Beta (β) | S.E. | C.R. | P-value | Label |
|------------|-----------|------------------|-------|--------|----------|--------|
| H1 | SQ--->DL | 0.289 | 0.018 | 16.056 | 0.002** | Reject |
| H2 | DI--->DL | 0.381 | 0.033 | 11.545 | 0.014 * | Reject |
| H3 | PV--->DL | 0.369 | 0.021 | 17.571 | 0.001** | Reject |
| H4 | SAT--->DL | 0.447 | 0.029 | 15.414 | 0.000*** | Reject |

***significant at $p < 0.001$; **significant at $p < 0.01$; *significant at $p < 0.05$

Findings revealed that service quality was a predictor of tourists' destination loyalty ($\beta = 0.289$, $p < 0.01$) with a positive effect. It implies that tourists who enjoyed good quality of services at SENAPA were more likely to plan revisit trips, recommend the park to relatives and friends or say positive things about the park. Based on this finding, the first null hypothesis which stated that "service quality does not influence tourists' destination loyalty" was rejected. This finding is in consonance with those of previous studies (Jeong et al., 2019; Wu & Cheng, 2018; Priporas et al., 2017), which also indicated that service quality had a positive effect on destination loyalty.

It is apt to note that in this study service quality comprised five dimensions which are tangibility, reliability, assurance, responsiveness and empathy. Given that all those dimensions had positive contributions to service quality (see Fig. 3), it is implied that they all contributed to influencing tourist's destination loyalty. It could be said that tourists' destination loyalty was derived from quality of tangibles like physical facilities, equipment, and appearance of personnel in terms of neatness. Also, tourists were likely to remain loyal to SENAPA because of reliable services reflected in the ability of providers to offer promised services dependably and accurately, because of employees' willingness to help customers (*responsiveness*), because of knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to inspire trust and confidence (*assurance*), or because caring and individualized attention given to each of them (*empathy*).

Destination image was found to have positive and significant effect on tourists' destination loyalty ($\beta = 0.381$, $p < 0.05$). The finding indicates that tourists who confirmed their pre-conceived image about Serengeti National Park to be real were more likely to remain loyal. It means that those tourists were more likely to plan revisit trips, recommend the park to friends and relatives, or speak positive things about the park. In line with this finding, the second null hypothesis which stated that "destination image does not influence tourists' destination loyalty" was rejected. It is of interest to note that similar results were also obtained in a number of previous studies (Atay et al., 2020; Moon & Han, 2018), which indicated that destination image was a predictor of tourists' loyalty with positive effect.

Destination image constituted five attributes including social setting, cultural attractions, natural attractions, amenities and accessibility. As shown in Fig. 3, all those dimensions positively contributed to destination image. Simply, it can be said that tourists' loyalty to SENAPA was enhanced by such aspects as personal safety, cleanliness of environment, hospitality and friendliness of local people, prices for shopping of local products and services as well as variety of local foods and products; among others.

Also, the findings showed that perceived value was found to be a predictor of tourists' destination loyalty with a positive effect ($\beta = 0.369$, $p < 0.01$). Impliedly, tourists who perceived those benefits of visiting Serengeti outweighed the costs associated with their trips were likely to remain loyal to the park. The findings, therefore, lead to rejection of the third null hypothesis which stated that "perceived value does not influence tourists' destination loyalty". Positive relationship between perceived value and destination loyalty was also confirmed in several previous studies (Kim & Uysal, 2015; Kim et al., 2015; Um et al., 2006). As noted earlier in this paper, perceived value was an outcome of individual tourist's evaluation of benefits enjoyed in the trip compared to the costs incurred. If in that evaluation costs are found to be less than benefits then a tourist realizes value for money. Since value was a result of low cost compared to benefits enjoyed, keeping the per-head costs low in the park may increase tourists' loyalty in terms of revisit plans, recommending the park to friends and relatives or simply speaking positive things about it. In other words, competitive park entry fees and prices for accommodations in hotels and lodges, low priced products and services would encourage more tourists to visit SENAPA.



Furthermore, the findings showed that satisfaction had significant positive effect on tourists' loyalty ($\beta = 0.447, p < 0.001$). This implies that satisfied tourists were more likely to remain loyal to Serengeti as a tour destination. Given these findings, the fourth hypothesis which stated that "satisfaction does not influence destination loyalty" was also rejected. This empirical stance is supported by several evidences from previous studies which also indicated that satisfaction was an antecedent of tourists' destination loyalty (Mainolfi & Marino, 2020; De Nisco et al., 2017; Wu, 2016). In the context of this study, tourists were satisfied if perceived post-visit experience exceeded their respective expectation before the trip. Satisfaction was also derived by considering time and efforts spent in comparison to the level of excitement experienced while visiting the park. It is argued here that satisfaction is crucial for a tourist to remain loyal to a destination. It would be difficult or just unlikely for an unsatisfied tourist to plan for a revisit intention or recommend the park to a friend or relative.

Mediated effects through satisfaction

Various studies included in the literature indicated that satisfaction mediated the relationships among service quality, destination image and perceived value on the one hand and destination loyalty on the other hand (Khatoon, Zhengliang & Hussain, 2020; Wibowo, 2019; Ali & Mugadas, 2015). This study therefore, endeavored to determine whether or not satisfaction mediated those relationships. In order to test for the mediation effects, satisfaction (SAT) was introduced in the relationships between SQ and DL, DI and DL and also between PV and DL. Results were as presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Mediated effects of SQ, DI and PV through SAT to DL

| Direct effect | | | | | Mediated effect | | | | |
|---------------|------------------|-------|--------|---------|-----------------|------------------|-------|--------|---------|
| Effect | Beta (β) | S.E. | C.R. | P-value | Effect | Beta (β) | S.E. | C.R. | P-value |
| SQ--->DL | 0.289 | 0.019 | 15.211 | 0.002** | SQ□SAT□DL | 0.257 | 0.018 | 14.278 | 0.004** |
| DI--->DL | 0.381 | 0.033 | 11.545 | 0.014 * | DI□SAT□DL | 0.324 | 0.021 | 15.429 | 0.023* |
| PV--->DL | 0.369 | 0.023 | 16.043 | 0.001** | PV□SAT□DL | 0.289 | 0.024 | 12.042 | 0.031* |

**significant at $p < 0.01$; *significant at $p < 0.05$

Results showed that after SAT was entered into the model, the direct effect of SQ on DL was reduced from 0.289 to 0.257 but still remained statistically significant ($p < 0.01$) meaning that the former was a partial mediator. Based on these results the fifth null hypothesis which stated that "satisfaction does not mediate the relationship between service quality and destination loyalty" was rejected. Findings also revealed that SAT was a partial mediator of the relationship between destination image (DI) and destination loyalty (DL) given that after it was introduced in the model, the direct effect was reduced from 0.381 to 0.324 but remained statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). In this specific scenario, this result led to rejection of the sixth null hypothesis which stated that "satisfaction does not mediate the relationship between destination image and destination loyalty". On similar account, the results showed that SAT was a partial mediator of the relationship between perceived value (PV) and destination loyalty (DL) by reducing the direct effect from 0.369 to 0.289 but remained statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) leading to rejection of seventh null hypothesis which stated that satisfaction does not mediate relationship between perceived value and destination loyalty.

