

**INFLUENCE OF TOUR GUIDING SERVICE QUALITY ON TOURIST
SATISFACTION IN MASAI MARA NATIONAL RESERVE, NAROK COUNTY,
KENYA**

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**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN FULFILMENT FOR THE AWARD OF A DEGREE
OF MASTER OF SCIENCE IN TOURISM MANAGEMENT IN THE SCHOOL OF
HOSPITALITY, TOURISM AND LEISURE STUDIES OF KENYATTA
UNIVERSITY**

JUNE, 2021

DECLARATION

Declaration by the Candidate

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other University.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my mother Mukami, my wife Waithiegeni and our children Gitonga and Ndungu for travelling with me on this journey.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am full of thanks to God for his enabling grace. I thank my supervisors Dr. Albert Kariuki and Dr. Sisinio Muthengi. Thank you for your tireless efforts to ensure that this work is done. I also want to thank the lodge managers in and around Masai Mara National Reserve who allowed us to administer questionnaires to their guests and the guests who agreed to fill out the questionnaire. Special mention to Tony Nyamai of Mara Duma Camp and Daniel Mpeeti of Mara Enkajiang Camp for introducing the researcher to the other camp managers and help in data collection.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CTDLT	-	Catering and Tourism Development Levy Trustees
EATGDA	-	East Africa Tour Guides and Drivers Association
GOK	-	Government of Kenya
KALTO	-	Kenya Association of Local Tour Operators
KATO	-	Kenya Association of Tour Operators
KPSGA	-	Kenya Professional Safari Guides Association
KTDGA	-	Kenya Tour Driver Guides Association
KWS	-	Kenya Wildlife Service
MGA	-	Mara Guides Association
MMNR	-	Masai Mara National Reserve
MOTW	-	Ministry of Tourism and wildlife
NACOSTI	-	National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation
NMK	-	National Museums of Kenya
SERVPERF	-	Service Performance
SERVQUAL	-	Service Quality
SPSS	-	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
SQ	-	Service Quality
TF	-	Tourism Fund
TRA	-	Tourism Regulatory Authority

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

Core service delivery aspects	Fundamental services that the tour guide must deliver to the tourist throughout the tour
Competencies	A mixture of tourism related skills, knowledge and attitudes that are required by a tour guide in order to deliver quality services
Sightseeing vehicle	A special safari van or Land cruiser jeep with pop-up roof
County	One of the 47 regions of Kenya. Narok is a county situated in the Southern part of the Kenyan Rift Valley, and home to Masai Mara National Reserve. In this study, Narok County refers to the tourism concept within the county.
Customer	A tourist who seeks tour guiding services
Expectations	Tourist experience on a guiding service before visiting the reserve
Influence	The capacity to have an important effect on tour guiding service quality
Perception	Tourist experience on a guiding service after visiting the reserve.
Quality	Difference between the customer's expectations and the perception of the tour guiding services offered
Satisfaction	Feelings of wellbeing and pleasure as a result of receiving what a tourist hopes for from a tour guiding experience
Service	Any action performed by the tour guide geared towards making the tourist experience satisfactory during a visit in an attraction
Tour Guide	A person who drives/leads tourists to visit attraction sites and offers explanations and interpretation to the tourist. He/she performs the dual roles of driver and guide

Tour guide orientation	Tour guide prioritizing their own economic benefits above the needs of the tourist while conducting a tour
Tour Guiding	The driving of tourists to attraction sites while giving information on the cultural and natural heritage therein
Visitors	Tourist or guest who is visiting the destination which is the study site and is guided by tour guide

ABSTRACT

The competitiveness of a destination is determined by the quality of services offered. Tour guides play an important role in meeting the perception and expectations of the tourists in a destination. Quality tour guiding services have ultimate effects on customer satisfaction with the services offered in a destination. There is limited research on tour guiding service quality and customer satisfaction in Kenya, thus the need to explore the influence of tour guiding service quality on the customer satisfaction in Masai Mara National Reserve (MMNR), Narok County, Kenya. The objectives of the study were; to assess tour guiding competencies that influence quality guiding services; to determine the influence of core tour guiding service delivery aspects on customer satisfaction; to determine the effects of tour guides' customer orientation on customer satisfaction; and to examine the moderating influence of the status of the sightseeing vehicles on the relationship between tour guiding service quality and customer satisfaction in MMNR. The study used a cross-sectional research design to evaluate the influence of tour guiding services on customer satisfaction. Primary data was collected from 311 tourists staying in camps and lodges in and around the MMNR and 10 Nairobi based tour operators. A questionnaire was used for the tourist respondents while an interview schedule was used for the tour operators. Descriptive statistics and regression analysis was used to analyse the data. Results indicate that tour guiding competencies significantly and positively influenced customer satisfaction. There was a high degree of correlation between tour guiding competencies and customer satisfaction ($R=0.805$) accounting for 76.4% of the relationship. Punctuality, keen sense of direction and enthusiasm being the most satisfying elements. Core service delivery aspects also significantly positively influenced customer satisfaction. There was a moderate correlation between delivery of core services ($R=0.696$) and tourist satisfaction, accounting for 48.4% of the relationship. Delivery of the promised service and knowledge of the destination being the most satisfying elements. Tour guide's orientation significantly negatively influenced customer satisfaction. Tour guide's orientation ($R=0.616$) also produced a moderate correlation with tourist satisfaction accounting for 38.0% of the relationship. Pressure to buy extra excursions and soliciting for tips being the most unsatisfying elements. The moderating variable; status of sightseeing vehicle had a significant moderating influence on the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction. It produced a moderate degree of correlation ($R=0.644$) accounting for 41.4% of the relationship between tour guiding service quality and tourist satisfaction. The study highlights the importance of tour guiding service quality to tourist satisfaction and recommends how the findings of this study will benefit tour operators and tour guides to improve the service quality of guiding services offered to the tourist. The government through the Ministry of tourism and wildlife will use the ideas generated to formulate and implement policies that will address tour guiding services in Kenya. The study findings will also contribute to the body of knowledge in the world of academia regarding tourism and tour guiding while also highlighting areas for further research.

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Globally, there are many tourist destinations providing very similar services. It is therefore very important to not just attract customers, but seek to retain them. Customer satisfaction is therefore key to customer loyalty (Virvilaite, Pilgrimiene & Kliukaite, 2015). The satisfaction and subsequent loyalty of customers is beneficial since various studies have established that attracting new customers is much more expensive than keeping existing ones (Chen, Weiler, Young & Lee, 2016; Khan, Garg & Rahman, 2015). As the number of satisfied customers increase, a destination will spend less on marketing thus increase the net direct tourism earnings. In addition, the consumption of related services increases (Sood & Chougale, 2016). The overall effect is an improved economic performance at the destination and improved wellbeing of individuals (Choo, Tan & Fernando, 2018).

Tour guides are one important component of the tourism product as they act as the link between the tourists, the host community and the tourist companies. They interact with the guests longer than other players in the tourism service chain the reason as to why tour companies dependent on them to deliver the promise made to the tourist. As such, the tour guides are the backbone of the entire tour operation (Guzman-Parra, Vila-Oblitas & Maqueda-Lafuente, 2016). Being a tour guide is therefore a very demanding job that combines skills, knowledge and attitudes to deliver a satisfying service to the tourist. Key tour competencies include; communication skills, improvisational skills, keen sense of direction and enthusiasm (Pereira, 2015). Tour guides are also expected to deliver the promise in the itinerary and thus adhere to the core service delivery aspects of the contractual agreement between the tour operator and the tourist. As Min (2016) found out, professional

attitude is one of the critical factors that set apart an ordinary guide from a great guide. If the attitude/orientation of the tour guide is towards meeting their own needs and not offering service that meets the expectations of the tourists, then the service quality of the guiding service will be negatively affected.

Customer satisfaction is the pleasure derived from consuming a good or service and is based on their feelings, affections, impressions derived by the customer on the quality of the service. A destination's image (brand image) is the reputation that a destination has built over time through the quality of services offered at the destination (Tsegaw & Teressa, 2017). Tourist satisfaction is very important for the current tourist market that is experiencing stiff competition among destinations and private enterprises. By enhancing tourist satisfaction, destinations and enterprises are able to cut on marketing costs by benefiting from customer loyalty which enhances intention to repurchase and free marketing (Meshak & Datta, 2015). Tour guiding service quality influences the overall satisfaction of the tourist and contributes to a positive destination image.

For tourists visiting Kenya, most will have prior arrangements of their trips either through travel agencies in their country of origin or with a local tour operator (Suntikul, Tang & Pratt, 2016). On arrival in Kenya, they will normally join up with the tour group at the airport or hotel in Nairobi to begin their tour. Most of these groups travel by road using Safari Landcruisers or Tour vans. The tourists are usually accompanied by tour guides to the attractions such as Masai Mara National Reserve (MMNR). The tour groups stay at lodges and /or tented camps within the protected areas or just outside the reserves. The days are spent out in the parks on game drives in search of wildlife. Optional and additional excursions such as the hot air balloon ride, Masai village visit and Souvenir shopping are

incorporated in the program either within the park and its environs or during the transfer from one park to the other (Togoch & Koki, 2018;Suntikul *et al.*, 2016).

The significance of tour guides in promoting the country's foreign relations and enhancing the country's positive image is widely acknowledged. For this reason, the Kenyan government, through the Ministry of Tourism and wildlife has given prominence to the critical role the tour guides play in the long term success of Kenya as a destination of choice for many tourists (Kabii, Okello & Kipruto, 2017). The development of the tour guiding sector regulation can be traced back to the 1990s (Togoch & Koki, 2018). This was when the Kenya Association of Tour Operatrors (KATO) in conjunction with the Kenya Wildlife Services (KWS) first initiated a regulatory mechanism for tour guides. This culminated in the formation of the Kenya Professional Safari Guides Association (KPSGA). This organisation was an industry initiative that was tasked with evaluation and grading of the practising guides. Later on in 2005, the Ministry of tourism, through the Catering and Tourism Development Levy Trustees (CTDLT) developed the initial regulatroy framework for tour guide licensing (Togoch & Koki, 2018). Measures and regulations on tour guide licensing were put in place. CTDLT was later disbanded and its roles taken over by Tourism Fund (TF) and Tourism regulatory Authority (TRA). Currently, the role of tour guide licensing and regulation is a key mandate of the TRA (GOK, 2011).

TRA has developed policies and regulations for the tour guiding sector in Kenya. These policies are meant to ensure that tour guides deliver better service quality for customer satisfaction among tourist visiting Kenya. However, these policy framework is mainly from the perspective of the policymakers (GOK, 2011). There is scanty information on specific studies relating to tour guiding service quality and customer satisfaction in Kenya, especially from the tourists' and tour operators' viewpoint. Findings of such studies can

enrich the tour guiding policy framework for better service quality, customer satisfaction and positive destination image. Such studies are as such very timely and relevant for those keen on sustainable tourism development in Kenya (Togoch & Koki, 2018). This study addressed this gap.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Existing literature identify the need to satisfy customers (Della-Corte, Sciarelli, Cascella & Del Gaudio, 2015), the need to solve visitor problems (Gnapala, 2015) and the need to improve visitor experience (Kabii, Okello, & Kipruto, 2017). In Kenya various policy documents seeking to achieve and maintain competitiveness have been drafted. The National Tourism Strategy (GOK, 2013) identifies the challenges of reinforcing the Kenya tourism industry as a high-quality service sector while the National Tourism Blueprint (GOK, 2018) highlights the need to increase and maintain visitor satisfaction levels. The Tourism Fund (TF) has for a long time invested in sustained efforts to improve the quality of tour guiding services in Kenya. The continual allocation of financial and human resources to this effort is due in part to the important role played by tour guides in delivering high quality of service to the visitors.

The Tourism Act established the Tourism regulatory Authority (TRA) in charge of regulating tourism activities and services countrywide (GOK, 2016). TRA has been developing and improving a system of regulating and improving quality in tour guiding since its inception. The policies and regulations on tour guiding, developed by TRA are geared towards improving the service quality of the guiding experience (GOK, 2016). This in itself is noble and very well intentioned. However, tour guiding services in Kenya continue to elicit negative reviews from tourists (Togoch & Koki, 2018).

There is therefore a need to relook at the policies and regulations which are largely based on the views of the policy makers. The views of the tourist, the main consumer of the tour guiding services are vital to development of sound policies for the tour guiding sector. There is limited research on tour guiding service quality and customer satisfaction in Kenya. Explicitly, research focussing on tour guiding competencies, core service delivery aspects, tour guide's orientation and the status of sightseeing vehicles is scanty especially on the Kenyan context. Yet, this is critical information for policy makers and tour operators based on what the National Tourism Blueprint (GOK, 2018) refers to as coordinated efforts of all stakeholders to improve visitor experiences. Therefore, there is need for this timely study in the Masai Mara National Reserve (MMNR). This is because MMNR is recognised as one of the most famous reserves in Africa and globally and a majority of the visitors to the park are usually on guided tours (Suntikul *et al.*, 2016). Tour guides in MMNR play a critical role in nature interpretation affecting tourist experiences.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

This study sought to explore the influence of the quality of tour guiding services offered on tourist satisfaction.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

1. To examine tour guiding competencies and their influence on customer satisfaction in MMNR in Narok County
2. To assess the impact of core service delivery aspects on customer satisfaction in MMNR in Narok county
3. To determine the extent to which the tour guides' customer orientation has on customer satisfaction in MMNR in Narok County

4. To determine the moderating effect of the status of the sightseeing vehicle on the relationship between tour guiding service quality and customer satisfaction in MMNR in Narok County

1.5 Research Hypothesis

- H₀₁: Tour guiding competencies have no significant influence on customer satisfaction in MMNR in Narok County
- H₀₂: Core tour guiding service delivery aspects have no significant impact on customer satisfaction in MMNR in Narok County
- H₀₃: The tour guide's orientation towards their own economic interest has no significant negative influence on customer satisfaction in MMNR in Narok County
- H₀₄: Status of the sightseeing vehicle has no significant moderating effect on the relationship between tour guiding service quality and customer satisfaction in MMNR in Narok County

1.6 Significance of the Study

The findings of the study are beneficial to various stakeholders. The private sector, through umbrella associations Kenya Tourism Federation (KTF), affiliates like the Kenya Association of Tour Operators (KATO) and Kenya Association of Local Tour Operators (KALTO) and regional private sector association East African Tourism Platform (EATP) in agitating for harmonious travel in the region. The findings will therefore provide important recommendations for actions targeted to improve the service quality and professionalism of the tour guides taking visitors to the parks.

The government, through the Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife (MOTW) and state corporations TRA and TF will use the implications generated to develop and implement policies that will address guiding services in Kenya. By determining the service quality of

the tour guides, policy makers and other tourism industry players can then develop the relevant support mechanisms for the tour guide. Narok County government, the managers of MMNR will also benefit from the findings of this study in better control of tour guiding activities for improved visitor experiences. The MMNR management can arrange for trainings especially for local tour guides and service providers of extra excursions for smoother interaction between the tour guides, tourists and host community.

The findings will also benefit the tour guides through Kenya Professional Safari Guides Association (KPSGA), Kenya Tour Driver Guides Association (KTDGA), Mara Guides Association (MGA) and the regional East Africa Tour Guides and Drivers Association (EATGDA). The findings will be useful to tour operators and tour guides as yard stick of improving on their services. In addition, the study findings will add to the body of knowledge and provide a base on which future similar studies can be carried out.

1.7 Delimitations/Scope of the Study

The study was delimited by both the geographical area and the subject. The geographical area of the study was Narok County. On the subject, the study was limited to the service quality of tour guides in MMNR in Narok County. Specifically, how the tourists perceived the guiding services in relation to customer satisfaction.

1.8 Limitation

The use of a questionnaire limited the respondent to only giving specific information sought by the questionnaire. The study was also a cross-sectional study. With more resources of time and money, it would have been better to do a longer study covering several seasons. This would have given more representative data suitable for making concrete conclusions. The use of a semi structured questionnaire was meant to make the exercise not totally limiting to the respondents and generate varied responses.

The study was also carried out within only a single county in Kenya. Had it been possible, a study covering several parks in different counties would have generated more representative data suitable for making generalizations. Being a cross sectional study that was carried out once may limit the extent to which generalisations can be derived. A longitudinal study involving several studies over an extended period may be important in following up on the findings of this study. In choosing Narok County, home to the most famous and most visited park in Kenya (MMNR), this study was able to have a more representative sample and therefore mitigate the limitations.

1.9 Assumptions

The study assumed that by administering the questionnaires at the accommodation facilities in MMNR, by-passing the tour operators and the tour guides, the respondents (tourists) would answer the questions freely. Had the questionnaires been administered by the tour guides, there is a likelihood that some guests may have opted not to take part in the study. Those who agreed may have been careful not to antagonise their tour guides and not provided full information. The study also assumed that all the tourists were accompanied by one tour guide who served both roles of tour guiding and also driving. In some rare instances, it is possible to have tourists accompanied by two persons a driver and interpreter.