The above results are supported by several other previous studies which showed that satisfaction mediates the relationships between service quality and destination loyalty (Subrahmanyam, 2017; Kim et al., 2015), between destination image and loyalty (Atay et al., 2020;



Mahadzirah et al., 2019), and between perceived value and loyalty (Lai et al., 2009; Yang and Peterson, 2004). Drawing from the mediated relationships presented above, it is worth noting that satisfaction is central to tourists' loyalty to destination. An important observation is that when satisfaction mediated the relationships between SQ, DI and PV on the one hand and DL on the other, the model accounted for a variance of 66% (see Fig. 4). This is a large variance compared to 56% when those predictor variables were not mediated by through satisfaction (see Fig. 3). Implicitly, it is plausible to argue that although other factors were important in influencing tourists' loyalty to destination, their effect would be maximized if they left the destination with feelings of satisfaction. Diagrammatically, the above mediation effects are presented in Fig.4.

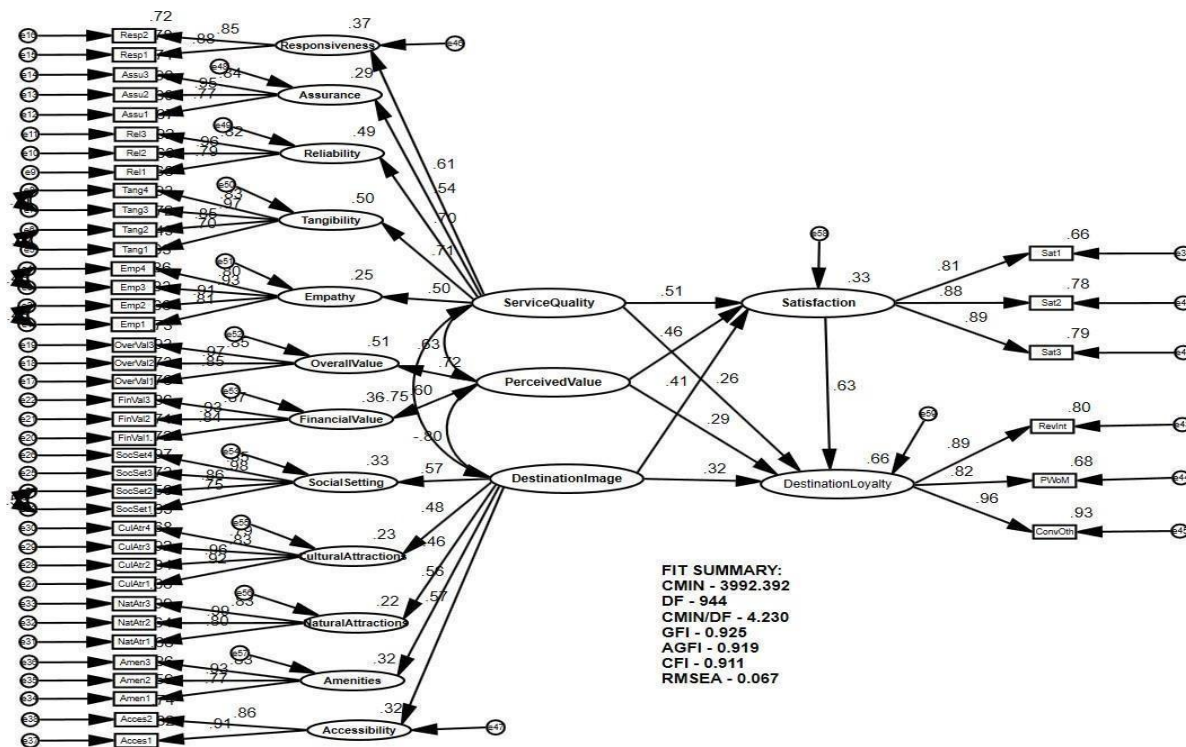


Figure 4: AMOS graphics on mediated effects of SQ, PV and DI through SAT to DL

Lastly, it is important to note that the findings of this study supported the Theory of Planned Behavior that was adopted by this study. In the context of this study the planned behavior was loyalty of tourists to SENAPA which was measured in terms of tourists' revisit intentions, willingness to recommend the park to friends and relatives or saying positive things about it the park. The findings of this study support the theory because tourists indicated that they were loyal to SENAPA. This was observed in their responses which showed that they strongly agreed with all three statements used to measure loyalty (see Table 1). However, the findings showed that loyalty was positively influenced by service quality, perceived value, destination image and satisfaction. The findings, therefore, suggest that application of TPB in the assessment of tourists' destination loyalty should take on board the aforementioned four predictor variables.

Conclusions and recommendations

Findings revealed that service quality, destination image, perceived value and satisfaction were positive predictors of tourists' loyalty to Serengeti National Park, which in this study was measured in terms of plans for revisit intention, recommendation of the same to friends and relatives or speaking positive things about it. Based on those findings this study concludes that provision of

services of high or appreciable quality increased the propensity of international tourists to remain loyal to a destination. This happens because tourists, just like other customers to service of product, would be attracted by experiences of superior quality compared to their expectations before making a trip. It is also concluded that tourists' overall perceived image of a destination would increase their loyalty to it. This would happen when tourists left a destination with feelings that their decision to visit the same resulted into wonderful experience that should also be enjoyed by a friend or a relative. Furthermore, it is concluded that perceived value, which is about extent to which benefits enjoyed outweigh the costs and efforts, is a crucial determinant of tourists' loyalty to a destination. Tourists who leave a destination with feeling that there was value-for-money for their experience in terms of enjoyment would tend to remain loyal to it. Lastly, the study concludes that satisfied tourists are likely to remain loyal to a destination that was visited. More importantly, the influences of service quality, destination image and perceived value on destination loyalty were maximized when mediated through satisfaction. This means that satisfaction was crucial in explaining tourists' loyalty to a destination.