1.10 Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

1.10.1 Theoretical Framework

Several theories have been advanced in relation to customer satisfaction. Being a relative term, there is general agreement that customer satisfaction is always measured against an expectation (Ye, Wu, & Zheng, 2019). Several theories have been postulated to explain customer satisfaction. They include; the attribution theory, the Value-Precept theory, the Equity Theory, The Expectancy-Disconfirmation theory and the Contrast theory among

others (Yang & Campos, 2020). For this study, the Expectancy-Disconfirmation theory formed the theoretical underpinnings of this study.

Expectancy-Disconfirmation theory was proposed by Oliver (1977) as the ideal theoretical framework in measuring customer satisfaction. The theory posits that a customer will purchase a good or service with an expectation on the performance. This expected performance becomes the yardstick that the customer uses to evaluate the product. After consuming the product or service, the performance is compared against the expectations. If the expected performance is equalled, there is confirmation (Suhartanto, 2018). If there is a difference between expectations and actual performance, disconfirmation is inferred.

The customer is therefore satisfied or dissatisfied depending on whether the difference between expectation and performance is positive or negative. If the performance exceeds the expectation of the customer, there is positive disconfirmation resulting in customer satisfaction. When the performance meets expectations, there is conformation resulting in satisfaction. However, when the performance is below expectations, there is negative disconfirmation leading to dissatisfaction (Ganiyu, 2017). In this study, service quality was assessed based on the expectancy-disconfirmation theory as reflected in the data collection instrument. The results were then used to infer customer satisfaction or dissatisfaction. To achieve this, a service quality model (SERVQUAL) was used.

Measuring service quality is generally accepted as a way of assessing customer satisfaction with a service (Sam, Hamidu & Daniels, 2018). As such service quality has been the focus of several studies. The approaches to these studies fall under two main schools of thought by Parasuraman, Zeithml and Berry, (1988); Gronroos (1988). The SERVQUAL model, a shortened form of “service quality” is a popular model used in the measurement of service

quality. This model was developed by Parasuraman *et al.* (1988). It uses five instruments to compare the customer's expectations against perceptions along a variety of service elements. The instruments are; reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy and tangibles. According Dudovsky (2014), SERVQUAL was initially designed to evaluate financial services. SEVQUAL has been adapted in many service sectors including the tourism industry (Deb & Ahmed, 2018; Rajeswari & Kumari, 2014).

Parasuraman *et al.* (1988) regards customer satisfaction as the gap between the expectations of the customer with regards to a service and the customer's perception of the service that they receive. It is the perception of the customer viewed against their expectation. The expectation versus perception school of thought makes it possible to interpret customer satisfaction based on expectations. Gronroos (1988) regards customer satisfaction as a product of the actual service performance quality as perceived by the customer. Gronroos (1988) developed the SERVPERF model, a shortened form of service performance. According to the perceived Quality Model (SERVPERF), the service quality as perceived by the customers is based on a comparison between the expectations of the customer on one hand and their actual experiences. If these real-life experiences exceed the expectation of the customer, the perceived quality is regarded as positive. Gronroos argues that customer-perceived quality contains two dimensions; the outcomes of the service provided or what the customer receives and another dimension based on the customer perceptions of their overall interactions with the service provider.

The SERVQUAL model was chosen for this study. This model was deemed suitable for this study because it has a scale constituting several items which makes it ideal for measuring the gap between tourist expectations and perceptions of service quality. SERVQUAL has also been successfully used, previously to evaluate service quality and tourist satisfaction

by other researchers including; Choo, Cheng, & Yeo, (2018) and Sam, Hamidu & Daniels, (2018).

1.10.2 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework shows the relationship between the major variables of the study. The conceptual framework shows the interrelationship between the independent, moderating and dependent variables (Figure 1.1). The independent variable is the tour guide’s service quality. The dependent variable is customer satisfaction. The relationship between the two is moderated by the status of the sightseeing vehicle.

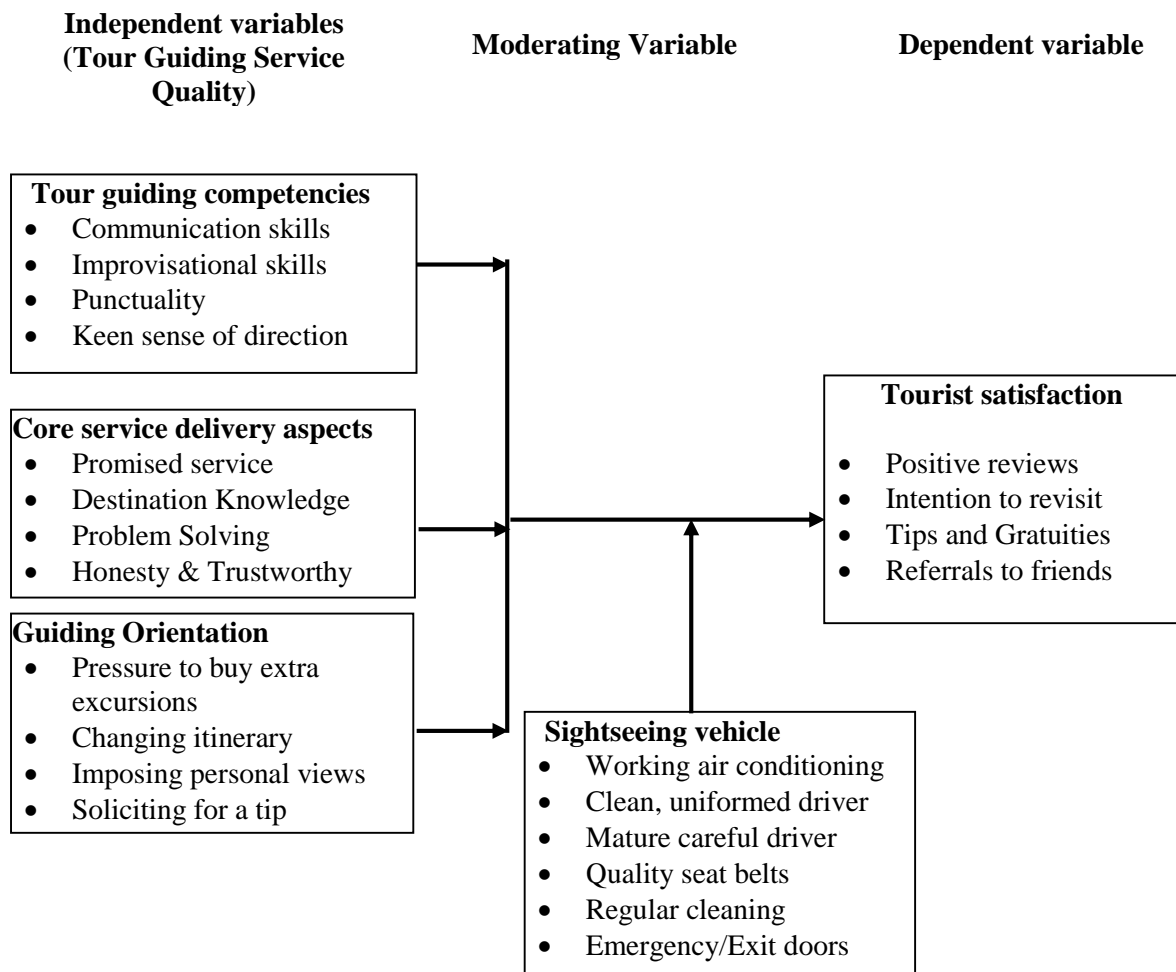


Figure 1.1: Conceptual Framework

Source: Adapted from Kangogo, Musiega & Manyasi (2013)

As depicted by Figure 1.1 independent variables are made up of three sub-variables namely; Tour guiding competencies, core service delivery aspects and tour guide customer orientation. The variable tour guiding competencies relates to a mixture of tourism related knowledge, skills and attitudes. These competencies include knowledge, skills, values, motivation, initiative and self- control, (Morton, Caulfiel & Anable, 2016). Competency is often associated with terms such as; Communication skills, initiative, innovation/improvisation, punctuality, interpersonal skills, and keen sense of direction (Pereira, 2015).

Core service delivery aspects in tour guiding refer to the fundamental services that the tour guide must deliver consistently throughout the tour (Weiler & Walker, 2014). The tour guide then assumes the role of delivering on this promise made to the tourists by the tour companies and travel agencies (Centikaya & Oter, 2015). Destination knowledge, honesty and problem-solving skills are important to delivering the promised service.

Customer orientation reflects how the guide balances their own as well as tourists' needs and interests so as to provide superior service to tourists (Min, 2016; Lin, Ting, Hsu & Wu, 2014). This entails focusing on what is valuable and satisfying to the tourists. It also means that the guide does not seek to exploit the tourists for his/her own benefit. Customer orientation of tour guides can be seen in what they put more value and emphasis in. Pressure to buy extra excursions, soliciting for tips, changing itinerary without consulting the guests and imposing personal views indicate that the tour guide is mainly driven by selfish economic interests and not a genuine desire to provide high quality guiding services to the tourists.

Dependent variable in this study is customer satisfaction which is a product of the tourist's perception of the service quality of the tour guide. Positive reviews, gratuities, intention to revisit and referrals to friends are relatives are common indicators of tourist satisfaction (Kuo, Chang, Cheng & Lin, 2015). Based on the service quality variables, the tourist will perceive the tour guiding service quality as being of high or low quality. If the service is perceived as being of high quality, customer satisfaction is achieved. If the service is of low quality, this leads to customer dissatisfaction.

Moderating variable: Service quality measurement has mainly been applied to tourist/passenger transport. It involves many aspects such as accessibility of the service, exterior and interior condition the vehicle, travel time, safety and existence of supporting infrastructure. Several studies have focused on key elements including; vehicle, the driver and the management (Suman, Bolia, & Tiwari, 2018; Sam, Hamidu, & Daniels, 2018). In this study, since the tour guide serves the dual role of driving as well as guiding, the status of the sightseeing vehicle affects how the tourist perceive the entire guiding experience. If the vehicle is in good condition and the driver is mature, clean and uniformed, this can only improve the overall rating of the experience. On the contrary, if the vehicle and driver are in a bad condition, this can only lower the overall rating of the experience. The status of the sightseeing vehicle therefore affects the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction.

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The available literature was reviewed based on its relevance under the following sub headings; customer satisfaction, tour guiding service quality, tour guiding competencies, delivery of core services, tour guide's customer orientation, Status of sightseeing vehicles, summary of literature and gaps identified.

2.2 Customer Satisfaction

Today's customers are more knowledgeable and well connected to information regarding a destination. Social media, online customer reviews and the internet are some of the sources of tourist information heavily used by potential tourists to a destination (Bimonte & Punzo, 2016). They use this information to inform their decision on choice of tour operators to use, best attractions at the destination as well as accommodation facilities (Zhang, Zhao, Lyles & 2018; Min, 2016).

The customer is much more sophisticated and demanding. They are very keen on getting, and indeed demanding value for services received in comparison to cost incurred (Arasli & Baradarani, 2014). As such, the customer knows that they are in charge. An organization has to offer better quality of services as compared to the competitors. Leaders in service quality understand what really matters. To realize customer satisfaction, industry must continuously seek creative ways and methods to improve service quality. Employees need to keep their passion for the customer alive (Khan, Garg & Rahman, 2015).

Customer satisfaction is largely a psychological issue which constitutes the feelings of wellbeing and pleasure as a result of achieving what a person was hoping for and expected from consuming a service or a product (Chan, Hsu & Baum, 2015). It is the customers'

fulfilment reaction to the consumptive experience. This is largely an individual assessment that is to a greater extent based on the customers' expectations and past experience. It has two dimensions; the individual's interaction with the provider of the service and the resulting experience by the consumer of the service (Chen, Weiler, Young & Lee, 2016).

Customer satisfaction is therefore a good reflection of the quality of service rendered in the service industry. The measurement of a quality of a service is a critical tool of determining customer satisfaction. When the expectations of the customer are met or exceeded, then the customer will be satisfied. Customer satisfaction is important because satisfied customers are more likely to be loyal customers (Kuo, Chang, Cheng & Lin, 2016; Kumar, 2016). They also act as free advertising agents of a product or service to friends and relatives through word-of-mouth (Rodger, Taplin & More, 2015). Satisfied customers can easily repurchase the product or service and also tell others to purchase the same. In order to create customer retention, a destination must do all to satisfy them and therefore create loyal customers.

Guest satisfaction is of the highest priority to owners of business as well as managers in the tourism industry who are in competition with many other businesses providing similar services. To achieve customer satisfaction, an organization must strive to recognize and anticipate the customer's needs. The attractiveness of a tourist destination is influenced partly by the quality of the service offered by the tour guide (Deb & Ali, 2018). There is need to shift focus from acquisition of new customers, to efforts in retaining customers and customer loyalty through customer satisfaction. This is because retaining existing customers is very important in sustaining the tourism industry. The biggest benefit of loyal customers is that they are not swayed by price inducements from competition (Rena, Qiu, Wang & Lin, 2016). Research has shown that it is less expensive to retain loyal customers

than trying to acquire new ones. Tour companies must therefore continuously keep track of customer satisfaction levels of their clients.

The measurement of a quality of a service is very important in determining customer satisfaction. According to Caro, Berchoux, Marek, and Chen (2015), quality of a service is comparison of expectations with performance which depends on the customer. The quality of services provided is dependent on customer perceptions and expectations before and after service is consumed (Phiri & Mcwabe, 2013). Quality service that meets or even exceeds customer's expectation is important in meeting satisfaction (Caro *et. al.*, 2015).

The competitiveness of a destination and a more assertive customer has made tourism organisations to recognize the importance of customer service quality in safeguarding current and future business (Roger *et al.*, 2015). Organisations invest on strategies like guest relations, development of new products, favourable pricing, and provision of relevant information among others to improve customer satisfaction. All these strategies are meant to address customer service quality to make the organisation or enterprise have competitiveness edge above others (Dabija, Dinu, Tăchiciu & Pop, 2014).

A study in China on tourist satisfaction with the service provided by the tour guides revealed several satisfying and unsatisfying aspects with regard to the service quality of the tour guides (Chen, Weiler, Young & Lee, 2016). In the study, professional competencies, good customer relations and communication skills were among the satisfying dimensions. On the other hand, incidences of tour guide misconduct, excessive shopping stops, soliciting for tips, poor communication, and inadequate customer care were among the unsatisfying dimensions. Other studies have also identified a number of service quality attributes in the tour guiding sector which are; delivery of the itinerary, keeping time, adequate knowledge of the attraction sites, problem solving skills, honesty

and trustworthiness, enthusiasm, ensuring the safety of the tourists and prompt communication (Kuo, Chang, Cheng & Lin, 2015).

From the review of available literature, there has been several studies on customer satisfaction with tour guiding services globally (Roger et al, 2015; Caro *et al.*, 2015; Kuo, Chang, Cheng & Lin, 2015) and in the African context (Magdy, 2016; Tsegaw & Teresa, 2017; Phiri & Mcwabe, 2013) as well as in Kenya (Kabii, Okello & Kipruto, 2017; Togoch & Koki, 2018). All these studies have helped in bringing out the service attributes that are important to tourist satisfaction; both satisfying and unsatisfying aspects. However, in the Kenyan context especially, these aspects have not been subjected to a study involving tourist respondents.

This study borrows from previous studies on tourist satisfaction dimensions as identified by Chen, Weiler, Young & Lee, (2016) in framing the variables of the study but goes further to investigate the variables under respective sub-variables and ranks them in order of significance for better understanding of what is the most important aspect of tourist satisfaction.

2.3 Tour Guiding Service Quality

Service quality can be viewed as the gap that exists between the customer's expectations and the perception of the service (Parasuraman, Berry and Zethmal, 1988). Therefore, a customer will assess service quality based on the difference between their expectations and the perception of actual performance. So, the smaller the gap between expectation and perception, the service will then be perceived as of high quality leading to customer satisfaction. The quality of service provided is dependent on customer perceptions and expectations before and after service is consumed (Choo, Tan & Fernando, 2018). Quality

service that matches or even surpasses customer's expectation is important in meeting satisfaction (Caro, Berchoux, Marek & Chen, 2015).

Today's customer is more informed, has increased expectations and has a variety of destinations having a similar offering in attractions to choose from. This has made tourism businesses recognize the importance of superior customer service quality for customer retention and loyalty (Khan, Garg, & Rahman, 2015). Organisations invest in strategies of improving customer satisfactions. Strategies like guest relations, development of new products, favourable pricing, and provision of relevant information among others have been used to improve customer satisfaction (Currie & Falconer, 2014). All these strategies are meant to address customer service quality to make the organisation or enterprise have competitiveness edge above others. Provision of high-quality service aimed at improving customer satisfaction is a key factor boosting the performance of companies in the tourism industry (Rena, Qiu, Wang & Lin, 2016).

Tourism brings to a destination people from all over the world. Professional and competent tour guides should represent and communicate a positive image of a country generally and the destination in particular. Governments in tourist destinations and tourism industry have realised the need to improve the quality of tour guiding services. Professional training, quality control, licensing and regulatory mechanisms are key in this area. Previous studies have shown that quality services in tour guiding are an integral part of ensuring destination service quality (Dedeoğlu & Demirer, 2015). Further, the service quality of the entire guided tour depends largely on the performance of tour guides (Cetinkaya & Oter, 2016). A tour guide who fails to meet the customer needs and expectations has the potential of losing repeat guests thus exporting business to competitors (Queensland & Government, 2017).

The tour guide is the person more intensely and continuously involved with tour participants through contact. The tour guide is a frontline employee tasked with the overall image and satisfaction with the guided tours offered at a destination (Hurombo, 2016). Tour guides are crucial crossing points between the tourists and destination and they determine whether a trip will be enjoyable or boring. They have the ability to build or damage the image of a destination (Tsegaw & Teressa, 2017). They can earn a good or bad reputation for a destination.

Service quality of tour guides is important in ensuring tourist satisfaction and thus enhancing a tour operator's image (Cetin & Dincer, 2014) as well as shaping the image of a destination. The tour guide can transform the tourists sightseeing activities into truly memorable experiences with passionate commentary and interpretation. They have the responsibility to make the customer satisfied with the service. A tour guide needs to combine knowledge and skills with passion and enthusiasm as well as be of good conduct. Commentary should be delivered in an exciting manner, be inspiring and be in the choice language of the visitor (Hughes, Wang, & Shu, 2015).

Therefore, the tour guide's service quality is one of the critical factors affecting the satisfaction of tourists during a tour (Rena, Qiu, Wang & Lin, 2016). Pereira (2016) posited that a tour guide, being a cultural mediator plays a critical role in turning a tour into a memorable experience for the tourists. These views were supported by Weiler & Walker, (2014) who agree that a tour guide who is competent in the core service delivery aspects of guiding and who is focussed on the needs of the customer can deliver guiding services meeting the expectation of the customer.

The ability of the tour guide to offer quality services and memorable experiences to the visitors is key to ensuring that the tourism business is successful. This is also important in

ensuring sustainability of the wider industry and the resources upon which the experiences are built (Min, 2016). Tour guides represent the image and face of their companies and in most cases; they are instrumental in selling the next tour. If their service quality leads to satisfied customers, such customers are likely to talk to their friends and relatives and encourage them to patronize the same company (Kabii, Okello & Kipruto, 2017).

The quality of tour guiding has been a subject of feedback by tourists who have visited destinations globally. Gnanapala (2015) in a study in Sri Lanka on implications of tourists' perception and satisfaction on destination management highlighted this. He observed that tour guides lacked adequate information leading to low perception and unsatisfied guests. Similar observations have been recorded in Tanzania (Philemon, 2015), Egypt (Magdy, 2016) and in Malawi (Chilembwe & Mweiwa, 2014)

According to Pathirana & Gnapala (2016), several factors may affect the service quality in tour guiding. For some tour operators, the tour is sold at a price below the actual cost. In this case, the tour guide is tasked with the responsibility of trying to sell extra excursions so as to make some money for the company as well as for themselves. Another factor is domination of the market. For markets dominated by a single source country, travel agents will tend to push for the lowest rates from the tour companies in the host destination. This could lead to poor services. Changing tourist behaviour especially with regards to buying of extra excursions can lead to decrease in income for tour guides and in some cases lowers the quality of guiding (Magdy, 2016; Chen, Weiler, Young & Lee, 2016).

Intense competition between tour operators, where in some extreme cases, tour operators pay bribes to travel agency employees to get business ends up affecting the entire service chain resulting in lower quality of service. Human resource issues regarding the tour guides such as; lack of recognition, low unstable income, high turnover rates and influx of

immigrant guides are factors that also lead to poor quality of tour guiding service (Kuo, Chang, Cheng & Lin, 2016). In a study on challenges facing the service quality of tour guide in Egypt, Magdy (2016), the four main areas of concern for tour guides were identified as critical issues affecting service quality. They include; Low remuneration, role conflict, foreign labour and a feeling of being unappreciated.

Tour guides are often paid less than the recommended minimum guide fees. In addition, the income is seasonal with the tour guides being out of work for between four and eight months. This period can extend even further whenever there are travel advisories and/or cancellations occasioned by global issues such as pandemics, terrorism and economic upheavals in source countries. Tour guides also have long working hours in some cases going without enough sleep and being away from home/normal place of residence (Min, 2016). Tour guides have to figure out how to bridge the remuneration gap through commissions. This ends up making them more of salesman trying to sell an extra excursion to the guest for personal gain than information givers, which is their main work (Pathirana & Gnapala, 2015). This ultimately affects their service quality.

Role conflict is another critical area affecting the service quality of tour guides. During a tour, the tourists should be accompanied by a tour manager as well as a tour guide. The role of the tour manager is to manage the day-to-day administrative roles. These include checking in of guests at accommodation facilities, arranging for meals, dealing with regulation of the relationship between tour participants, briefing, debriefing among other issues (Su, Yang, Badaoui & Cho, 2014). The tour guide should then be left to concentrate on guiding with emphasis on giving information to the tourists on the attractions (Chen, Weiler, Young & Lee, 2016). Tour companies, in order to save cost, end up giving the tour guide the role of tour manager (administration and regulation) in addition to his/her

interpretation roles. This inevitably compromises on the service quality as the guide tries to juggle both roles either often failing to deliver quality of services expected.

Foreign labour is another area of concern for tour guides. Despite restrictions on foreign workers for some professions in the tourism industry such as guiding, the foreigners still work as tour leaders/ guides earning higher pay while doing a job they cannot really perform well (Tsegaw & Teressa, 2017). This is due to their limited knowledge of the local customs, cultures and even wildlife at the destination. He or she can only give the information they have to the foreign tour guide who will then repeat it to the guests (Su, Yang, Badaoui, & Cho, 2014). In such cases, a local tour guide is silent while the foreign guide explains local history and customs to the tourists. This scenario ends up compromising on the service quality of tour guiding services rendered to the tourist.

According to Magdy (2016), most tour guides have a feeling of being unappreciated. Most guides are unhappy with the lack of respect in trade and in society. The treatment of tour guides at government offices, attraction sites, and from tour operators and travel agencies is often an indication that nobody promotes their role and dignity. In many countries, tour guides have to renew their licenses every year. This is not the same rule that applies to other professions (Dzikit & Leonard, 2016). Besides, the governments are very keen on regulation and enforcement in their relationship with tour guides. Issues of the tour guides' welfare such as remuneration, working conditions among others do not receive much support from the government agencies. This lack of recognition affects the quality of guiding they deliver to the tourists (Centikaya & Oter, 2016).

From the literature reviewed, several studies on tour guiding service quality have been carried out (Su, Yang, Badaoui & Cho, 2014; Min, 2016). The studies have focussed mainly on assessing service quality levels (Dedeoğlu & Demirer, 2015.), human resource issues

affecting service quality (Magdy, 2016, Min, 2016).), unhealthy business practices affecting service quality (Su, Yang, Badaoui, & Cho, 2014) and changing tourist behaviour affecting service quality (Currie & Falconer, 2014). In Kenya, a similar study by Togocho & Koki (2018) looked at performance attributes and tourist satisfaction. Suntikul, Tang & Pratt (2016) considered service quality aspects of tour guiding but specifically targeting Chinese tourist respondents.

This study not only identifies the gaps in service quality but brings out clearly the specific variables and respective sub variables that significantly influence tourist satisfaction with tour guiding services. The target population is also quite inclusive and not specific to a certain people. This makes it possible to make generalizations from the findings.

2.4 Tour Guiding Competencies

Competency can be viewed as a key characteristic of a worker contributing to success in the performance of the specific job-related tasks and thus achievement of the organizational goals. These competencies include knowledge, skills, values, motivation, initiative and self-control, (Al Jahwari, Sirakaya-Turk & Altintas, 2016).

Competency is often associated with terms such as; teamwork, initiative, innovation, creative thinking, technical ability, ethical standards and skills, interpersonal skills, motivation, personal credibility technological knowhow and accountability (Sood & Chougale, 2016). For forward looking organisations, a continuous assessment of the current and future competencies of its employees is a critical element for planning purposes. Organisations strategically manage their workforce by investing in staff development initiatives meant to meet the current and future staffing requirement. Deliberate initiatives and strategy focussed on staff development initiative to eradicate the gap between abilities required and those available are important for the sustainability of the organisation.

Tour guiding competencies are critical traits that determine the perception of guests towards the guiding services rendered. In a study in Istanbul, Turkey by Centikaya & Oter (2016) found that lack of critical tour guiding competencies like creativity, humour and interpersonal skills contributes to ineffective tour guiding leading to poor quality of services and unsatisfied clients (Pereira, 2016). Cetinkaya and Oter (2016) argued that there exists a significant relationship between customer satisfaction and loyalty, competency of the tour guide and the tour guiding service. This observation implies that adequate tour guiding competencies coupled with professionalism are necessary in ensuring quality guiding services and customer satisfaction. It is imperative that tour guides have relevant competencies to meet the tourists' expectations (Tsegaw & Teressa, 2017).

Skilled guiding is at the heart of Tourism industry in ensuring profitability and image maintenance (Cetinkaya & Oter, 2016). Tour guiding is a professional job that requires one to have high standards of academic and personal development (Kumar, 2016). A professional tour guide must be well equipped with knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that will help him/her perform guiding duties competently. A tour guide must exhibit professional qualities in order to deliver quality and dependable guiding services. Competencies that are required by a tour guide in order to discharge professional guiding include; good communication skills, outgoing personality, good memory, adaptability, flexibility, enthusiasm, sense of humour, punctuality and a keen sense of direction (Cetin & Yarcin, 2017).

A tour guide who is not endowed wide range of the above competencies has likelihood of providing unprofessional poor quality guiding services. This is a fact that was noted by Chen, Weiler, Young & Lee (2015) in their study on the quality of tour guiding in China.

They noted that lack of key competencies like professionalism ultimately affected service performance by the tour guides. In an attempt to ensure quality service performance by the tour guides they recommended professional training to impact guides with competencies like communication skills, product knowledge among others. These recommendations are in line with observation by Min (2016) who argued that tour guide competencies are a prerequisite for professional guiding services.

The critical role of tour guide competencies in ensuring customer satisfaction has been underscored by a study in Egypt (Magdy, 2016). In the study, it was established that knowledge of the needs of the tourists and ability to meet their expectations plays a big role in ensuring clients satisfaction. They also posited that quality guiding services is determined by a number of competencies in a guide which helps him/her to execute their duties professionally (Pereira, 2015).

In a study conducted in South Africa to assess key tour guiding competencies, Hurombo (2016) found that personality aspects as well as emotional and cultural knowledge were critical in delivering memorable guided experiences. The same was found in Ethiopia by a study conducted by Tsegaw & Teressa (2017) who established that tour guides plays an important role in tourist satisfaction. For tour guides to offer sufficient quality guiding services they must be able to communicate effectively in a language the tourist can understand to influence their perception. Knowledge of the destination was also critical in satisfying the clients needs. These revelations by Hurombo (2016) and Magdy (2016) confirms that tour guiding competencies ensure quality guiding which is a prerequisite for customer satisfaction.

In a study conducted in Tanzania it was established that the country is highly rich in a wide variety of tourist attractions and destinations and whose support facilities like

accommodation facilities are doing well. However, tour guiding services are relatively poor (Philemon, 2015). The poor services offered by tour guides was attributed to lack of tour guiding competencies like mastery of foreign languages like English, French, Italian, Spanish, and even Chinese. The tour guides were also found to lack competencies of close interactions with the clients which are key in influencing guests' perceptions (Pathirana & Gnapala, 2015).

Kenya like Tanzania has a wide variety of tourist attractions and destinations distributed all over the country. Wildlife Safari forms the major tourism products that attract large number of guests. Tour guiding is important support service used by tour operators to ensure guests have a memorable experience. A study by Akama and Kieti (2003) on satisfaction with guided tours in Tsavo West National Park showed that over 70% of the guests had satisfactory experience. This study by Akama and Kieti (2003), however did not explore the tour guiding services offered and competencies that may have contributed to guests' satisfactory experience. In another study on the challenges that hinders growth indigenous entrepreneurs in the tourism industry by Ragui (2013) it was revealed that most of the tour guides lacked requisite guiding competencies to satisfy the tourists (Togoch & Koki, 2018). This was attributed to lack of formal training.

From the reviewed literature, several studies have identified key tour guiding competencies that influence tourist satisfaction. In the Kenyan context, most studies on competencies have focussed on training needs assessment. However, there is scanty information on studies that investigated competencies important to tourist satisfaction in the Kenyan context.

This study utilised the already identified tour guiding competencies from previous studies by Sood & Chougale (2016); Centikaya & Oter (2016); Cetin & Yarcin (2017). These

competencies were investigated on tourists visiting MMNR. The study went beyond identifying which of the competencies significantly influenced customer satisfaction but also demonstrated how much each competency contributed to overall customer satisfaction.

2.5 Core Service Delivery Aspects

For the tourist to buy a tour, the tour operator makes a promise in the itinerary. The tour guide then assumes the role of delivering on this promise (Centikaya & Oter, 2015). Core services in tour guiding refer to the fundamental services that the tour guide must deliver consistently throughout the tour (Weiler & Walker, 2014). Several service quality attributes have been identified by researchers as indicators for tour guiding service delivery.

In a study on tour guide's performance in China, Chan, Hsu & Baum, (2015) identified several tour guiding attributes contributing to customer satisfaction. Among the many attributes were several that were considered as core service delivery aspects of tour guiding. They are; a good destination knowledge, fully delivering the itinerary, problem solving skills and honesty (Kumar, 2016).

The work of the tour guide is to transmit information in an exciting and genuine manner (Dzikit & Leonard, 2016). This is very important in ensuring that the tourist's interest in the tour and travel experience is maintained. According to Centikaya & Oter (2015), tour guides provide interpretation at the visited sites, photographed places and host communities encountered. The ability to provide this commentary in the language of choice of the visitor is a critical part of service delivery. Besides, the tour guide must provide commentary in an interesting and engaging manner that creates and maintains the interest of the visitors.

Good knowledge of the areas visited is another critical area in service delivery for customer satisfaction. He/she will then be able to give factual information to the visitors. A tour guide, who is knowledgeable and interprets the destination's attractions in a pleasant and helpful manner, has the ability to transform the tourists' visit from a good tour to a memorable experience for the tourists (Rena, Qiu, Wang & Lin, 2016). Thus, the outcome of a guided tour depends greatly on the tour guide's ability to deliver the promised service. Tour guides are also the culture interpreters and go-between for the tourists and the local host community. Tour guides are therefore expected to deal with the tourists and the host community in an honest and truthful manner. They should avoid taking advantage of the community and/or their guests for their own personal benefit (Cetin & Yarcan, 2017).

A tour guide coordinates the tour and handles any potential problems (Pathirana & Gnapala, 2015). As the leader of the group, he/she is in moderates the social interactions and minimizes conflicts within the group. This results to the smooth running of the tour itinerary. Tour guides are crucial crossing points between the tourists and host communities. They therefore need to manage the interactions between the visitors in a way that minimizes conflicts. They need to be able to predict potential conflict areas during the tour and proactively forestall such conflicts. During the tour, various problems could arise such as delays, sickness, rude and aggressive participants, accidents, death among many other potential problem areas. The tour guide should be able well versed in the laid-out procedures for handling such emergencies. Reporting channels, who to call/inform and First Aid are some of the issues the tour guide is expected to handle competently in order to deliver quality services (Kumar, 2016).

The tour guide sets the schedule and pace of the tour ensuring that the tourists arrive on time to the various attractions and activities as per the itinerary (Cetin & Yarcan, 2017). It is therefore important that the tour guide communicates the day's schedule of activities clearly to the guests. This should also include the amount of time to spend at each site to be visited. Arrival at accommodation facilities and being in time for meals and excursions should be well planned. The tour guide then has the responsibility of ensuring that the group follows the plan as much as possible. He/she should be able to control the pace of the tour to ensure a smooth trip (Weiler & Black, 2015). When activities/meals are missed during the tour, the visitor dissatisfaction will be high.

From the literature reviewed, previous similar studies have identified and documented core service delivery aspects of tour guiding (Weiler & Black, 2015; Dzikit & Leonard, 2016). However, specific studies on core tour guiding service delivery aspects is scanty in the Kenyan context. Based on the recurring themes in the previous studies that already identified core service delivery aspects, this study investigating each aspect with a view of assessing the influence of each aspect on tourist satisfaction. The study also goes further to rank the aspects in order of importance.