Based on the above conclusions, this study recommends the following measures. First, SENAPA management should make efforts to ensure that international tourists are provided with services of high quality possible right from the entry to the exit points of the park. This can be achieved by introducing service provision charter on manual that would guide the operations of different stakeholders operating inside the park. Second, SENAPA management should also make efforts to market the park in the international arena so as to maintain its good image and in that way continue to attract more tourists. Third, the management of the park should make efforts that would enhance perceived value among the tourists. This can be achieved by reviewing cost items charged on tourists like park entry fees in view of making them competitive compared to similar parks in the East African region. Affordable costs are likely to encourage visitors to plan for revisit trips or recommend friends and relatives to SENAPA. Lastly, SENAPA and other stakeholders should ensure that the international visitors are always satisfied whenever they visit the park. This can be achieved by conducting mandatory regular tourists' exit surveys for purposes of identifying any areas of weaknesses that need to be improved so as to attract more visitor to the park.

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CHAPTER THREE

3.0 SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 Summary of the Key Findings

3.1.1 Tourists' satisfaction with quality of services at SENAPA

Findings revealed that on average perceived quality of tangibles including physical facilities, equipment and appearance of personnel at the park was significantly higher than tourists' expectation ($t = 5.050, p < 0.001$). Those findings implied that tourists were satisfied with quality of tangibles at the park. Perceived reliability of services provided was significantly higher than expectations of tourists ($t = 4.405, p < 0.001$). This finding implied that there was positive disconfirmation which was an indication of tourists' satisfaction with reliability of service providers. Also, findings revealed that there was positive disconfirmation between tourists' expectations and perceived quality of employees' responsiveness. This difference was statistically significant ($t = 3.214, p < 0.001$) indicating that tourists were satisfied with quality of services on the aspect of responsiveness, which constituted willingness to help customers and provide prompt service.

Similarly, tourists' perceived quality of element of empathy exceeded expectations as evidenced in statistically significant positive disconfirmation ($t = 6.542, p < 0.001$). Given the context of empathy as used in this study, the findings implied that tourists experienced better care and individualized attention from service providers than they expected prior to their visit to the park. However, the findings also showed that there was not statistically significant difference between tourists' perceived service providers' assurance and their expectations ($t = 1.045, p = 0.296$). The findings implied that tourists were not satisfied with assurance of service quality on the aspect of assurance.

3.1.2 Influence of service quality and destination image on tourists' perceived value

Findings revealed that destination image (DI) had positive and significant effect on perceived value ($\beta = 0.724, p < 0.001$). This variable accounted for a variance of 63% of perceived value. In other words, the image created by tourists about SENAPA contributed to making them realize value for money for cost incurred in their trips. This happened when tourist evaluation of benefits obtained exceeded money, time and efforts spent. The finding leads to rejection of a null hypothesis which stated that "destination

does not influence perceived value”. More findings showed that service quality had positive and statistically significant effect on perceived value ($\beta = 0.325$, $p < 0.001$, $R^2 = 0.63$). In this study service quality was assessed using five dimensions (sub constructs) including tangibility, reliability, assurance, responsiveness and empathy. It was noted that all those five dimensions were positive predictors of service quality. Impliedly therefore, tourists’ perceived value was influenced by the abovementioned five dimensions of service quality. The findings therefore lead to rejection of a null hypothesis which stated that “service quality does not influence tourists’ perceived value”.

3.1.3 Destination image, service quality and perceived value on tourist’s satisfaction

Findings revealed that perceived value (PV) had a positive and statistically significant effect on tourist’s satisfaction (SAT) ($\beta = 0.442$, $p < 0.01$, $R^2 = 0.432$). This finding implied that tourists’ evaluation of costs and benefits of their trip to SENAPA influenced their overall satisfaction. In other words, if a tourist perceived that the benefits of his or her visit to SENAPA outweighed the costs incurred in terms of financial resources and efforts, then he or she was satisfied. This is to say that a tourist would be satisfied if he or she spent less on travel and associated costs. Based on this finding, a hypothesis which stated that “perceived value did not influence tourists’ satisfaction” was rejected.

Findings further showed that service quality (SQ) had a positive and statistically significant effect on tourists’ satisfaction (SAT) ($\beta = 0.304$, $p < 0.001$, $R^2 = 0.432$). Those findings lead to rejection of a null hypothesis which stated that “service quality did not influence tourists’ satisfaction”. The findings implied that tourists were satisfied by their trips because of good services experienced at Serengeti.

Similarly, destination image (DI) was found to have positive and significant effect on tourists’ satisfaction ($\beta = 0.381$, $p < 0.05$, $R^2 = 0.432$). The implication of this particular finding is that confirmation of beliefs, ideas and impressions that visitor had towards Serengeti made the tourists’ satisfied. More elaborate, tourists felt satisfied after they found out that the beauty of Serengeti that was conveyed to them through advertisements or through positive word of mouth (WOM) from friends and relatives was real. Given this finding, the third null hypothesis which stated that “destination image does not influence tourists’ satisfaction” was rejected.

The study further endeavoured to test for mediation effect of perceived value (PV) in the relationships between service quality (SQ) and satisfaction (SAT). Regression weights indicated that service quality (SQ) had significant direct effect on satisfaction ($\beta = 0.30$, $p < 0.001$) before PV was introduced into the model. It was also revealed that SQ had a significant indirect effect on satisfaction after introduction of PV in the model ($\beta = 0.27$, $p < 0.001$). These findings ascertained that perceived value (PV) exhibited partial mediation effect on the relationship between service quality (SQ) and tourists' satisfaction (SAT). Based on those findings, a hypothesis which stated that "perceived value does not mediate the relationship between service quality and satisfaction" was rejected.

3.1.4 Determinants of tourists' loyalty to Serengeti National Park

Findings revealed that service quality was a predictor of tourists' destination loyalty ($\beta = 0.289$, $p < 0.01$) with a positive effect. This finding implies that tourists who enjoyed good quality of services at SENAPA were more likely to plan revisit trips, recommend the park to relatives and friends or say positive things about the park. Based on this finding, the first null hypothesis which stated that "service quality does not influence tourists' destination loyalty" was rejected.

Destination image was found to have positive and significant effect on tourists' destination loyalty ($\beta = 0.381$, $p < 0.05$). The finding indicates that tourists who confirmed their pre-conceived image about Serengeti National Park to be real were more likely to remain loyal. It means that those tourists were more likely to plan revisit trips, recommend the park to friends and relatives, or speak positive things about the park. In line with this finding, the second null hypothesis which stated that "destination image does not influence tourists' destination loyalty" was rejected.

Also, the findings showed that perceived value was a positive predictor of tourists' destination loyalty with a positive effect ($\beta = 0.369$, $p < 0.01$). Impliedly, tourists who perceived those benefits of visiting Serengeti outweighed the costs associated with their trips were likely to remain loyal to the park. The findings, therefore, lead to rejection of the third null hypothesis which stated that "perceived value does not influence tourists' destination loyalty"

Furthermore, the findings showed that satisfaction had significant positive effect on tourists' loyalty ($\beta = 0.447$, $p < 0.01$). This implies that satisfied tourists were more

likely to remain loyal to Serengeti as a tour destination. Given these findings, a hypothesis which stated that “satisfaction does not influence destination loyalty” was also rejected.

Lastly, this paper investigated the mediation effect of SAT on relationships between SQ, DI and PV on the one hand and DL on the other. Results showed that after SAT was entered into the model, the direct effect of SQ on DL was reduced from 0.289 to 0.257 but still remained statistically significant ($p < 0.01$) meaning that the former was a partial mediator. This finding lead to rejection of a hypothesis that “satisfaction does not mediate the relationship between service quality and destination loyalty” Similarly, SAT was a partial mediator of the relationship between destination image (DI) and destination loyalty (DL) given that after it was introduced in the model, the direct effect was reduced from 0.381 to 0.324 but remained statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). Given these findings, the hypothesis which stated that “satisfaction does not mediate the relationship between destination image and destination loyalty” was rejected. Furthermore, SAT was also a partial mediator of the relationship between perceived value (PV) and destination loyalty (DL). This is because after it was introduced into the model, the direct of effect of DI to DL was reduced from 0.369 to 0.289 but still remained statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). Those findings lead to rejection of the last null hypothesis which stated that “which stated that satisfaction does not mediates relationship between perceived value and destination loyalty”.

3.2 Contribution of the study

3.2.1 Contribution to academic literature

Literature showed that while various studies had addressed the relationship between service quality and tourist’s satisfaction (Jeong *et al.*, 2019; Sangpikul, 2018; Han and Hyun, 2015; Wu and Li, 2015; Cheng *et al.*, 2014), there were few, if any, studies conducted in Africa and Tanzania in particular. It was observed that geographically, those studies were conducted in China (Wu and Li, 2015), Malaysia (Cheng *et al.*, 2014) and South Korea (Jeong *et al.*, 2019). Literature further showed studies that had used SERVQUAL model in assessing international tourists’ satisfaction in Tanzania were missing. This study filled that knowledge gap by showing that the international tourists to SENAPA were satisfied with quality of services offered in the park.

Particularly, tourists were satisfied with four out of five dimensions of SERVQUAL model that were tangibility, reliability, responsiveness and empathy.

Several studies had addressed the relationship between destination image (DI) and perceived value (PV) (Kim and Park, 2017; Lin and Wang, 2012; Phillips *et al.*, 2011; Özturk and Qu, 2008). However, none of those studies was conducted in Tanzania or other African country. Those studies were conducted in China (Joseph, 2018), United States of America (Fu *et al.*, 2018; Kim *et al.*, 2014; Phillips *et al.*, 2013) and Taiwan (Cheng and Lu, 2013). Similarly, while several studies had addressed the relationship between service quality and perceived value (Xiaoting *et al.*, 2020; Oriade and Schofield, 2019; Suhartanto *et al.*, 2019; Al-Ansi and Han, 2019; García-Fernández *et al.*, 2018), there was paucity of literature about Tanzanian tourism sector. The previous studies were mainly conducted in Asia and Europe. The current study filled this literature gap by showing that service quality (SQ) and destination image (DI) were positive predictors of perceived value (PV) among the international tourists who visited SENAPA. Specifically, the study deployed Covariant-Based Structural Equation Modelling (CB-SEM), which is currently a standard model when dealing with variables that are measured by several constructs.

Literature revealed that most of previous studies addressing the relationships between perceived value and tourists' satisfaction (Williams *et al.*, 2017; Kim and Park, 2017; Bajs, 2015; Mai and Luan, 2015; Williams and Souter, 2009;); between destination image and satisfaction (Swart *et al.*, 2018; Prayag *et al.*, 2017; Allameh *et al.*, 2015); and between service quality and satisfaction (Jeong *et al.*, 2019; Sangpikul, 2018; Han and Hyun, 2015; Wu and Li, 2015; Cheng *et al.*, 2014) were conducted in Europe, Asia and America. There was scarcity of literature about the determinants of tourists' satisfaction in Tanzania and Africa at large. This study filled those gaps by finding out that perceived value (PV), destination image (DI) and service quality (SQ) were positive determinants of international tourists' satisfaction at SENAPA. In addition, the study managed to show that perceived value was partial mediator of the relationship between service quality and satisfaction.

Lastly, literature showed that while several studies had addressed the relationship between quality of services and destination loyalty (Jeong *et al.*, 2019; Priporas *et al.*, 2017; Kim *et al.* 2015), the influence of perceived value on tourists destination loyalty (Kim and Uysal, 2015; Chiu *et al.*, 2014; Sun *et al.*, 2013; Kim *et al.*, 2013; Um *et al.*,

2006), the link between image of the destination and loyalty (Atay *et al.*, 2020; Moon and Han, 2018; Türkmen *et al.*, 2018) as well as the relationship between tourists' satisfaction and destination loyalty (Mainolfi and Marino, 2020; De Nisco *et al.*, 2015; Wu, 2016), no such study was conducted in Africa despite the fact that the continent attracts millions of tourists per year. It was specifically noted that the drivers of tourists' destination loyalty in Tanzania were not yet scientifically documented. This study found that perceived value (PV), destination image (DI), service quality (SQ) and satisfaction (SAT) were all positive predictors of international tourists' loyalty to SENAPA. The study further found that satisfaction mediated the relationships between perceived value, destination image and service quality on one hand and tourists' loyalty to SENAPA on the other hand.

3.2.2 Theoretical contribution

In this study, the Expectancy Disconfirmation Theory (EDT) was used to assess the international tourists' satisfaction with service quality at SENAPA. According to EDT, satisfaction is the difference between tourists' expectations and perceived experience (Parasuraman, 1988). The findings of this study support the theory by showing that when service quality is measured using the five SERQUAL dimensions which were tangibility, reliability, assurance, responsiveness and empathy; tourists' level of satisfaction can be obtained by taking the difference between expectations before visiting a destination and perceived quality after a trip. However, the findings showed that while tourists were satisfied with the rest of four dimensions of service quality, they were dissatisfied with assurance. This finding informs the theory that when SERVQUAL model is used, satisfaction should not necessarily be determined by all dimensions.

Also, the study adopted the Means-End Theory to guide explanation on the influences of destination image and service quality on perceived value. This theory assumes that consumers associate their decision and behaviour with goal achieved that is derived by multiple consumption values which may constitute social, emotional, functional or financial (Sheth *et al.*, 1991). The MET connects the tangible attributes of a product (*the means*) to highly abstract and intangible personal and emotional values (*the ends*) (Olson and Reynolds, 2001). In this study, service quality and destination image could be considered as 'means' while perceived value, which is trade-off between benefits and costs incurred was 'the ends'. The findings of this study showed that service quality and

destination image influenced tourists' perceived value. Given those findings, the study supported the theory showing that two were the 'the means' of achieving value.