2.6 Tour Guide's Orientation

Tour guide's orientation can be seen in how the tour guide prioritises the needs and interests of tourists above his or her own while providing guided services (Cetin & Yarcan, 2017). This entails focusing on what is valuable and satisfying to the tourists. It also means that the guide does not seek to exploit the tourists for his/her own benefit. Customer orientation of tour guides is reflected in their conduct. If their orientation is wrong, the tour guide will be acting mainly motivated by self-economic interest. On the contrary if the orientation is towards the customer, they will seek to genuinely deliver high-quality customer service to

tourists. In the tour guiding context, several factors affect customer orientation. Low levels of income, human resource issues such as employment contract conditions and lack of recognition contribute to tour guides being motivated by selfish economic interests (Weiler, Young & Lee, 2016).

In some cases, low remuneration has turned tour guides from their main roles of interpretation and information givers to salesmen. Zero commission and low prices (Hughes, Wang & Shu, 2015) are some of the most prevalent unhealthy business practises. This occurs when competition among tour operators is very intense and based on price. In such cases, some operators sell the tours at prices less than the actual cost (Weiler and Walker, 2014). To recover the loss, the tour operators do not pay the tour guide. Instead, a financial burden is placed on the guide to push for tourist shopping for commissions and the marketing and sale of optional tours (Cetin & Yarcan, 2017). The guide is then paid from these extra sales. In such circumstances, the tour guide may not be fully customer oriented. Instead, he/she has to take up the responsibility of trying to sell extra excursions so as to make some money for the company as well as for themselves.

In other cases, tour guides are often paid less than the recommended minimum guide fees and are heavily reliant on tips from the guests (Centikaya & Oter, 2016). In addition, the income is seasonal with the tour guides being out of work for between four and eight months. This period can extend even further whenever there are travel advisories and/or cancellations occasioned by global issues such as pandemics, terrorism and economic upheavals in source countries. Tour guides have to figure out how to bridge the remuneration gap through commissions and tips. This ends up distracting them from their core duties to salesmen pushing the guests to shopping and buying of extra excursions (Magdy, 2016; Pathirana & Gnapala, 2015).

Tour guides, despite their key role in the tourism service provision chain face many challenges. They are rarely recognised by the tourism players (Kabii, Okello & Kipruto, 2017). Many are contracted on short terms during the tourism season and could be jobless for long periods affecting their income. Due to the large number of competing tour operators, and the fact that many consumers are sensitive to price changes, many tour companies are competing on the basis of price rather than service differentiation (Magdy, 2016). This concept of price minimization, a cost cutting business practice often leads to lowering of service standards. This is not ethical business practice because the tour guide earns from shopping commissions often leading to complaints of low-quality guiding service as the tourists are forced to shop (Chiang & Chen, 2014).

Besides their main roles, tour guides also need to make their encounter with tourists profitable to themselves. This is a role of tour guides that is less discussed by researchers yet it could be a potential challenge for tour guides and tourists if they are not in agreement. Proficient and skilful tour guides are important in offering high quality services. However, many guides lack the requisite training (Tsegaw & Teressa, 2017; Kabii *et al.*, 2017). These challenges influence the orientation of the guide towards his/her own economic benefits rather than focussing on the guests (Pathirana & Gnapala, 2015).

Tour guides also have long working hours in some cases going without enough sleep. In addition, the guides spend considerable time away from home/normal place of residence (Tsegaw & Teressa, 2017). This disruption of their lives especially in the high season when they barely have an off day has the potential to cause distractions from their core activities. Most have families but are not available when needed by these families and they will try to solve issues as and when they arise from a distance. In such cases, the tour guide will be dealing with fatigue and other stress related conditions and as such not be fully focussed on

the guests. Their orientation in such circumstances changes from giving quality services to the guests to thinking about their faraway families and things that could be going wrong in their long absence (Magdy, 2016).

Orientation is strongly related to the economic well-being of the tour guide. Several studies have identified challenges facing tour guides (Hughes, Wang & Shu, 2015, Weiler, Yang & Lee, 2016, Weiler & Walker, 2014). Other studies have looked at tour guide behaviour that drive tourist dissatisfaction (Cetin & Yarcan, 2017; Magdy, 2016; Pathirana & Gnapala, 2015). However, there is scanty information on specific studies that assessed tour guides orientation and related this to customer satisfaction. This study brings out the aspects of the tour guides orientation that lead to customer dissatisfaction with tour guiding services. It also attempts to bring out the most dissatisfying aspects of the tour guide's orientation.

2.7 Status of Sightseeing Vehicle

Transport is a vital service in the tourism industry. This is because tourism and the leisure experience involve travelling (Mahmoud & Hine, 2016). Tourists depend on the destination's transport system for mobility in order to access the attraction sites. The tourist's experience with transport service has the potential to influence satisfaction with the destination. The importance of the transport system for tourism at the destination has been acknowledged in tourism literature (Haron, Nasir & Mohammad, 2016; Deb & Ahmed 2018; Guner, 2018). For a tourist destination, the ability to travel from one point to another with ease to the attraction sites enhances the marketability of the destination. This in turn improves the attractiveness of the destination.

Service quality measurement has been widely studied in relation to public passenger transport. Several factors such as the condition of the vehicle, punctuality, reliability, safety and infrastructure have been studied (Joewono, Tarigan & Susilo, 2016). Other studies have

focused on key elements including; vehicle, the driver and the management (Jomnonkwao & Ratanavaraha, 2016). For tourist's transport, sightseeing vehicles offer an important service in moving tourists from one place to another.

The vehicle exterior and interior are what the tourists come into direct contact with (Ratanavaraha, 2016). There is the general tendency of the users to judge the safety of the vehicle based on physical condition and appearance. As a general rule, the newer it appears, the safer it is considered (Deb & Ahmed, 2018). Interior characteristics include seating comfort and a nice clean appearance (Guner, 2018) Cleanliness is key among the interior characteristics (Jomnonkwao & Ratanavaraha, 2016).

The driver's personal attributes such as being polite, kind and friendly demeanour are crucial aspects affecting of transport. These personal attributes become part of the service package that the traveller will receive from the driver. They thus become a significant component of how the traveller will view the entire experience at the destination. Management refers to the entire running of the vehicle such as punctuality and adherence to traffic rules and regulations (Sam, Hamidu & Daniels, 2018). These are also important in shaping the entire travelling experience for the traveller. Several studies have shown that on transport; the vehicle condition is the most important aspect followed by driver and management respectively (Jomnonkwao & Ratanavaraha, 2016).

According to Morton, Caulfield & Anable (2016), body condition, cleanliness and safety as well as the driver are the three main factors influencing tourist transport. Body condition constitutes several sub factors such as the age of the vehicle, condition of the wheels, seat comfort, air conditioning and security accessories (Jomnonkwao, Siridhara & Ratanavaraha, 2015). Previous studies in Thailand have shown that tourists are concerned with the condition of sightseeing vehicles especially when travelling over long distances. The study

found out that with good safety features such as seat belts, fire extinguishers, emergency exits and anti-roll bars, the risk of accidents or accident-related injuries decreases (Jomnonkwao & Ratanavaraha, 2016).

Providing suitable seats, with sufficient distance between seats which are well designed are important aspects of making the vehicle comfortable for the tourists (Georgescu, 2015). Clean and neat driver guides in uniform also go a long way in enhancing the quality of the transportation. The driver guide needs to be of a mature age with requisite licenses and relevant experience in order to offer quality service to the client. Having route skills is important as they need to take the visitors to different attractions. Smoking or non-smoking tour guides is also an important aspect when evaluating the service quality of the tour guide especially when dealing with smoking/non-smoking visitors (Suman, Bolia & Tiwari, 2018).

Literature reviewed indicate that there are several studies on tourist transport globally but not much in the Kenyan context. Instructive to note that while in many destinations globally, it is possible to detach the transport element from the tour guide, the Kenyan context is different as the tour guide also serves as the driver. There is therefore scanty information on how the status of the sight-seeing vehicle affects the relationship between the service quality of the tour guiding experience and tourist satisfaction. This specific study investigated the moderating effect of the status of the sight-seeing vehicle on customer satisfaction.

2.9 Summary of Literature and Gaps

2.9.1 Summary of Literature

The literature reviewed found that majority of research on the effect of tour guiding on tourist satisfaction have been conducted in developed countries and other countries of Asia. Pereira, (2016) in Portugal, Min, (2016) in China, Kuo, Chang, Cheng & Lin (2015) in

Taiwan and Cetinkaya and Oter (2016) are some of the studies that specifically investigated tour guiding service quality in Europe and Asia. Chan, Hsu and Baum (2015) also conducted a study on the impacts of service performance on tourist satisfaction in Hong Kong.

In Africa, there has been similar studies in Tanzania by (Philemon, 2015) and in Malawi (Chilembwe & Mweiwa, 2014) that investigated tour guide roles. Phiri and Mcwabe (2013) investigated customer expectations while Dzikit & Leonard (2016) focussed on barriers affecting service quality. Although the tour guiding context in Kenya is similar to these countries, the focus of their studies was quite different from the present study which focused on service quality and customer satisfaction. Similar studies have however been conducted in other African countries by Tsegaw and Teresa (2017) and Magdy (2016). The two studies specifically investigated tour guiding service quality in Ethiopia and Egypt respectively. However, the tour guides in those countries work mainly in historical sites which differ in many ways from the Kenyan context.

In Kenya, several studies on tour guiding have been conducted. Most of the studies have focused on levels of training (Sindiga, 1994) as well as training needs. (Kabii, Makonjio & Kipruto, 2017). Akama & Kieti (2003) investigated Tourist Satisfaction in a safari tour but did not relate that to tour guiding aspects. Kangogo, Musiega, & Manyasi, (2013) investigated customer satisfaction effect on performance in the hotel industry. Recently Togoch & Koki (2018) investigated tour guiding performance attributes in the North rift region.

2.9.2 Literature Gaps

In the Kenyan context, none of the reviewed literature has been found to examine specifically the relationship between tour guide service quality and customer satisfaction. While similar studies have been done elsewhere in the world, none has been done for

Kenyan National Parks/Reserves. In the absence of specific research findings in this area, tour companies (KATO) as well as regulating authorities (TRA) may not be confident enough in regulating tour guiding practices and enhancing tour guide performance for high quality services to their customers. To bridge this void, there is need to carry out such study in Kenya and crucially in MMNR, one of the most famous parks in Africa and globally.

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study adopted a cross-sectional research design. Cross-sectional design allows the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data at a single point in time. This data on two or more variables under study is then tested for patterns of association (Madan & Kensinger, 2017). For this study, quantitative data was collected from tourists visiting MMNR from the month of November 2019. Qualitative data was also collected from Nairobi based tour operators, whose tour guides took their customers (tourists) to MMNR during this period.

The design was useful to demonstrate the relationship between SQ determinants and customer satisfaction. Accordingly, the design was very useful in saving time as it was one-time interaction with the respondents and also helped in generalization of the findings (Dudovskiy, 2014). The survey method was used to generalize whether SQ variables influenced customer satisfaction. The study variables were measured by developing statements that explained each of the four SQ determinants and the level in which each one influenced loyalty as well as cumulative. The structure of the survey research design allowed the researcher to conduct a pre-test to evaluate the reliability and validity of the instruments and also the constructs under measurement.

3.2 Variables

The study had three main variables; independent, dependent and moderating variables.

3.2.1 Dependent Variable

The dependent Variable is customer satisfaction. It is inferred from a composite score of the SERVQUAL gap analysis.

3.2.2 Independent Variable

The independent variable was tour guiding service quality that consisted of three sub variables; Tour guiding competencies, Core service delivery aspects and tour guide's customer orientation. Each of these three sub variables consisted of several elements. The dependent variable is customer satisfaction.

3.2.3 Moderating Variable

The moderating variable is the status of the sightseeing vehicle. The moderating variable affected the relationship between the independent variable (tour guiding service quality) and the dependent variable (Customer satisfaction).

3.3 Location of the Study

The study was carried out in the Masai Mara National Reserve (MMNR) in Narok County, Kenya. MMNR covers some 1,510 km² (Appendix v). The MMNR is world famous for the annual wildebeest migration. Other wildlife attractions include the big 5 (Lion, Leopard, Elephant, Rhino and buffalo) as well as cheetah, hippo, crocodiles, giraffe, zebra and various antelope species (WB, 2014). MMNR has also previously been voted for 5 consecutive years as the leading tourism destination in Africa and globally (WTA,2018). The National Tourism Blue Print 2030 highlights the importance of MMNR as the leading destination in Kenya

Many tourists from all over the world visit MMNR every year for its rich wildlife attractions. Most of them are usually in pre-arranged tours with locally based tour operators. Inside the MMNR, there is a network of roads for purposes of game drives in search of wildlife sightings. Navigating around the extensive reserve and spotting wildlife is best done by the experienced tour guides. For that reason, most of the visitors to MMNR are chauffeur driven around. These drivers also serve as tour guides. Days are spent on game drives within the

expansive reserve in search of wildlife. There are many accommodation facilities in and around the MMNR where the tourists will stay for 2-3 days usually before proceeding to other parks (Suntikul *et al.*, 2016).

According to the listings of Kenyan accommodation in the World Bank Report (WB, 2014), there are a total 118 lodges and tented camps in and around the MMNR. For this study, the proposed accommodation facilities were those located within the Main MMNR as well as those located adjacent to the Reserve boundaries. These comprised of 39 camps and Lodges (Appendix vi). For this specific study 7 high end exclusive camps out of the 39 were excluded. This is because all their guests are usually on flying packages. Accommodation facilities located within private conservancies were also not included. Therefore, data was collected from guests in 32 facilities.

MMNR therefore has the highest tourist-tour guide interaction among all wildlife attractions in the country. Carrying out this study in MMNR allowed the researcher to reach the most representative sample of tourists on guided tours in the country. Service quality of tour guiding is important to customer satisfaction.

3.4 Target Population

3.4.1 Tourists

The target population comprised of guided tourists visiting Masai Mara National Reserve.

According to the Narok County visitor data, Masai Mara received 291,164 tourists in 2018.

In November 2018, 9,031 tourists visited the reserve (Table 3.1)

Table 3.1: Summarized MMNR visitor data for November 2018

	NUMBER OF VISITORS
Week 1	2308
Week 2	2267
Week 3	1987
Week 4	1907
Week 5	562
Total	9031

Source: GOK, 2019

3.4.2 Tour Operators

This study targeted licensed tour operators who are also members of an association. There are 710 tour operators who are members of the Kenya Association of Tour Operators (KATO) according to the member list downloaded from the KATO website.

3.5 Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

3.5.1 Sampling Techniques

For tourist respondents, two sampling techniques were used. Purposive sampling was used to select accommodation facilities within the main MMNR and right outside the boundaries. Purposeful sampling was chosen because it made it possible to reach the individuals well informed on the variable under study (Madan & Kensinger, 2017). From these selected facilities, respondents from the target population were selected using simple random sampling. Random sampling technique was used as it made it possible for each member of the target population to have an equal chance of being represented in the sample (Fowler, 2018). For tour operators, interviewees were chosen randomly from the list of Kenya Association of Tour Operators (KATO) members.

3.5.2 Sample Size

Using visitor data from a similar month (November) in the previous year, the Slovin's formula was used to work out the sample size. Using the Slovin's (1960) formula $n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$, (where "n" is the desired sample size, "N" is the population size, and "e" is the margin of error [0.05]). The formula was used to determine the sample size of tourists who were enrolled in the study. Using the Slovin's formula $n = \frac{9031}{1+9031(0.05)^2}$ n = 384 tourists

With the sample of 384 tourists and since there were 32 facilities to sample from, the sample of 384 was divided between the 32 facilities for 12 respondents per facility (Table 3.2).

Table 3.2: Sample Size

Number of Sampling Units	Respondents	Percentage (%)
Lodges/Camps	32	
Sample size (32X12)	384	100%

For the interviewees, 10 tour operators were randomly selected from the list of 710 KATO member tour operators.

3.6 Research Instruments

Research instruments are tools that are developed by the researcher to help in collecting the necessary information regarding the study.

3.6.1 Questionnaire

This study used semi-structured questionnaires to collect quantitative data from the tourists. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2012), semi-structured questionnaires are cost effective means of collecting data. Semi-structured questionnaires have also been found to

be easier to administer. They also enable collection of data in a structured and manageable form that makes analysing of data quick (Kruschke, 2015).

The questionnaires were used to provide information on the tour guide's service quality and customer satisfaction. This questionnaire (Appendix 1) had two sections: section A had mainly close ended questions and dealt with demographic characteristics of the respondents and B, C, D and E collected information on the service quality aspects of tour guiding. The questions on SQ construct were based on the four selected determinants of tour guiding competencies, Core service delivery aspects of tour guiding, tour guides' customer orientation and status of sightseeing vehicles. Each determinant had a number of statements that were used to measure SQ. They were tested on a close ended 5-point Likert scale where one was strongly disagree whereas five was strongly agree. The scale made it easier for filling in and for quantitative data analysis (Fowler, 2018). Accompanying all the questionnaires was a cover letter which explained the purpose, objectives and ethical considerations of the survey to the respondents (Appendix I).