Adams (1963) Equity Theory (ET) was used to guide assessment of the determinants of tourists' satisfaction at SENAPA. The theory posits that satisfaction exists when consumers perceived their output-input ratio as being fair (Swan and Oliver, 1989). In the context of tourism, the equity theory suggests that tourists compare perceived input and output (gains) in a social exchange. In this theory tourists are dissatisfied if they perceive that what they gain is less than their input in terms of time, money and other costs (Reisinger and Turner, 1997). The findings of this study support the theory by showing that the international tourists' satisfaction while visiting SENAPA was influenced by service quality and perceived value. Specially, tourists achieved equity because the costs and efforts incurred were less compared to the benefits enjoyed during their trip to SENAPA. Similarly, equity was achieved when perceived quality of services exceeded tourists' expectation.

Lastly, it is important to note that the findings of this study supported the Theory of Planned Behavior that was adopted by this study. In the context of this study the planned behavior was loyalty of tourists to SENAPA which was measured in terms of tourists' revisit intentions, willingness to recommend the park to friends and relatives or saying positive things about the park. The findings of this study support the theory because tourists indicated that they were loyal to SENAPA. This was observed in their responses which showed that they strongly agreed with all three statements used to measure loyalty. However, the findings showed that loyalty was positively influenced by service quality, perceived value, destination image and satisfaction. The findings, therefore, suggest that application of TPB in the assessment of tourists' destination loyalty should take on board the aforementioned four predictor variables.

3.2.3 Policy contribution

This study has implication to the Tanzania's National Tourism Policy (MNRT, 1999) whose one objective is "to increase revenue and contribution of tourism to foreign currency earnings and the GDP". The findings of the study showed that tourists were satisfied with service quality and that they were likely to remain loyal to SENAPA as a destination. Those findings give an implication that the objective of increasing revenue through increased international tourists' inflows was likely to be achieved in the near future. However, this would happen if efforts are made to enhance good quality of

services, maintain good image of the park alongside provision of services at reasonable costs. It has to be noted that in order for Tanzania to realize more revenue from international tourists' receipts, the number of tourists' inflow must also increase. According to this study, those numbers can be achieved if tourists remain loyal to the park. Thus, efforts to make tourists loyal to the SENAPA have to consider the four predictors that are service quality, perceived value, destination image and satisfaction.

Also, the study has implication on the national park tariffs in Tanzania. The findings informed that perceived value influenced both tourists' satisfaction and loyalty to Serengeti National Park. It is observed that although Tanzania National Parks announced new tariffs for July 2021 to June 2022 (TANAPA, 2021), still those rates were high given the adverse economic impact of COVID-19 pandemic. Tanzania could be able to attract more tourists if the numerous per-head costs on the tourists were kept competitively lower than similar costs charged by other countries in Africa.

Lastly, the findings have implication on the implementation of National Second Five-Year Development Plan (NFYDP II) 2016/17 – 2021. Specially, the findings show that the target of the plan for “aggressive promotion and marketing of Tanzania as a unique tourist destination” (URT, 2016:60) was being realized. This is so given that findings revealed that destination image, which is created through continuous marketing and promotion, influenced both tourists' satisfaction and loyalty. However, destination marketing is a continuous process which requires high-level of innovation and commitment. Tanzania National Parks should therefore sustain those efforts in the internationally recognized media.

3.3 Conclusions

Findings of this study showed that tourists were generally satisfied with service quality offered at SENAPA. However, a number of aspects of service quality were below tourists' expectations. Some of those aspects include lack of trust among service providers, delayed responses to customer requests, and tourists not feeling safe to transact with the service providers. Based on those findings, this study concludes that customer care services among services providers in SENAPA were poor.

The study revealed that tourists' perceived value was influenced by destination image and service quality. Impliedly, tourists' evaluation of benefits enjoyed by visiting SENAPA was influenced by the pre-conceived image of the park as well as quality of

services offered. Thus, the study concludes that quality of perceived image of SENAPA as well as quality of services provided enhanced tourists' perceived value, which is an outcome of evaluation of costs and benefit of their respective trips

Also, the findings showed that service quality (SQ), destination image (DI) and perceived value (PV) were positive predictors of international tourists' satisfaction (SAT). Findings also showed that PV mediated relationship between PV and SAT. Based on those findings, this study concludes that the international tourists left SENAPA with feelings of satisfaction. Tourists realized value for visiting the park given that benefits enjoyed during their trips outweighed the costs involved. Although the tourists were satisfied with quality of services at the park, they did not appreciate the assurance of service providers. Tourists' satisfaction was maximized when service quality and destination image were mediated through perceived value.

Furthermore, the finding of this study revealed that service quality (SQ), destination image (DI), perceived value (PV) and satisfaction (SQ) were positive predictors of tourists' destination loyalty (DL) to Serengeti National Park. In this study DL was measured in terms of plans for revisit intention, recommendation of the same to friends and relatives or speaking positive things about it. Based on those findings this study concludes that provision of services of high quality increased the propensity of international tourists to remain loyal to a destination. This happens because tourists, just like other customers to service or product, would be attracted by experiences of superior quality compared to their expectations before making a trip. It is also concluded that tourists' confirmation of perceived image of a destination increased their loyalty to that destination. This would happen when tourists left a destination with feelings that their decision to visit the same resulted into wonderful experience that should also be enjoyed by a friend or a relative.

Lastly, the study concludes that perceived value, which is about extent to which benefits enjoyed outweigh the costs and efforts, is a crucial determinant of tourists' loyalty to a destination. Tourists who left a destination with feeling that there was value-for-money for their experience in terms of enjoyment would tend to remain loyal to it. Also, the study concludes that satisfied tourists are likely to remain loyal to a destination that was visited. More importantly, the influences of service quality, destination image and perceived value on destination loyalty were maximized when mediated through

satisfaction. This means that satisfaction was critical in explaining tourists' loyalty to a destination.

3.4 Recommendations

3.4.1 Recommendations to SENAPA management

- i) SENAPA management should strive to improve quality of physical facilities and equipment used to match the global standards. This can be achieved by modernizing the available structures or by putting up new ones with higher standards than ones that are currently available using TANAPA ISO 9001:2015.
- ii) Given that tourism is a very competitive business which requires continuous marketing and infrastructure improvement, SENAPA should strive to maintain its good image through marketing. This can be achieved through advertisements and promotions of attractive features found in the park in the international media like British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), Cable News Network (CNN) and ALJAZEERA; participating into international tourism exhibitions and use of social media platforms.
- iii) SENAPA management should make efforts to ensure that international tourists are provided with services of the highest quality possible right from the entry to the exit points of the park. This can be achieved by introducing service provision charter or manual that would guide the operations of different service providers operating inside the park.
- iv) The management of the park in collaboration with other service providers like operators of hotels and lodges should strive to provide services of good quality at affordable costs. This approach is essential because tourists' satisfaction was maximized when it was mediated through perceived value.
- v) SENAPA and other stakeholders should ensure that the international visitors are always satisfied whenever they visit the park. This can be achieved by conducting mandatory regular tourists' exit surveys for purposes of identifying any areas of weaknesses that need to be improved so as to attract more visitors to the park.

3.4.2 Recommendations to service providers

- i) Service providers in SENAPA like tour companies, hotel and lodge operators should use relevant modern service provision facilities which meet the demand of their customers. In addition, they should improve neatness of employees by providing them with uniforms and other relevant attires.
- ii) Service providers should train their employees on customer care services so as to improve their promptness during services' delivery, courtesy, and ability to inspire trust and confidence to visitors.
- iii) Service providers should continue to provide services of good quality to guarantee satisfaction of tourists. This can be achieved by adherence to the best international tour and travel standards that can be learnt from destinations that attract huge numbers of tourists in Africa or elsewhere in the globe.

3.4.3 Recommendation to TANAPA

- i) Tanzania National Parks (TANAPA) should make efforts that would enhance perceived value among the international tourists. This can be achieved by reviewing cost items charged on tourists like park entry fees and taxes in view of making them competitive compared to similar parks in African. Affordable costs are likely to encourage visitors to plan for revisit trips or recommend friends and relatives to SENAPA. Cutting down costs will be a good approach to revamp the sector after it seriously suffered from COVID-19 effects.

3.5 Areas for further studies

- i) This study was conducted in Serengeti National Park, which is one of the 22 national parks found in Tanzania. Another comparative study could be conducted to involve more than one National Parks found in Tanzania. Although, it might be costly in terms time and resources, such study could provide results which can be generalized to the rest of national parks in Tanzania.
- ii) This study used non-probability convenience sampling technique. Another study could be conducted using randomized sampling technique. Although such a study would take long time to complete, its findings are likely to be more robust.
- iii) Tanzania has more tourists' destinations than the national parks. Among the famous destinations include beaches, Mount Kilimanjaro and Bagamoyo historic

town. A study could be conducted to compare the determinants of tourists' loyalty to those destinations.

- iv) This study relied heavily on quantitative data collected through survey questionnaire. Another study could be conducted with a triangulation approach which would involve collection of data using both survey questionnaire and key informant interviews. The latter would enable the international tourists to qualify their views on the drivers of perceived value, satisfaction and destination loyalty.
- v) This study involved international but not domestic tourists. Another study could be conducted to involve both groups of tourists. Such a study will enable comparison of domestic and international tourists on their loyalty to SENAPA. Related to this is the fact that this study did not pay attention to social and demographic characteristic of the tourists. This aspect made the study lack groups for comparing the loyalty of different groups. Another study could, therefore, be conducted to take into account those characteristics.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Survey questionnaire

Dear Visitor,

I am Richard J. Matolo, a PhD student at Moshi Co-operative University (MoCU) in Tanzania. I am currently conducting a survey on the “Antecedents of International Tourists’ Loyalty to Serengeti National Park in Tanzania”, as a requirement for attainment of Doctoral Degree of the above university. I ask you to spend some time to fill this questionnaire with relevant information about extent to which you agree with given statements. The information obtained will be treated with great confidentiality and used only for the said academic purpose. Thank you very much in advance.

Part 1a: Tourists expectations about destination

At this point, the survey intends to get your opinions about services in a tourist destination (**like national parks**) which you have just been visiting. Please show extent to which you think firms offering different services to tourists (tour companies, hotels etc.) should possess features described by each of statements provided below. You are requested to do this by putting a tick (√) on any number between 1 and 7 which best expresses your feeling against each statement where: *1 = Very strongly disagree; 2 = Strongly disagree; 3 = Disagree; 4 = Neither Agree nor Disagree; 5 = Agree; 6 = Strongly agree; and 7 = Very strongly agree*

| Sn | Statement | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|-----|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| i | Tourist destinations like national parks should have up-to-date equipment | | | | | | | |
| ii | Physical facilities should be visually appealing | | | | | | | |
| iii | Employees of service providers should be well-dressed | | | | | | | |
| iv | Appearance of the physical facilities in Serengeti should be consistent with the type of services provided | | | | | | | |
| v | When service providers promise to do something, they should do so within specific time frame | | | | | | | |
| vi | Whenever tourists have problems, service providers should be sympathetic and reassuring | | | | | | | |
| vii | Service providers should be dependable | | | | | | | |

| Sn | Statement | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|------|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| i | Services should be provided at the times promised | | | | | | | |
| ii | Service providers should keep customer records accurately | | | | | | | |
| iii | Service providers should be expected to tell customers exactly when the service will be provided | | | | | | | |
| iv | It is reasonable to expect prompt service from employees of services providers | | | | | | | |
| v | Always, employees should be willing to help customers | | | | | | | |
| vi | Employees should promptly respond to customers' requests | | | | | | | |
| vii | Employees should be trustworthy | | | | | | | |
| viii | Customers should feel safe when transacting with employees | | | | | | | |
| ix | Employees should be polite | | | | | | | |
| x | Employees should get adequate support from their employers | | | | | | | |
| xi | Service providers are expected to give each customer/tourist individualized attention | | | | | | | |
| xii | Employees should give personal attention to each customer/tourist | | | | | | | |
| xiii | Employees fully understand the needs of the customer | | | | | | | |
| xiv | Service providers should have the best interests of a customers at heart | | | | | | | |
| xv | Service providers should operate at hours convenient to all customers | | | | | | | |