3.6.2 Interview schedule

An interview schedule (Appendix iii) was developed along the main objectives of the study with an aim of gaining further insight on the issues addressed by the questionnaire. Specifically, the interview schedule sought to bring out the viewpoint of the tour operators. The interview schedule was therefore used to collect qualitative data.

3.6.3 Secondary sources of information

Secondary data was collected from articles, books, academic journals, newspaper articles, internet sources and other relevant documents related to tour guiding.

3.7 Pre-Testing

To assess the suitability of the instrument to the study, a pre-test of the research instruments was conducted. It was important to pre-test research instruments with respondents who have shared characteristics as the respondents but that are not considered in the sample as noted by Charlotte, (2015). Therefore, a camp at the edge of Olare Orok conservancy, and for whom tourists staying there go into the main MMNR for game drives was used. This is because it is a camp sharing similar characteristics with the sample but was not in the sample because it is located within a conservancy adjacent to MMNR.

Madan & Kensinger (2017) affirms that for pre-testing questionnaires to yield reliable data, 1% to 10% of the sample size is adequate. Based on Madan and Kensinger (2017) affirmation, a 5% of 384 (20) questionnaires was administered to guided tourists in convenient places at the camp. Pre-testing was a vital step in the development of the questionnaire because it helped to bring out areas of improvement in wording, structure and format (Charlotte, 2015). The questionnaire was cleaned and improved accordingly after pre-testing (Appendix viii).

3.7.1 Validity

Fowler, (2018) defines validity as the extent to which research results obtained from data analysis measures the reality of the phenomenon under study. It reflects on whether an instrument really measures what it is meant to. Content validity was utilized to ensure the research instrument's items represented the subject matter of the research area. Content validity was ensured by seeking expert opinion from research supervisors and three other professionals in the field of research.

Three professionals drawn from three organisations; the Tourism Regulatory Authority (TRA), Tourism research Institute (TRI) and Kenya Association of Tour operators (KATO)

were given the questionnaire. They were to assess the questionnaire and advice whether it was appropriate for the industry and collection of required data. They gave their views and the questionnaire was cleaned in line with their expert recommendations.

3.7.2 Reliability

Reliability measures repeatability, precision, trustworthiness and consistency of research (Chakrabartty, 2013). Therefore, reliability determines how much the instrument is error-free, ensuring that the measurement across the various elements is consistent in the research instrument. Reliability is measured using a coefficient. If the coefficients yield figures above 0.7, they are considered acceptable. According Madan & Kensinger (2017), coefficients above 0.8 are considered as very good.

The reliability of the tourist questionnaires was determined by conducting a pre-testing exercise before the actual or main study. After collecting data from the 20 tourists, the data was coded and entered into SPSS. Reliability test was done using Cronbach Alpha which was command driven. Some variables that yielded low coefficients were deleted from the questionnaire. The amended Research instrument yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.751 hence was considered acceptable (Table 3.3).

Table 3.3: Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	Number of Items
0.751	0.715	49

3.8 Data Collection Techniques

The research approval letters were obtained from Kenyatta University Post-Graduate Board and National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) (Appendices VIII & IX). The introduction letter from Kenyatta University graduate school

was issued on 25th September 2019. This letter was used in applying for a research permit from National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI). The permit was obtained on 10th October 2019. Then data collection for pre-test began. Data for the study was collected after ascertaining the validity and reliability of the research instruments. The researcher sought permission from the respective managers of the accommodation facilities during the month of October 2019.

During the same month of October, two research assistants were recruited and trained. Both were tourism students and also from around Masai Mara. Both the assistants were taken through the objectives of the study as well as the data collection instruments. The researcher introduced them to the lodge and camp managers. One to cover camps and lodges between Sekenani gate and Ololaimutiak and the other to cover facilities around Talek gate. The research assistants were to work with the frontline staff at the accommodation facilities. Pretesting was also done in the same month and the research instruments cleaned accordingly.

The process of administering self-completion questionnaires to guests in lodges and tented camps kicked off at the beginning of November. With the authority of the Camp/lodge managers, the questionnaires were administered to the guests by front office employees at the reception and lobby areas. The tourists were given an oral briefing on the purpose of the study and thereafter issued with questionnaires. They were requested to complete them and return them before checking out of the hotel/camp or as soon as they were through. The questionnaires were administered mainly when the guests would be relaxing at the lobby after lunch, waiting to go for the evening game drive and also after dinner as the guests relaxed at the lobby/bar area. This enabled the guest to be sampled randomly to ensure each

guest and an equal chance of being represented in the sample. A total of 384 questionnaires were administered.

The process ran for the entire month of November. The frontline employees would collect back the completed questionnaires from the guests. As most of the guests stayed for 2-3 nights, with new guests checking in, it was possible for the employees to track their stay and collect the questionnaires. Within the same month, an interview schedule was subjected to tour operators with a view of gaining further insight into the variables under consideration. This was done by the researcher so as to guide the interviewees accordingly and therefore obtain relevant responses.

3.9 Data Analysis

After collecting the questionnaires, the data was coded then entered and subsequently analysed using a statistical software program (SPSS). To analyse the tourist's demographic characteristics such as age and region of origin, frequencies were used. Descriptive analysis was used to analyse the questions with a Likert scale. Descriptive analysis was preferred based on the recommendation by Madan & Kensinger (2017) who posits that the descriptive analysis is ideal for Likert scale data. This is because such data requires a unique data analysis method.

To measure customer satisfaction (the dependent variable), the elements of the study variables that were considered as contributing to customer satisfaction were put in a Likert scale as statements. The tourists were asked to rate how much they agreed or disagreed with the statements on a scale of 1 to 5. The scale that was used ranged from 1- Strongly disagree to 5- Strongly agree. In this case, a value of "5" was considered the highest while "1" was the lowest. More particularly, the Likert scale was comprised of the elements measuring the

perception of the tourists on “tour guiding competencies”; core service delivery aspects”; “tour guides’ customer orientation”; and status of sightseeing vehicles.

Further analysis was conducted to assess the relationship between guiding service quality and tourist satisfaction. The regression fitness model was analysed and interpreted based on ANOVA, adjusted R squared and regression coefficients results. R values were used to determine simple correlation and adjusted R squared used to determine how much of the total variation in the dependent variable could be explained by the independent variable. ANOVA was used in reporting how well the regression model fitted the data (whether it is a good fit for data) and the coefficients used to generate the regression equation and test the hypothesis. The corresponding model is set as:

$$y = \beta_0 + \beta_1x_1 + \beta_2x_2 + \dots\dots\dots + \beta_nx_n + e$$

Where

y = Dependent variable (Tourist satisfaction with guiding services)

β_i = coefficients to be estimated

x_i =independent variables

Where

X_1 - Tour guiding competencies

X_2 – Core service delivery aspects

X_3 – Tour Guide’s orientation

The moderated multi linear regression model was used to test the effect of the moderating variable (status of sightseeing vehicle) on the relationship between the independent variables (tour guiding competencies”; core service delivery aspects”; “tour guides’ customer orientation”) and the dependent variable (customer satisfaction).

$$Y = a + \beta_1X_1 + \beta_2X_2 + \beta_3X_3 + e$$

Where;

Y =Customer satisfaction

a =the Constant or intercept

β_1 =the Slope (Beta coefficient) competencies centred

X_1 = competencies centred

β_2 =the Slope (Beta coefficient) status vehicle centred

X_2 = Status vehicle centred

β_{3i} =the Slope (Beta coefficient) competencies status centred ($X_1 * X_2$)

X_{3i} = competencies status vehicle centred ($X_1 * X_2$)

e = Error term

The interview schedule was used to collect quantitative data from tour operators. Interviews were recorded during the interview and Transcribed. Content analysis was used to analyse the qualitative data gathered from the interviewees. A table (Appendix IV) was used to present the findings based on words/concepts and themes present from the respondents.

Table 3.4: Data Analysis Methods per objective

Objectives	Data Analysis Methods
1	Descriptive statistics and the regression fitness model
2	Descriptive statistics and the regression fitness model
3	Descriptive statistics and the regression fitness model
4	Moderated Multi Linear Regression and Descriptive Statistics

3.10 Logistical and Ethical Considerations

3.10.1 Logistical considerations

Before data collection, consent was obtained from respective managers of the accommodation facilities through calls and visits to the camps/lodges. The respondents were

through an oral briefing, informed about the objectives and purpose of the study. In addition, the respondents were also assured that their responses would be treated with confidentiality and used only for academic purposes.

3.10.2 Ethical considerations

Every effort was made to ensure that chances of misleading studies was minimal. By regularly consulting the supervisor, the researcher was able to address any challenges during data collection. The respondents were also not required or expected to indicate their names. This was meant to ensure that their anonymity was fully respected. Collected data was handled with utmost confidentiality.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter is a presentation of the statistical analysis of data. The first part presents the descriptive statistics of the demographic information of the respondents. The second part is a description of the results based on the objectives of the study. The specific objectives of the study were: to examine tour guiding competencies and their influence on customer satisfaction in; to assess the impact of core service delivery aspects on customer satisfaction; to determine the extent that tour guides' customer orientation has on customer satisfaction; and to determine the moderating effect of the status of the sightseeing vehicle on customer satisfaction. These objectives were formulated into four research hypotheses. This chapter presents an analysis of the four objectives and the testing of the hypothesis resulting in either accepting or rejecting the hypotheses that formed the foundation of this study.

4.2 Response Rate

For quantitative data collection exercise purposes, all the 384 questionnaires were given out for completion at the lodges and camps to the tourist respondents. The completed questionnaires were collected when the guests were through with the exercise. However, some of the tourists who had been issued with questionnaires did not hand them in as requested. 311 completed questionnaires were collected and later analysed. This represented a response rate of 80.99%. The response rate achieved by the study (80.99%) was considered as good. According to Fowler (2018), for questionnaire administered in person, a survey response rate of 80-85% is considered good and therefore the findings from the study may be generalized to the population from which the sample was drawn. For qualitative data collection, all 10 identified interviewees were interviewed (100% response rate)

4.3 Demographic Information of Respondents.

This section shows the analysis of the demographic and general information of the respondents of this study.

4.3.1 Gender

The respondents were asked what their gender was. This was meant to check whether the gender ratios were representative of the target population based on previous research in nature-based tourism. The results are as shown in Figure 4.1.

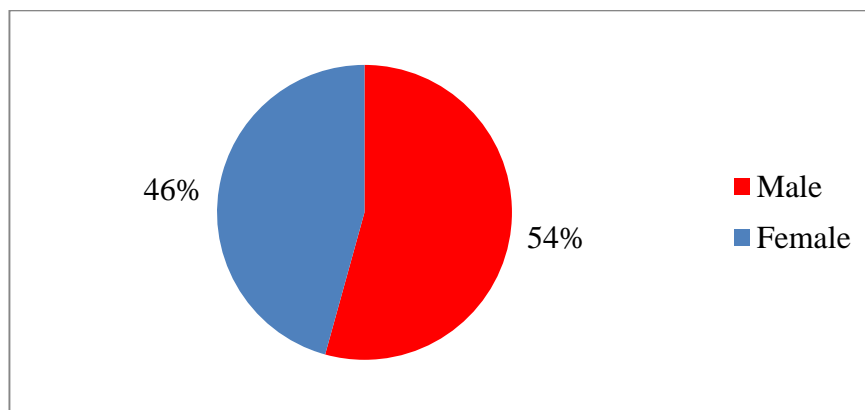


Figure 4.1: Gender of respondents

The findings in Table 4.1 indicate that there was a fairly even split in gender with 54.0% of the respondents being male while 46.0% were females. This result implies that slightly more males visited MMNR. Similar previous studies of nature based tourists indicate a similar pattern (Suntikul et al, 2016;Togoch & Koki, 2018). The possible explanation is that men are more adventurers than females.

4.3.2 Age of Respondents

The respondents were given three age brackets from which they would indicate their age. Age distribution was to be compared with results from similar studies and as such compare overall findings. The results are in Figure 4.2.

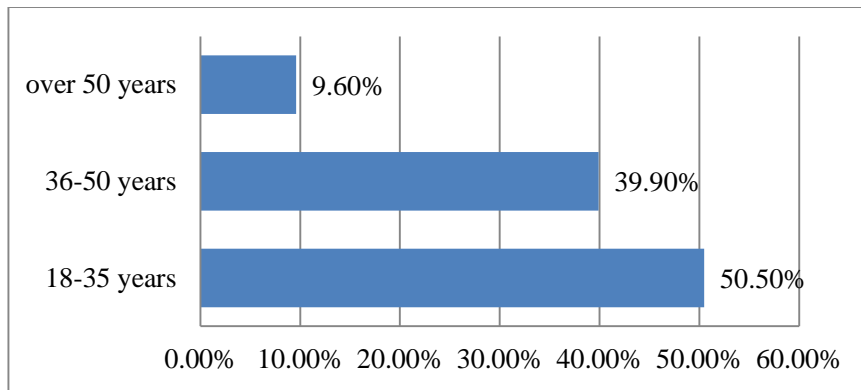


Figure 4.2: Age of respondents

The results indicate that the majority of the tourists were aged between 18-50 years, constituting up to 90.4% of the respondents. Persons older than 50 years constituted only 9.6% of the respondents. The possible explanation for this result is the fact that travelling on holiday by road requires some level of fitness due to the condition of the roads as well as money to spend. These results corroborate the findings of a great deal of the previous work in this field by Suntikul, et al, (2016) and Chilembe & Mweiwa (2016).

4.3.3 Region of Origin of Respondents

The respondents were asked to indicate the continent from which they were from. Since the visitor data for MMNR was available, the aim was to check whether the sample reflected the general trend in the visitor data and as such was representative of the target population. The results are as shown in Figure 4.3.

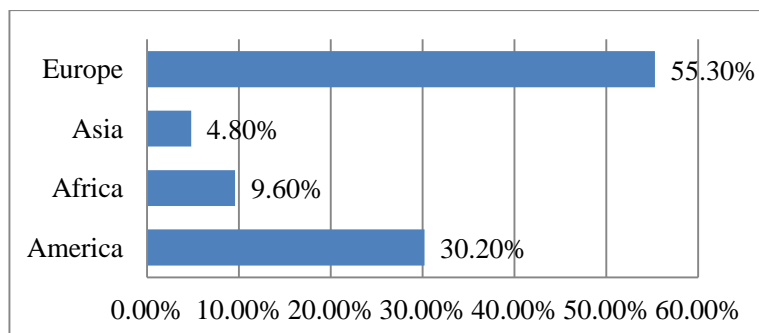


Figure 4.3: Region of Origin of respondents

The results indicate that of the tourists visiting the MMNR, 55.3% were European, 30.2% Americans and 9.6% Africans. Asians recorded 4.8% of the respondents. These findings are consistent with previous visitor data for MMNR (Appendix v) that indicates that Non-residents constitute the highest number of visitors to Masai Mara throughout the year. As noted by Suntinkul, W. *et al.* (2016), since the colonial era, most of the tourists visiting Kenya have traditionally been from Europe and America. However, today, tourist origins have become more diverse expanding to Asia, Africa and the Middle East. Asians especially the Chinese however visit mainly during the high tourism season of July- October (Suntikul, *et al.*, 2016).

4.3.4 Source of Information about MMNR

The respondents were asked to indicate how they learnt about MMNR. The aim was to gain extra information not directly related to the study but that could be of benefit to tour operators. The results are as shown in Figure 4.4.

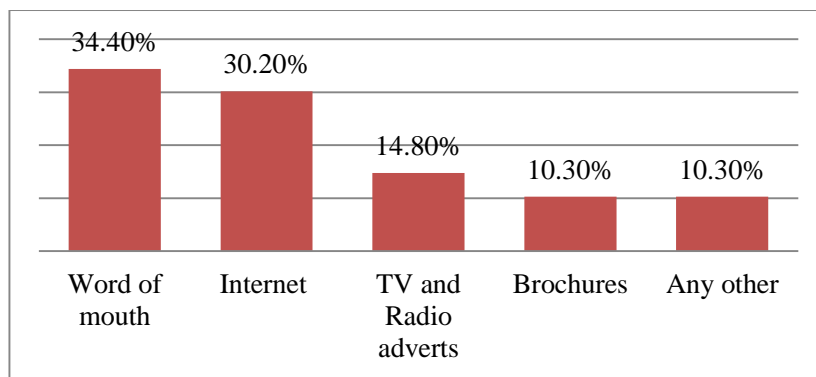


Figure 4.4: Source of information about MMNR

The results indicate that most of the respondents' first encountered information regarding the MMNR from friends (34.4%) and from the internet (30.2%). These findings are consistent with previous studies that indicate the importance of word of mouth from friends and family as an important source of information for potential tourists (Bimonte & Puzo,

2016; Chang, Chou, Wu, 2017). The use of the internet to search for tourist information has increased as well as the use of social media and travel blogs (Hughes, Wang, & Shu 2015). Online sales and information from social networks is another major source of tourist information (Du Plessis, 2015).