Part 1b: Tourists' real experience after visiting Serengeti

The following set of statements relate to your actual (real) feeling after visiting Serengeti National Park. Please indicate extent to which you believe that firms (hotels, tour companies etc.) operating in Serengeti National Park has features described in each of those statements. Express your feelings by putting a tick (√) on any number between 1 and 7 where: 1 = very strongly disagree; 2 = strongly disagree; 3 = disagree; 4 = neither agree nor disagree; 5 = agree; 6 = strongly agree; and 7 = very strongly agree

| Sn | Statement | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| i | Serengeti national park has up-to-date equipment | | | | | | | |
| ii | Physical facilities at Serengeti national Park are visually appealing | | | | | | | |
| iii | Employees of services providers in Serengeti are well dressed and appear neat | | | | | | | |
| iv | Appearance of the physical facilities in Serengeti match with types of services provided | | | | | | | |
| v | When service providers promised to do something within specific time frame, they do so | | | | | | | |
| vi | When a tourist has a problem, service providers in Serengeti are sympathetic and reassuring | | | | | | | |
| vii | Services providers operating in Serengeti are dependable | | | | | | | |
| viii | Services are provided timely as promised | | | | | | | |
| ix | Service providers do keep customer records accurately | | | | | | | |
| x | Firms do not tell customers exactly when services will be offered | | | | | | | |
| xi | It is reasonable to expect prompt service from employees | | | | | | | |
| xii | Employees do not provide promptly services to customers | | | | | | | |
| xiii | Employees are always willing to help customers | | | | | | | |
| xiv | Employees are trustworthy | | | | | | | |
| xv | I feel safe while transacting with employees | | | | | | | |
| xvi | Employees of firms in Serengeti are polite | | | | | | | |

| Sn | Statement | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|-------|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| xvii | I feel that employees get adequate support from their firms so as to provide the best services | | | | | | | |
| xviii | Service providers do give customers individualized attention | | | | | | | |
| xix | Employees give personal attention to each customer | | | | | | | |
| xx | Employees know what your real needs are | | | | | | | |
| xxi | Service provider have best the interests of customers at heart | | | | | | | |
| xxii | Service providers have operating hours convenient to all their customers | | | | | | | |

Part 2: Destination image

To what extent do you agree that Serengeti National Park possess the following features? Express your feelings by putting a tick (√) on any number between 1 and 7 where: 1 = *Very strongly disagree*; 2 = *Strongly disagree*; 3 = *Disagree*; 4 = *Neither Agree nor Disagree*; 5 = *Agree*; 6 = *Strongly agree*; and 7 = *Very strongly agree*.

| Item | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| <i>Natural attractions</i> | | | | | | | |
| Beautiful natural scenery | | | | | | | |
| Pleasant weather | | | | | | | |
| Great variety of flora and fauna | | | | | | | |
| Migration of wildebeests | | | | | | | |
| <i>Cultural attractions</i> | | | | | | | |
| Interesting historical sites (structures) | | | | | | | |
| Variety and quality of local foods (cuisine) | | | | | | | |
| Variety of local products that promote local culture | | | | | | | |
| Unique customs and traditions of local people | | | | | | | |
| <i>Accessibility</i> | | | | | | | |
| Adequate and convenient transportation | | | | | | | |
| Ease of access to the park | | | | | | | |
| Quality road infrastructure/airstrip | | | | | | | |
| <i>Facilities/amenities</i> | | | | | | | |

| Item | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Good nightlife and entertainment | | | | | | | |
| Quality and variety of accommodations | | | | | | | |
| Quality and variety of restaurants | | | | | | | |
| Opportunity for outdoor sport activities (game drive, picking, camping4 etc.) | | | | | | | |
| <i>Price and value</i> | | | | | | | |
| Good value for money | | | | | | | |
| Reasonable prices for food and accommodations | | | | | | | |
| Reasonable prices for entertainment and sport activities | | | | | | | |
| Reasonable prices for shopping of local products and services | | | | | | | |
| <i>Social setting and environment</i> | | | | | | | |
| Personal safety | | | | | | | |
| Cleanliness of environment | | | | | | | |
| Hospitable and friendliness of local people | | | | | | | |
| Pleasant weather | | | | | | | |
| Tranquil and relaxing atmosphere | | | | | | | |

Part 3: Perceived value

Please express your feelings about value obtained during your trip to Serengeti compared to the costs incurred by putting a tick (√) any number between 1 and 7 where: 1 = Very strongly disagree; 2 = Strongly disagree; 3 = Disagree; 4 = Neither Agree nor Disagree; 5 = Agree; 6 = Strongly agree; and 7 = Very strongly agree

| Item | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Serengeti was destination that I enjoyed | | | | | | | |
| Visiting Serengeti made me feel better | | | | | | | |
| Serengeti experiences were better than I expected | | | | | | | |
| Serengeti was reasonably priced | | | | | | | |
| Serengeti was expensive compared to what it offers | | | | | | | |
| The quality per dollar spent while visiting Serengeti was more than what I expected | | | | | | | |

Part 4: Personal satisfaction with visit to Serengeti

Please rate the following aspects describing your level of satisfaction after visiting Serengeti National Park by putting a tick (✓) on any number between 1 and 7 where: 1 = *Very strongly disagree*; 2 = *Strongly disagree*; 3 = *Disagree*; 4 = *Neither Agree nor Disagree*; 5 = *Agree*; 6 = *Strongly agree*; and 7 = *Very strongly agree*

| Item | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Serengeti is the best place I have visited | | | | | | | |
| Serengeti is what I expected | | | | | | | |
| Serengeti fulfil my expectations | | | | | | | |

Part 6: Loyalty to Serengeti National Park

Please rate the following statements to demonstrate your loyalty to Serengeti National Park. Express your feelings by putting a tick (✓) any number between 1 and 7 where: 1 = *Very strongly disagree*; 2 = *Strongly disagree*; 3 = *Disagree*; 4 = *Neither Agree nor Disagree*; 5 = *Agree*; 6 = *Strongly agree*; and 7 = *Very strongly agree*

| Item | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I have plans to revisit Serengeti in the near future | | | | | | | |
| I will recommend visiting Serengeti to others (family or friends) | | | | | | | |
| I will speak positive things about Serengeti | | | | | | | |

Thank you very much for your cooperation

Appendix 2: Research Clearance Letter

**MOSHI CO-OPERATIVE UNIVERSITY (MoCU)
CHUO KIKUU CHA USHIRIKA MOSHI**

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OFFICE OF THE VICE CHANCELLOR
P.O. Box 474,
Moshi, Tanzania.
Tel: +255 27 2751833
Fax: +255 27 2750806
E-mail: vc@mocu.ac.tz

Our Ref. No: MoCU/UGS/3/41
Your Ref. No:

Date: 12 February, 2019

Mkurugenzi Mkuu,
Tanzania National Parks (TANAPA),
ARUSHA.

**YAH: KIBALI CHA KUFANYA UTAFITI KWA WANATAALUMA NA WANAFUNZI WA CHUO
KIKUU CHA USHIRIKA MOSHI (MoCU)**

Madhumuni ya barua hii ni kumtambulisha kwako **Eng. Richard John Matolo** mtafiti/mwanafunzi wa Chuo Kikuu cha Ushirika Moshi ambaye kwa sasa anatarajia kufanya utafiti katika eneo lako.

Maombi haya yamezingatia Waraka wa Serikali wenye Kumb. Na. MPEC/R/10/1 wa tarehe 7 Julai, 1980 pamoja na Hati Idhini ya Chuo Kikuu Cha Ushirika Moshi (MoCU). Moja ya majukumu ya Chuo ni pamoja na kufanya utafiti na kutumia matokeo ya tafiti hizo katika kufundishia. Aidha, wanafunzi hufanya utafiti kama sehemu ya masomo yao wakiwa Chuoni.