4.3.5 Purpose of Visit

The respondents were asked about their purpose of visit to establish the main reason why they choose MMNR from among other destinations. The results are as shown in Figure 4.5.

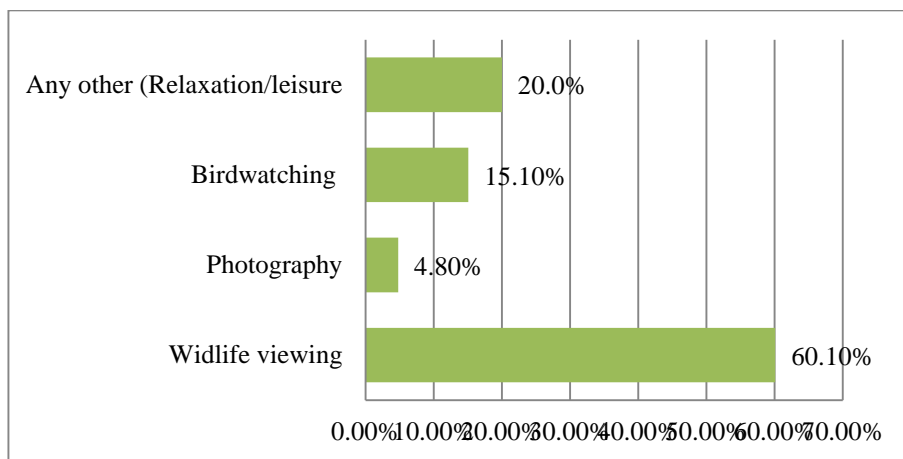


Figure 4.5: Purpose of visit

The findings indicate that the majority of the respondents (60.1%) were visiting MMNR for wildlife viewing opportunities. Relaxation and leisure accounted for 20.0% while a significant 15.1% came for bird watching. The possible explanation for this result is that Kenya's tourism is mainly wildlife based (Suntikul, *et al.*, 2016) and MMNR offers the best viewing opportunities. Wild animals especially the big game holds a particular fascination with tourists. In Kenya particularly, the presence of the Big Five is a major attraction to the tourists with the annual wildebeest migration in the MMNR being a major event that draws tourists from all over the world to witness the unique spectacle (Bandari, 2018).

4.4 Tour Guiding Competencies and their Influence on Customer Satisfaction

The first objective sought to examine tour guiding competencies and their influence on customer satisfaction in Narok County. The respondents were asked to indicate the tour guiding competencies that they considered important to their satisfaction and rate them based on importance. Table 4.1 present the results.

Table 4.1: Guiding competencies and their influence on customer satisfaction

	Count	Mean		Std. Deviation
	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic
Strong communication skills	311	3.43	.060	1.050
Improvisational skills	311	4.20	.055	.974
Enthusiasm	311	4.16	.054	.959
Punctuality	311	4.51	.052	.912
Keen sense of direction	311	4.40	.041	.729

All variables produced high mean scores and low standard deviations. Which means that majority (84.9%) agreed that strong communication skills, improvisational skills, enthusiasm, punctuality and keen sense of direction have an effect on customer satisfaction with tour guide services at MMNR.

4.4.1 Hypothesis Testing H01

Hypothesis testing: H_1 : Tour guiding competencies have no significant influence on customer satisfaction in Narok County. Linear regression analysis was used to test the null hypothesis. The model summary, ANOVA and coefficients were analysed as shown in the respective Tables 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4. Table 4.2 indicates the degree of correlation between the variables.

Table 4.2: Model Summary of tour guiding competencies

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of Estimate	Change Statistics of the R Square Change	F	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.805 ^a	.764	.750	15.96639	.764	11.933	5	305	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Keen sense of direction, Enthusiasm, Strong communication skills, Improvisational skills, Punctuality

Table 4.2 provides the R and R² values. The R represents the simple correlation which in this case is 0.805 (the “R” column) which indicates a high degree of correlation between tour guiding competencies and customer satisfaction. The R² value normally indicates how much of the total variation in the dependent variable (customer satisfaction) can be explained by the independent variable (tour guiding competencies). In this case, 76.4% can be explained. Table 4.3 indicates the statistical significance of the regression model applied.

Table 4.3: Tour Guiding Competencies ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	15210.677	5	3042.135	11.933	.000 ^b
	Residual	77752.358	305	254.926		
	Total	92963.035	310			

a. Dependent Variable: customer satisfaction
b. Predictors: (Constant), Keen sense of direction, Enthusiasm, Strong communication skills, Improvisational skills, Punctuality

The ANOVA table normally reports how well the regression equation fits the data (i.e. predicts the dependent variable). This is determined by looking at the “regression” row, “sig” column. From this row, it shows that “sig” =0.001 which is less than 0.05, this indicates the statistical significance of the regression model applied (Table 4.3). It implies that the regression model statistically significantly predicts the outcome variable (i.e.it is a good fit for the data).

Table 4.4 provides the regression equation. Ideally, the coefficients table provides necessary information to predict whether tour guiding competencies statistically contribute to the model.

Table 4.4: Coefficients for tour guiding competencies

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
	B	Std. Error				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
(Constant)	70.141	6.694		10.479	.000	56.969	83.313
1 Strong communication skills	.748	1.788	.619	1.095	.024	5.476	10.560
1 Improvisational skills	.616	1.572	.035	.392	.015	-2.477	3.709
Enthusiasm	9.704	1.702	.538	5.701	.000	-6.354	13.053
Punctuality	11.295	2.974	.595	3.798	.000	17.148	35.443
Keen sense of direction	7.862	2.656	.331	2.961	.003	2.637	13.088

a. Dependent Variable: customer satisfaction

From the Table 4.4, the regression equation can be presented as; Customer satisfaction =70.141+ 0.748 (strong communication skills) +0.616 (improvisational skills) +9.704 (enthusiasm) +11.295 (punctuality)+7.862(keen sense of direction). This regression equation shows that for every additional element of tour guiding especially punctuality, keen sense of direction and enthusiasm, customer satisfaction will be expected to increase as per the values indicated in the “B” column. Further, the variables having produced low P value (0.003=P=0.000) implies that this finding can be generalized to the population from which the sample was drawn. The findings from the regression analysis imply that tour guiding

competencies have a statistically significant influence on customer satisfaction. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative accepted.

4.4.2 Qualitative results for competencies

The quantitative results (Appendix IV) differed with the qualitative results to a great extent. In ranking the competencies, tour operators considered knowledge of culture and communication skills were ranked as the most important competency (three interviewees each). Foreign language and academic qualification were both ranked highest by two interviewees each. This contrasts sharply with the competencies ranked highest by the tourist respondents. Tourists considered punctuality, enthusiasm and keen sense of direction as more important competencies influencing customer satisfaction

4.5 Impact of Core Service Delivery Aspects on Customer Satisfaction

The second objective sought to assess the impact of core service delivery aspects on customer satisfaction in Narok County. The respondents were asked to indicate the core service delivery aspects of tour guiding that they considered important to their satisfaction and rate them based on importance. Table 4.5 shows the results.

Table 4.5: Core service delivery aspects

	Count	Mean		Std. Deviation
	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic
Delivery of promised service	311	4.65	.027	.477
Knowledge of the destination	311	4.50	.028	.501
Ability to solve problems	311	4.55	.028	.498
Honesty and trustworthiness	311	4.60	.028	.491

All variables produced high mean scores and low standard deviations (Table 4.5). This means that majority (100%) agreed that delivery of the service promised in the itinerary,

knowledge of the destination, ability to solve problems and honesty and trustworthiness have an influence on customer satisfaction with tour guiding services

4.5.1 Hypothesis Testing - H02

Hypothesis testing: H₂: Core service delivery aspects have no impact on customer satisfaction in Masai Mara National Reserve in Narok County. Linear regression analysis was used to test the null hypothesis. The model summary, ANOVA and coefficients were analysed as shown in the respective tables. Table 4.6 presents model summary on the degree of correlation between the variables.

Table 4.6: Model summary of core service delivery aspects

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of Estimate	Change in R Square	Change in F	df1	df2	Sig.	F Change
1	.696 ^a	.484	.478	12.51726	.484	71.831	4	306	.000	

a. Predictors: (Constant), Delivery of promised service, knowledge of destination, ability to solve problems, Honesty and trustworthiness

The table 4.7 provides the R and R² values. The R represents the simple correlation which in this case is 0.696 (the “R” column) which indicates a high degree of correlation between core service delivery aspects and customer satisfaction. The R² value normally indicates how much of the total variation in the dependent variable (customer satisfaction) can be explained by the independent variable (core service delivery aspects). In this case, 48.4% can be explained. The ANOVA Table 4.7 indicates the statistical significance of the regression model applied.

Table 4.7: ANOVA of Core service delivery aspects

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	45018.397	4	11254.599	71.831	.000 ^b
	Residual	47944.638	306	156.682		
	Total	92963.035	310			

a. Dependent Variable: customer satisfaction
b. Predictors: (Constant), Delivery of promised service, knowledge of destination, ability to solve problems, Honesty and trustworthiness

The ANOVA table (Table 4.7) normally reports how well the regression equation fits the data (i.e. predicts the dependent variable). This is determined by looking at the “regression” row, “sig” column. From this row, it shows that “sig” =0.001 which is less than 0.05, this indicates the statistical significance of the regression model applied. It implies that the regression model statistically significantly predicts the outcome variable (i.e.it is a good fit for the data).

Table 4.8 provides the regression equation coefficient. Ideally, the coefficients table provides necessary information to predict whether tour guiding competencies statistically contribute to the model (by looking at the “sig” column).

Table 4.8: Coefficients for core service delivery aspects

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B		
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	
1	(Constant)	53.929	7.756		6.953	.000	38.667	69.190
	Delivery	7.161	2.565	.748	6.588	.000	2.209	12.113
	Knowledge	4.719	2.454	.715	4.072	.000	9.890	19.549
	Problem solving	1.881	4.261	.630	5.135	.000	3.497	9.265
	Honesty	.881	4.261	.309	.554	.011	9.265	12.497

a. Dependent Variable: customer satisfaction

Regression Equation: Customer satisfaction=53.929+7.161(Delivery of promised service) +4.719 (Knowledge of destination) +1.881(Ability to solve problems) + 0.881(Honesty and trustworthiness). This regression equation shows that for every additional element of core service delivery aspect especially delivery of promised service and knowledge of destination, customer satisfaction will be expected to increase as per the values indicated in the “B” column. Further, the variables having produced low P value (0.003=P=0.000) implies that this finding can be generalized to the population from which the sample was drawn. The findings from the regression analysis imply that core service delivery aspects have a statistically significant influence on customer satisfaction. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative accepted.

4.5.2 Qualitative Results for Core Service delivery

Qualitative results (Appendix IV) indicate that tour operators considered honesty and trustworthiness as the most important core service delivery aspect of tour guiding (eight interviewees). Next was problem solving skills that were ranked highest by 2 interviewees. These quantitative results contrasted with the qualitative results. Quantitative statistics revealed that delivery of the tour as per the itinerary was the most important element followed by problem solving skills. Honesty and trustworthiness was the least significant element.

4.6 Objective 3: Extent of Tour Guides’ Orientation has on Customer Satisfaction in Narok County

The respondents were asked to indicate the tour guide’s orientation that they considered as having a negative influence their satisfaction and rate them based on level of dissatisfaction. Table 4.9 shows the results from the descriptive analysis of the tour guide’s orientation elements on customer satisfaction.

Table 4.9: Descriptive statistics for Tour Guides' customer orientation

	Count Statistic	Mean Statistic	Std. Error	Std. Deviation Statistic
Pressure to buy extra excursions e.g. Masai village	311	4.50	.069	.710
changing itinerary without consulting the guests	311	3.94	.058	1.017
Imposing personal views	311	1.88	.056	.989
Soliciting for a tip	311	4.73	.068	.950

From the findings (Table 4.9), it can be deduced that the variables “pressure to buy extra excursions” (M=4.50, SD=0.069), “soliciting for a tip” (M=4.73, SD=0.068) and “changing itinerary without consulting the guests” (M=3.94, SD=0.058) produced high mean scores and low standard deviations. Which means that majority agreed that pressure to buy extra excursions, changing itinerary without consulting the guests and soliciting for a tip have an influence on customer satisfaction with tour guiding services in MMNR. The variable “imposing personal views” (M=1.88, SD=0.056) produced a low mean score and a low standard deviation. This means that a majority agreed that imposing personal views has no influence on customer satisfaction with tour guiding services in MMNR.

4.6.1 Hypothesis Testing - H03

Hypothesis testing: H₃: The tour guides' customer orientation has no influence on customer satisfaction in Masai Mara National Reserve in Narok County. Linear regression analysis was used to test the null hypothesis. The model summary, ANOVA and coefficients were analysed as shown in the respective Tables 4.10, 4.11 and 4.12. Table 4.10 presents linear regression model summary analysis that indicates the degree of correlation between the variables.

Table 4.10: Model summary for tour guides' orientation

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change in the R Square	F Change	df1	df2	Sig.	F
1	.616 ^a	.380	.371	13.72982	.380	46.788	4	306	.000	

a. Predictors: (Constant), Soliciting for a tip, Pressure to buy extra excursions e.g., Masai village, Imposing personal views, changing itinerary without consulting the guests

Table 4.10 provides the R and R² values. The R represents the simple correlation which in this case is 0.616 (the “R” column) which indicates a high degree of correlation between core service delivery aspects and customer satisfaction. The R² value normally indicates how much of the total variation in the dependent variable (customer satisfaction) can be explained by the independent variable (tour guide customer orientation). In this case, 38.0% can be explained.

Table 4.11 presents ANOVA analysis on statistical significance of the regression model applied.

Table 4.11: ANOVA for tour guides' orientation

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	35279.577	4	8819.894	46.788	.000 ^b
	Residual	57683.459	306	188.508		
	Total	92963.035	310			

a. Dependent Variable: customer satisfaction

b. Predictors: (Constant), Soliciting for a tip, Pressure to buy extra excursions e.g., Masai village, imposing personal views, changing itinerary without consulting the guests

The ANOVA table normally reports how well the regression equation fits the data (i.e., predicts the dependent variable). This is determined by looking at the “regression” row, “sig” column. From this row, it shows that “sig” =0.001 which is less than 0.05, this

indicates the statistical significance of the regression model applied. It implies that the regression model statistically significantly predicts the outcome variable (i.e. it is a good fit for the data).

Table 4.12 presents regression equation coefficients. Ideally, the coefficients table provides necessary information to predict whether tour guiding competencies statistically contribute to the model (by looking at the “sig” column).

Table 4.12: Coefficients for tour guides' orientation

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
	B	Std. Error				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
(Constant)	77.119	2.237		34.482	.000	72.718	81.520
Pressure to buy extra excursions	2.919	.926	.504	3.152	.002	-4.741	1.097
1 Changing itinerary	3.204	1.532	.183	2.092	.037	0.190	6.218
Imposing Personal views	-.412	1.702	-.024	-.242	.809	-3.762	2.937
Soliciting for tips	7.598	.935	.530	8.124	.000	5.758	9.439

a. Dependent Variable: customer satisfaction
b. Predictors: (Constant), Soliciting for a tip, Pressure to buy extra excursions e.g. Masai village, imposing personal views, changing itinerary without consulting the guests

Regression Equation: Customer satisfaction=77.119+2.919(Pressure to buy extra excursions) +3.204(changing itinerary without consulting guests) +7.598 (Soliciting for a tip)- 0.412 (Imposing personal views). This regression equation shows that for every additional element of tour guide orientation (apart from the “imposing personal views” variable)) customer satisfaction will be expected to decrease as per the values indicated in the “B” column. Further, the variables having produced low P value (0.003=P=0.000)

implies that this finding can be generalized to the population from which the sample was drawn. The findings from the regression analysis imply that the tour guides' orientation has a statistically significant influence on customer satisfaction. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative accepted.

4.6.2 Quantitative Results for tour guide's orientation

Out of the 10 tour operators interviewed (Appendix IV), four had no written policy on tipping, three mentioned to the tourists orally during briefing while three had a written guideline that was shared with the guests. On sale of extra excursions, five had no such policy guideline, three had a written one and the other two did not allow tour guides to arrange extra excursions with the tourists.

The quantitative results were to a large extent in agreement with the qualitative findings. However, it is clear that only a few companies have put in place clear measures to handle aspects of the tour guide's orientation that are the cause of dissatisfaction to the tourists.

4.7 Objective 4: Moderating Effect of the Status of the Sightseeing Vehicle on Customer Satisfaction in Narok County

The respondents were asked to indicate the elements of the status of the sightseeing vehicle that they considered important to their satisfaction and rate them based on importance. Table 4.13 shows the results from the descriptive analysis of the effects of the status of the sightseeing vehicle elements on customer satisfaction.