Ili kufanikisha utekelezaji wa tafiti hizo, Makamu wa Mkuu wa Chuo hutoa vibali vya kufanya utafiti nchini kwa wanafunzi, waalimu, na watafiti wake kwa niaba ya Serikali na Tume ya Sayansi na Teknolojia.

Hivyo basi, tunakuomba umpatie mwanafunzi/mtafiti aliyetajwa hapo juu msaada atakaohitaji ili kufanikisha utafiti wake. Gharama za utafiti atalipia mwenyewe. Msaada anaohitaji ni kuruhusiwa kuonana na watu mbalimbali/watalii ili aweze kuzungumza nao na kuwauliza maswali aliyo nayo kuhusiana na utafiti wake.

Madhumuni ya utafiti wa mwanafunzi/mtaalumu aliyetajwa hapo juu ni: **“The Antecedents of Destination Loyalty Tourism Sector in Tanzania: The Case of Serengeti National Park”**

Sehemu atakazofanyia utafiti huo ni: **ARUSHA NA SERENGETI.**

Muda wa Utafiti huo ni kuanzia tarehe **12/02/2019** hadi **31/12/2019**

Ikiwa utahitaji maelezo zaidi tafadhali wasiliana nami.

Wako katika ujenzi wa Taifa,


Prof. F.K. Bee
MAKAMU MKUU WA CHUO

Nakala kwa: Mtafiti



*Vision: To become a Centre of Excellence in Co-operative Education and Practice
Centre of Excellence in Co-operative and Business Management Training of the East Africa Community (EAC)*

Appendix 3: Permission to Conduct Pilot Study



TANZANIA NATIONAL PARKS
 OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR GENERAL
 P. O. BOX 3134, ARUSHA - TANZANIA

Ref. No. TNP/PF.0633

Date 14.03.2019

The Conservator,
 NCAA,
 P.O. Box 1,
 ARUSHA.

Dear Sir,

**RE: REQUEST TO CONDUCT PILOT TEST FOR A PhD STUDY
 AT NCAA GATE.**

Please refer to the above captioned subject matter.

We would like to introduce to you our *Eng. Richard John Matolo (Infrastructure Development Manager)* who is pursuing his PhD study in Destination Loyalty. His study area is Serengeti National Park (SENAPA) but the researcher is interested to conduct *pilot test* for the *exit* visitors from Serengeti as they register at the NCAA gate.

Please allow and accord them necessary assistance to enhance accomplishment of this important task.

Thanking you for your continued cooperation.

Yours,

TANZANIA NATIONAL PARKS

Jmru

For: CONSERVATION COMMISSIONER.

CC: Eng. R.J. Matolo – for information

Appendix 4: Permission for Data Collection

TANZANIA NATIONAL PARKS
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR GENERAL
 P.O.BOX 3134, ARUSHA - TANZANIA

Ref. No: TNP/HQ/PF. 0633/135Date: 15/03/2019

Makamu Mkuu wa Chuo,
 Chuo Kikuu cha Ushirika Moshi,
 S.L.P. 474,
MOSHI.

**YAH: KIBALI CHA KUFANYA UTAFITI KWA WANATAALUMA NA
 WANAFUNZI WA CHUO KIKUU CHA USHIRIKA MOSHI (MoCU)**

Tafadhali rejea barua yako yenye Kumb. Na. MoCU/UGS/3/41 ya tarehe 12/02/2019 yenye mada tajwa hapo juu.

Uongozi wa Shirika unapenda kukujulisha kuwa kibali kimetolewa kwa Eng. Richard John Matolo ambaye ni mtafiti/mwanafunzi wa Chuo Kikuu cha Ushirika Moshi kufanya utafiti katika Hifadhi za Arusha na Serengeti kuanzia tarehe 12/02/2019 hadi tarehe 31/12/2019.

Wasalaam,
HIFADHI ZA TAIFA TANZANIA


 Nassoro Mhdeme

Kny: KAMISHNA WA UHIFADHI

MSM/shs

Appendix 5: Manuscript Acceptance Letter 1

MOSHI CO-OPERATIVE UNIVERSITY (MoCU)
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 or jcbschiefeditor@gmail.com

Journal of Co-operative and Business Studies (JCBS)

To: Richard J. Matolo, Paul J. Salia & Vedasto G. Ndibalema

RE: MANUSCRIPT PUBLICATION ACCEPTANCE LETTER

Dear Authors,

We are pleased to inform you that our editorial board has accepted and approved your manuscript titled: "INTERNATIONAL TOURISTS' SATISFACTION WITH SERVICE QUALITY AT SERENGETI NATIONAL PARK IN TANZANIA" for publication in the imminent issue (Issue 2 of Volume 6, 2021) of the Journal of Co-operative and Business Studies (JCBS). Your Manuscript has passed for a plagiarism check where it scored an acceptable Similarity Index (SI), whereas, all the similarities in the manuscript belong to the "general knowledge domain". The paper has also gone through a peer review process. You will receive the galley proof of the final revision after all of the quality control checks and prior to publishing the article on the said issue.

Thank you for choosing to publish with JCBS.

Best regards,

Cyril Kalembana Komba (PhD),

For: Chief Editor-JCBS

Cc: Head Research and Publications Department,

Cc: Director - Directorate of research and Publications (DRPS).

Appendix 6: Manuscript Acceptance Letter 2



UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

**MOSHI CO-OPERATIVE UNIVERSITY (MoCU)
CHUO KIKUU CHA USHIRIKA MOSHI**



East African Journal of Social and Applied Sciences (EAJ-SAS)

To: Richard J. Matolo, Paul J. Salia, and Vedasto G. Ndibalema

RE: MANUSCRIPT ACCEPTANCE LETTER

Dear Author,

We are pleased to inform you that our editorial board has accepted and approved your manuscript No. EAJ-SAS/2021/02/10 entitled: "*Influence of destination image and service quality on international tourists' perceived value in Serengeti National Park, Tanzania*" for publication in the forthcoming issue (volume 3 issue 2 of 2021) of "The East African Journal of social and applied sciences", after successfully passing the review process and revisions made by the author. The manuscript also checked for plagiarism that showed the similarity index (SI) is acceptable and all the similarities in the manuscript belong to the "general knowledge domain". The author(s) will also receive the galley proof of the final revision after all of the quality control checks and prior to publishing the article.

Thank you for choosing to publish with EAJ-SAS.

Best regards,

Dr. Isaac Kazungu (Ph.D),

For-Chief Editor-EAJ-SAS

Cc: Head Research and Publications Department,

Cc: Director - Directorate of research and Publications (DRPS).