Table 4.13: Descriptive statistics for effect of status of sightseeing vehicle

	Count	Mean		Std.
	Statistic	Statistic	Std.	Deviation
			Error	Statistic
Working air conditioning	311	3.38	.089	1.575
Driver uniformed and clean	311	4.04	.067	1.173
Mature careful driver	311	4.56	.028	.498
Quality seat belts	311	3.94	.066	1.169
Regular cleaning	311	3.94	.049	.872
Emergency/exit doors	311	4.13	.055	.968

From the findings (Table 4.13), it can be deduced that all variables produced high mean scores and low standard deviations apart from working air conditioning which produced a lower mean score and high standard deviation (M= 3.38 SD= 1.575). This means that a majority a uniformed and mature careful driver, quality seat belts, regular cleaning and emergency exits are important variables of the status of the sightseeing vehicle that have an influence on customer satisfaction with tour guiding services in MMNR.

4.7.1 Hypothesis Testing - H04

Hypothesis testing: H₄: Status of the sightseeing vehicle has no moderating effect on the relationship between tour guiding service quality and customer satisfaction in Narok County. Moderated multiple regression analysis was used to test the null hypothesis. The model summary, ANOVA and coefficients were analysed as shown in the respective Tables 4.15, 4.16 and 4.17. Table 4.15 presents moderated multiple regression analysis model summaries.

Table 4.14: Model summary of the effect of the status of sightseeing vehicle on the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction

Model	R	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change in R Square	F	df1	df2	Sig.
1	.644 ^a	.414	13.31810	.414	72.371	3	307	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), comp status centred, status centred, competencies centred

The model summary table 4.14 indicates that the R value was 0.644 which denotes a medium correlation between the independent variable (tour guiding service quality), the moderating variable (status of sightseeing vehicle) and the dependent variable (customer satisfaction). Table 4.15 presents ANOVA analysis on statistical significance of the regression model applied.

Table 4.15: ANOVA of the effect of the sightseeing vehicle

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	38509.904	3	12836.635	72.371	.000 ^b
	Residual	54453.131	307	177.372		
	Total	92963.035	310			

a. Dependent Variable: customer satisfaction
b. Predictors: (Constant), comp status centred, status centred, competencies centred

The ANOVA table normally reports how well the regression equation fits the data (i.e. predicts the dependent variable). This is determined by looking at the “regression” row, “sig” column. From this row, it shows that “sig” =0.001 which is less than 0.05, this indicates the statistical significance of the regression model applied. It implies that the regression model statistically significantly predicts the outcome variable (i.e.it is a good fit

for the data). The ANOVA Table 4.15 yielded a probability significant value of 0.000 which denotes that the model applied was a good fit for the data.

Table 4.16 presents regression equation coefficients. Ideally, the coefficients table provides necessary information to predict whether tour guiding competencies statistically contribute to the model (by looking at the “sig” column).

Table 4.16: Coefficients of the effect of the status of the sightseeing vehicle

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
	B	Std. Error				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	88.088	.840	104.834	.000	86.434	89.741
	Competencies centred	-.209	.252	-.046	.409	-.705	.288
	Status centred	2.545	.202	.639	.000	2.147	2.943
	Comp status centred	.653	.179	.018	.038	-.300	.405

a. Dependent Variable: customer satisfaction

b. Predictors: (Constant), comp status centred, status centred, competencies centred

The results in the coefficients table (Table 4.16) show that the moderating variable (status of sightseeing vehicle) statistically significantly accounted for a high proportion of the relationship between tour guiding service quality and customer satisfaction ($\beta=0.653$; $P=0.038$). This result implies that status of the sightseeing vehicle had a statistically significant moderating effect on the relationship between tour guiding service quality and customer satisfaction. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative accepted.

4.7.2 Qualitative results for Status of Sight-seeing Vehicle

Interview results (Appendix IV) indicate that out of ten tour operators, five considered proper car insurance as the most important aspect of the status of the sight-seeing vehicle. Three said properly licensed guide and two considered communication equipment as the most important. The qualitative results were also to some extent in agreement with the quantitative findings because the tourists considered a mature careful driver as the most important aspect.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

This section presents the discussions of findings of the study. It discusses the overview of the findings based on the specific objectives.

5.2 Objective 1: Tour Guiding Competencies and their Influence on Customer

Satisfaction

The descriptive statistics indicated that all tour guiding variables produced high mean scores and low standard deviations. Which means that majority of the respondents agreed that strong communication skills, improvisational skills, enthusiasm, punctuality and keen sense of direction have an effect on customer satisfaction with tour guide services. The possible explanation for this finding can be found in the multiple roles of a tour guide. These roles include; tour leaders, interpreters, pathfinders, information givers, animators, solving problems related to travel and mentor for tourists (Min, 2016, Centikaya & Oter, 2016).

Tourists will perceive the quality of the tour guiding service based on how well he/she demonstrates these competencies in performing the variety of roles expected of the guide. These professional competencies of tour guides are a very important part of the travel product and they can influence the tourists' perceptions on service quality of the tour guides and improve tourist satisfaction (Al Jahwari, Sirakaya-Turk & Altintas 2016, Mossberg, 2014). This study produced results which corroborate the findings of a great deal of the previous work in this field. Studies by Kuo et al, (2016), and Hoarau, (2014) indicate that tourists view tour guiding competencies as important to the service quality of the tour guide.

All the variables were also found to positively and significantly influence customer satisfaction. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative accepted.

However, the results of this study further highlight the importance of punctuality, keen sense of direction and enthusiasm in enhancing the service quality of tour guiding and tourist satisfaction. Although no specific ranking of the competencies in the order of importance was found in reviewed literature, this was somewhat surprising as most other studies emphasize on communication skills (Al Jahwari et al, 2016 and Araslı & Baradarani (2014).

The possible explanation for this could be found in the visitor data that shows that most of the tourists were from Europe and America who have a culture of being punctual while Africans are generally a bit more relaxed with time keeping (Pauw, Collins & Gouws, 2017). This implies that tour guides in MMNR, who mainly Kenyans are serving a predominantly Western clientele need to take punctuality seriously as it greatly affects the tourists' perception of the entire tour guiding experience and thus customer satisfaction. As mentioned in the literature review, previous researchers have shown the importance of tour guiding competencies in the service quality of tour guiding (Centikaya & Oter, 2016, Magdy, 2016 and Cetin & Dincer, 2014). A professional tour guide must exhibit professional qualities in order to deliver quality and dependable tour guiding services. Kumar (2016) found out that Competencies required for guiding include; strong communication skills, excellent personality, good memory, improvisational skills, enthusiasm, sense of humour and punctuality as well as a keen sense of direction.

Further, tour guiding professional competencies have been shown to have a very important impact on tourist satisfaction. The results of this study are also consistent with those of Chen, Weiler, Young & Lee, (2016) and Al Jahwari et al (2016) who found out that tour guiding competencies significantly and positively influence the service quality of the tour guiding service and hence enhance tourist satisfaction. Al Jahwari et al posit that, enhancing tour guiding competencies allows the tourists to perceive the service rendered by the guides

to be of high quality. This in turn effectively enhances tourist satisfaction. The results are also in agreement with those of Centikaya and Oter (2016) who found that there is a significant relationship between tourist satisfaction, customer loyalty and tour guiding services and the competencies of the tour guide.

Interviews with tour operators revealed that a majority regarded communication skills and excellent personality as the most important competences for tour guides. This is what they look out for in hiring tour guides. Punctuality, enthusiasm and keen sense of direction were not as highly regarded by most tour operators interviewed. This is in contrast to their customers who regard punctuality, enthusiasm and keen sense of direction as very critical to their perception of the tour guiding service quality. In addition, while most of these competencies are taught in formal tour guide training, tour operators continue to use tour guides without formal training but who have gained experience through working.

These findings have important implications for regulators, tour companies, training institutions and tour operators. For the Tour Operators, they should recruit guides with adequate tour guiding competencies. From the training institutions, they should ensure that their curriculum and teaching methods equip trainees with appropriate professional competencies and attitudes required in the performance of the various tour guide roles. For the tour guides, they should work at improving their professional competencies as they advance in their careers. They should use guest feedback as a basis of making requisite improvements to their competencies. For TRA, it is important that only persons with tourism related training are licensed to work in the industry.

5.3 Objective 2: Impact of Core Tour Guiding Service Delivery Aspects on Customer Satisfaction

The results indicate that all core tour guiding service delivery variables impact on service quality. This means that delivery of the service promised in the itinerary, knowledge of the destination, ability to solve problems and honesty and trustworthiness have an influence on customer satisfaction with tour guiding services in MMNR. These findings are consistent with those of Weiler & Walker (2014) who refers to core service delivery aspects in tour guiding as fundamental services that the tour guide must deliver consistently throughout the tour. The findings are also in agreement with several studies that identified core service delivery aspects in tour guiding. These include; Rodger, Taplin & Moore (2015) and Kumar (2016) who identified service quality attributes in tour guiding which are considered as key service delivery aspects in tour guiding.

The results also indicated that core service deliver aspects had a positive and significant influence on customer satisfaction. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative accepted. In addition, the results indicated that delivery of promised service (B=7.161) and knowledge of the destination (B=4.719) are the most important elements of core service delivery aspects in tour guiding influencing customer satisfaction at MMNR. This enhances the position that the perceived quality of a guided tour depends largely on the tour guide's ability to deliver the promised service (Pereira, 2015, Min, 2016). According to Centikaya & Oter (2015), tour guides provide commentary on places visited and thus a good knowledge of the areas visited is critical to customer satisfaction.

The possible explanation for these results is that during the purchasing of a tour from a tour operator or travel agency, the seller makes a promise which is then bought by the tourist. When the tourist arrives at the destination, the responsibility of delivering the promised

services is taken up by the tour guide (Centikaya & Oter, 2015). The tour guide is therefore expected to take the guest to the attractions and especially for MMNR, be able to take the guest to the best spots for game viewing opportunities. The tour guide also acts as the mediator between the tourists on one hand and the host communities and environment (Cetin & Yarkan, 2017). He/she should also be able to moderate interactions between the participants on the tour. Therefore, the tour guide plays a critical role in the delivery of core services to the tourists (Pathirana & Gnanapala, 2015).

From the reviewed literature, previous studies in tour guiding have shown the importance of delivery of core tour guiding services on the tourists' overall perception of guiding services received. This perception is critical to customer satisfaction. According to Weiler & Walker (2014), a tour guide who is competent in the core service delivery aspects of tour guiding can deliver guiding services exceeding the expectation of the customer. Good knowledge of the areas visited is another critical area in service delivery for customer satisfaction. He/she will then be able to give factual information to the visitors. A tour guide, who is knowledgeable and interprets the destination's attractions in a pleasant and helpful manner, has the ability to transform the tourists' visit from a tour into a memorable experience (Chen, Young & Lee, 2016).

Gnanapala (2015) in a study in Sri Lanka on implications of tourists' perception and satisfaction on destination management highlighted this. He observed that tour guides lacked adequate information leading to low perception and unsatisfied guests. Similar observations have been recorded in Tanzania (Philemon, 2015), Ethiopia (Tsegaw & Teresa, 2017) and in Malawi (Chilembwe & Mweiwa, 2014).

Interviews with tour operators revealed some interesting findings on core service delivery aspects. Tour operators regard honesty and trustworthiness as the most important aspects.

This is directly related to the enormous resources entrusted to the tour guides by the operators especially company assets such as vehicles, clients and large sums of money. Problem solving and delivery of the promised service rank lower for the tour operators. In delivering the promised itinerary, the most important aspects to the tourists, tour companies may be contributing to the failure of the tour guide. Ideally, tour companies should have written itineraries that they give to the guests before departure and give a copy of the same to the tour guide. This is what is to be implemented. However, a number of tour operators admitted to sending the tour guides on a tour with just an oral briefing and no written document to follow. These tour operators take it that as long as the tour guide is told where to take the guests, he/she knows what to do. In some cases, some activities have been missed because the tour guide was not well briefed. This is an area of concern because the results of this study indicate that tourists regard delivery of the exact promised service as critical to their satisfaction.

These findings have important implications for both tour operators and tour guides. Tour guides should ensure that they deliver what is promised in the itinerary to the guests. They should continually endeavor to learn more about the destination and its attractions so that their interpretation of the attractions is correct. With so much information from internet and other sources, it is critical that tour guides give only factual information as the guests can easily cross-check all this information. The authenticity of the information given to the guests by the tour guide is an important aspect of how the tourist will view the service quality of the guiding experience. It is also important that the tour guides moderate the interactions between the tourists and the host communities in an honest and truthful manner without trying to take advantage either way. Should the guests perceive dishonesty on the part of the tour guide, then they will perceive the guiding service negatively.

To the tour operators, it is important that they send out tourists with tour guides who have the required knowledge, skills and attitudes to deliver the itinerary fully. A background check on the tour guides' character is very important especially because to be a tour guide in Kenya, there is no particular vetting and there is ease of entry. While the government is doing its part in vetting guides who seek licenses, there are many more guides who do not seek licenses and still operate as freelancers and also as employees of tour operators. Many may not seek licensing because they lack basic education requirements while some may not be able to get a police clearance certificate, a requirement possibly due to criminal records.

5.4 Objective 3: Influence of Tour Guide's Customer Orientation on Customer

Satisfaction

From the results, the variables "pressure to buy extra excursions" ($M=4.50$, $SD=0.069$), "soliciting for a tip" ($M=4.73$, $SD=0.068$) and "changing itinerary without consulting the guests" ($M=3.94$, $SD=0.058$) produced high mean scores and low standard deviations. Which means that majority of the respondents (84.2%) agreed that these aspects had a negative influence on customer satisfaction with tour guiding services in MMNR. The variable "imposing personal views" ($M=1.88$, $SD=0.056$) produced a low mean score and a low standard deviation. This means that a majority agreed that imposing personal views had no influence on customer satisfaction with tour guiding services in MMNR.

The possible explanation for these results could be found in a tour guide role less focussed on; that of making their interactions with the guests economically profitable to them and/or their companies (Magdy, 2016 and Pathirana & Gnanapala 2015). In Kenya and indeed many countries, tour guides are poorly remunerated and they have to make up by pushing the guests to buy extra excursions and shopping in order to earn commissions and boost their income. Tips from guests also constitute a great percentage of their earnings. In some

cases, the guides may change the itinerary to create time for these extra activities. All these actions impact negatively on the perceived quality of the guiding services hence influence customer satisfaction negatively (Chen Weiler Young & Lee 2016).

The results further indicate that soliciting for tips by the tour guides ($B=7.598$) and Pressure to buy extra excursions ($B=2.919$), having also produced low P values ($0.003=P=0.000$) had a high degree of significant negative influence on customer satisfaction. Changing itinerary without informing the guests had a moderate significant negative effect. However, the variable ‘imposing personal views’ showed no significant influence. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative accepted.

These findings of the current study are generally consistent with the findings in other studies in this field (Choo, Tan & Fernando, 2018 and Cheng, Weiler, Young & Lee, 2016). However, it is surprising that a majority of the guests did not perceive imposing of personal views as influencing customer satisfaction in MMNR. The possible explanation for this finding could be that tour guides in MMNR mainly interpret wildlife to the tourists. This interpretation is mainly based on observation and scientific facts with very little room for personal views. Many studies where imposing personal views is viewed as negatively influencing customer satisfaction were done at destinations where the main attractions are historical and cultural (Weiler & Walker, 2014, Sood & Chougale 2016 and Tsegaw & Teresa 2017). Tour guides working in such destinations may introduce their own biased opinions into their interpretations.

A tour guides’ orientation can be seen in their attitude towards their job. Is the tour guide’s orientation focussed on personal economic interest or a genuine desire to provide superior guiding services that meet the tourists needs? In most cases, tour guides are recruited for short terms during the high season and could be jobless for long periods. This leads to low

income and salaries resulting in orientation towards self-economic interests in their interactions with tourists (Konings & Vanormelingen, 2015).

In some cases, low remuneration has turned tour guides from their main roles of interpretation and information givers to salesmen as they seek to bridge the gap. (Al Jahwari et al, 2016) and Cheng, Weiler, Young & Lee, 2016). Zero commissioning occurs when competition among tour operators is very intense and based on price. In such cases, some operators sell the tours at prices less than the actual cost (Weiler and Walker, 2014). To recover the loss, the tour operators do not pay the tour guide. Instead, a financial burden is placed on the guide in pushing for tourist shopping and the marketing of optional tours (Magdy, 2016). The guide is then paid a commission from these extra sales. In such circumstances, the tour guide may not be fully customer oriented. Instead, he/she has to take up the responsibility of trying to sell extra excursions so as to make some money for the company as well as for themselves. This ends up distracting them from their core duties to salesmen pushing the guests to shopping and buying of extra excursions.

In interviewing tour operators, it was clear that they all agreed that tips were an important source of income for the tour guides. Some of the operators had a tipping guideline which they shared with the guests before the tour. Some had it in their oral briefing while some just left it to the guests to decide based on the service they receive. Most admitted that this was a conflict area in their operations because by giving a guideline, it would appear like an obligation to the guests. On the other hand, if the issue is left purely to the guests, some nationalities may not have a tipping culture thus disadvantaging the tour guides. On selling of extra excursions, a majority of tour operators agreed that tour guides earn commissions from the extra excursions. This is to supplement their income. This is also a conflict area

because sometimes the tour guide will push the tourists too hard to buy leading to complaints from the guests.

These findings have important implications for the government. The government must put in place policies that ensure fair competition among tour operators to ensure that competition is not based on cost but on quality of service. When there is stiff competition based on cost, tourists, being sensitive to price will go for the cheaper alternative which could even be below the actual cost of the tour. In such cases, the tour guide will always be underpaid and left to their own devices in bridging the income gap. They will keep pushing tourists to buy extra excursions as well as solicit openly for tips. If they can miss an attraction and save the entry fees, they will do so in order to make more. The government should enforce laws on minimum wages as well as ensure tour guides employment is regulated. When the needs of the tour guide are taken care of, then they can be fully orientated to the needs of the guests, delivering high quality services that lead to enhanced customer satisfaction.

5.5 Objective 4: Moderating Effect of the Status of the Sightseeing Vehicle on Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction

From the descriptive analysis, it can be deduced that all variables (apart from working air conditioning $M= 3.38$ $SD= 1.575$) produced high mean scores and low standard deviations (Table 4.14). This means that a majority (79.4%) agreed that; a uniformed, mature and careful driver, quality seat belts, regular cleaning and emergency exits are important attributes of the sightseeing vehicle that have an influence on customer satisfaction with tour guiding services in MMNR.

While previous studies have emphasized on the need for air conditioning in sightseeing vehicles (Lamtrakul & Pimonsathen, 2010 and Jomnonkwao *et al.*, 2015), the present study

found that the majority did not find this variable as having an influence on customer satisfaction. A possible explanation for this because these previous studies focussed vehicles travelling for long distances. The r present study focuses on vehicles doing shorter distances within MMNR. Besides, sightseeing vehicles in MMNR have open roofs to allow for better game viewing and wildlife photography and therefore the use for air-conditioning is not practical.

The results show that the moderating variable (status of sightseeing vehicle) statistically significantly accounted for a high proportion of the relationship between tour guiding service quality and customer satisfaction ($\beta=0.653$; $P=0.038$). This result implies that status of the sightseeing vehicle had a statistically significant moderating effect on the relationship between tour guiding service quality and customer satisfaction. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative accepted.

A possible explanation for this finding is that the sightseeing vehicle is where the guests spend most of their waking hours out in the MMNR on game drives. It is the means through which the tour guide will move the guests from one attraction to another while interpreting the attractions. The condition of the vehicle therefore becomes an important part of the tour guiding service (Joewono, Tarigan & Susilo 2016). As such, tourists will perceive the entire tour guiding experience as being of high quality or not depending on also how comfortable and safe it was in the vehicle (Rajeswari & Kumari, 2014 and Ratanavaraha & Jomnonkwao, 2014). Besides, giving information, the guide is also judged on his/her suitability as a driver. A safe and mature guide who also keeps the vehicle clean (Jomnonkwao, Siridhara & Ratanavaraha, 2015) and in good working condition has a better chance of delivering high quality of tour guiding services. On the contrary, if the vehicle is not safe and the tour guide does not clean them, the chances of the tourists perceiving the tour guiding services

negatively are higher and hence low customer satisfaction (Currie & Falconer 2014; Mahmoud & Hine 2016).

In reviewing the literature, no findings were found on moderating effect of the status of the sightseeing vehicle on the relationship between tour guiding service quality and customer satisfaction. This is a new finding and therefore a contribution to knowledge since no such relationship has been recorded in literature. However, further research needs to be done in this area factoring more aspects of the sightseeing vehicle status such as body condition, risks of accidents, wheels, accessories among others.

Interviews with tour operators revealed that a majority considered the status of the sightseeing vehicle as important to the service quality of the entire tour. The outside appearance, interior condition and newness were highly regarded aspects. Many of the large tour companies maintain a fleet of their own and thus ensure the vehicles are well maintained. Smaller companies mainly engage freelance tour guides on need to basis. Most tour operators were also keen on engaging mature careful tour guides with relevant licenses. In addition, the larger operators issue their tour guides (both full time employees and those contracted on short term) with company uniforms.

These findings have important implications for tour operators and government. For tour operators, they must ensure that they operate well maintained tourist vehicles. In most cases, newer vehicles tend to be in better condition thus the importance of upgrading the fleets every so often. Vehicles hired from other companies and/or freelance guides should also be subjected to quality control and certified before being assigned duties. Cleaning of the tourist vehicles should also be prioritized. It is also important that tour companies are concerned with the driving skills of the tour guides and if need be, upgrade their skills. Tour companies would also be encouraged to have uniformed tour guides as part of branding. For

the government, there is need to enhance the vetting of tour guides' driving skills to ensure that only qualified persons are licensed. The government should also put stringent vehicle inspection for tourist vehicles to ensure that un-roadworthy vehicles are not used for tourist transportation.

CHAPTER SIX

6.0 SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

The findings are based on four specific objectives that were explored. The objectives were to examine tour guiding competencies and their influence on customer satisfaction in Narok County, to assess the impact of core service delivery aspects on customer satisfaction in Narok county, to determine the extent that tour guides' customer orientation has on customer satisfaction in Narok County and to determine the moderating effect of the status of the sightseeing vehicle on customer satisfaction in Narok county

6.2 Summary of Findings

The summary of the findings are based on data collected and analysed in relation to research objectives and hypotheses. The purpose of the study was to explore the influence of the quality of tour guiding services on customer satisfaction in MMNR, Narok County. The study utilized cross-sectional research design and the questionnaire was the major method of data collection. Purposive sampling was used to select accommodation facilities within and around the MMNR. Simple random sampling was then used to select respondents from the target population. A total of 311 questionnaires from the tourists were collected and analysed. Interviews were also conducted with selected tour operators who take their customers to MMNR to gain a deeper insight into the variables.

6.2.1 Objective 1: Tour Guiding Competencies and their Influence on Customer Satisfaction

The findings of the tour guiding competencies and their influence on customer satisfaction revealed that punctuality and a keen sense of direction were the most important factors influencing customer satisfaction. descriptive analysis revealed that the mean scores of all

the variables ranged between moderate and high. Punctuality (M=4.51) ranked highest followed by Keen sense of direction (M=4.40), Improvisational skills (M=4.20), Enthusiasm (M=4.16) and Strong Communication skills (M=3.43) In addition, all the variables had a low standard deviation ranging between 0.729 (Keen sense of direction) and 1.050 (Strong Communication skills).

6.2.2 Objective 2: Impact of Core Tour Guiding Service Delivery Aspects on Customer Satisfaction

The findings of core service delivery aspects' influence on customer satisfaction revealed that all the factors were important for customer satisfaction. Descriptive analysis revealed that the mean scores of all the variables were high. Delivery of the promised service ranked highest (M=4.65) followed by Honesty and trustworthiness (M=4.60), ability to solve problems (M=4.55) and knowledge of the destination (M=4.50). All the variables produced low standard deviations with the highest being 0.501.

6.2.3 Objective 3: Influence of the Tour Guide's Orientation on Customer Satisfaction

The findings of tour guide's orientations influence on customer satisfaction revealed that soliciting for a tip and pressure to buy extra excursions were the most dissatisfying factors. descriptive analysis of the variable revealed that soliciting for a tip (M=4.73) and pressure to buy extra excursions (4.50) were the variables that produced high mean scores and low standard deviations. Changing the itinerary without consulting the guests produced moderate mean scores (M=3.94) and a higher standard deviation of 1.017. Imposing personal views produced a low mean (M=1.88).

6.2.4 Objective 4: Moderating Effect of the Status of the Sightseeing Vehicle on Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction

The findings of the moderating effect of the status of the sightseeing vehicle on customer satisfaction revealed moderate to high moderating effect by all the variables. Descriptive analysis of the variables revealed that; Mature, careful driver (M=4.56), Emergency exits (M=4.13) and Uniformed and clean driver (M=4.04) had a high moderating effect while Quality seat belts (M=3.94), Regular cleaning (M= 3.94) and Working air conditioning (M=3.38) had a moderate effect. The standard deviation for working air conditioning was high (1.575) revealing inconclusive findings.

Based on the objectives of the study, four hypotheses were formulated and analysed. linear regression analysis was used to determine the simple correlation (R value) and how much the total variation on the dependent variable (customer satisfaction) can be explained by the independent variables (R² value). Regression analysis revealed a moderate to high degree of correlation between all the independent variables and customer satisfaction. Tour guiding Competencies (R, =0.805 R² =76.4%) revealed the highest degree of correlation followed by Core service delivery (R, =0.696 R² =48.4%), Moderating effect of the status of the sightseeing vehicle (R, =0.644 R² =41.4%) and Tour guide's orientation (R, =0.616 R² =38.0%)

The ANOVA analysis was used to report how well the regression equation fits the data (i.e. predicts the dependent variable). This is determined by looking at the “regression” row, “sig” column. The analysis indicated that all the independent variables produced “sig” =0.001 which is less than 0.06. This implies that the regression model statistically significantly predicts the outcome variable (i.e.it is a good fit for the data).

To test the hypotheses, the coefficients tables were generated to provide necessary information to predict whether the independent variables statistically contribute to the model (by looking at the ‘sig’ column. The regression equations for each of the four independent variables were generated. The regression equation showed that the four independent variables had a statistically significant influence on customer satisfaction. Further, the variables having produced low P value ($0.003=P=0.000$) implies that this finding can be generalized to the population from which the sample was drawn. Therefore, the entire null hypotheses were rejected and the alternatives adopted.

A summary of the relationship between the study variables based on the findings is hereby provided in an updated conceptual framework (Figure 6.1)

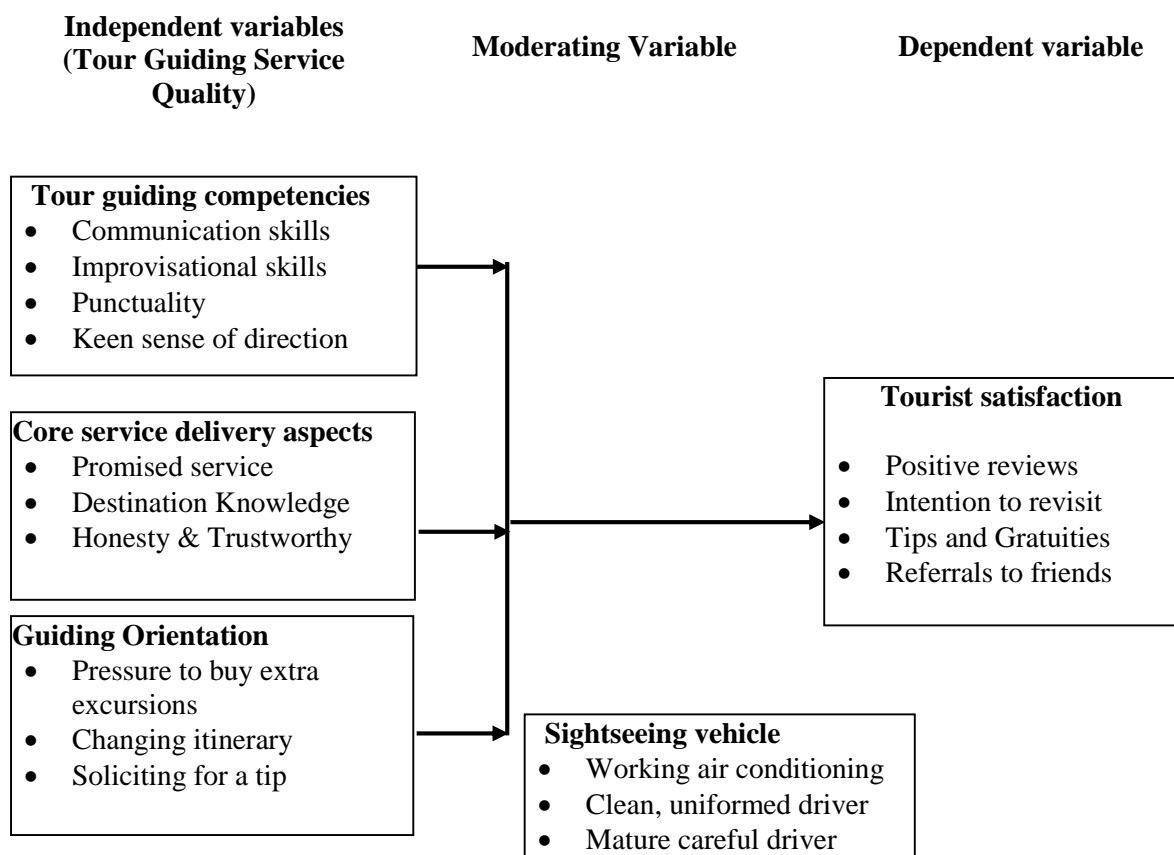


Figure 6.1: Updated Conceptual Framework

6.3 Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study and the testing of the four, research hypothesis that formed the framework of this study, four major conclusions can be made. First, the study set out to examine tour guiding competencies and their influence on customer satisfaction in MMNR. Although all variables were found to positively and significantly influence customer satisfaction, the results of this study further highlight the importance of punctuality, keen sense of direction and enthusiasm in enhancing the service quality of tour guiding and tourist satisfaction. This implies that tour guides in MMNR who are serving a predominantly Western clientele need to take punctuality seriously as it greatly affects the tourists' perception of the entire tour guiding experience and thus customer satisfaction.

Second was to assess the impact of core service delivery aspects on customer satisfaction in Narok county. Core service delivery aspects were found to have a significant influence on customer satisfaction. In addition, delivery of the service promised in the itinerary and knowledge of the destination were the most important variables of core delivery aspects of tour guiding influencing customer satisfaction at MMNR. This enhances the position that the perceived quality of a guided tour depends largely on the tour guide's ability to deliver the promised service.

Third objective was to determine the extent that tour guide's orientation has on customer satisfaction in MMNR. The tour guide's orientation was found to significantly influence tourist satisfaction. Of the variables examined, results indicate that soliciting for tips by the tour guides has the most negative influence on customer satisfaction followed by pressure to buy extra excursions and changing the itinerary without consulting the guests which had only a mild significant influence while imposing of personal views on the guests had no significant influence.

As long as the tour guides are mostly motivated by self-economic interest and not genuine desire to provide high-quality customer service to tourists, the tourists will perceive the guiding service as of low quality therefore negatively affecting customer satisfaction. Tour guides who are focussed on seeking to make the most economic benefit from their interactions with tourists are bound to shun their main roles of interpretation and information givers to tourists leading to customer dissatisfaction.

Forth was to determine the moderating effect of the status of the sightseeing vehicle on customer satisfaction MMNR. The moderating variable (status of sightseeing vehicle) was found to have statistically significantly accounted for a high proportion of the relationship between tour guiding service quality and customer satisfaction. The tour guides are commonly referred to as driver guides because of their dual roles as drivers of the tourist vehicles as well as information givers. The tourists therefore perceive the tour guiding service experience through the guide's ability as a driver, ability as a guide and also the condition of the vehicle they are using. If any of the elements is perceived as being of low quality, then the entire experience will lead to customer dissatisfaction.

6.4 Recommendations for Policy/Practice

Based on the study findings, the following recommendations are made;

1. TRA has done a lot in ensuring that tour guides have relevant training before licensing. However, some of the critical tour guiding competencies such as punctuality, keen sense of direction and enthusiasm has a lot to do with the organisational culture of the tour operator. As such, tour operators should think more about their culture, vision and mission as well as objectives and standard operating procedures. The tour operators should develop a standard operating procedure based on these relevant competencies.

This will then inculcate in their tour guides and ensure similar levels of service regardless of the tour guide.

2. Tour operators must ensure that their tour guides are issued with a copy of the itinerary sold to the guests in order to implement it as agreed between the tour company and the tourist. For newly employed tour guides, the tour operators have a responsibility of ensuring that before sending them out with tourists, the tour guides are familiar with the destination. Familiarization trips during the low tourism season should be a regular. For an industry where many of the tour operators use freelance tour guides whom they hire for short term during the high season, the responsibility is on Tour guide association to ensure that their members are up to date and ready to go out into the field.
3. In order for the tour guide to be fully focussed on delivering quality services to the tourists, their economic wellbeing must be looked into. Daily guiding fees, salaries and the nature of contracts should be looked into to ensure remuneration that matches the responsibility given to them. The employment contracts for tour guides should be addressed by government together with tour operators and tour guide associations. It is important that tour companies develop a clear policy on tipping and the sale of extra excursions. Since tips, though not mandatory form a significant proportion of the income of tour guides globally, tour companies should develop a tipping guideline that is given to the tourists. This guideline will put the guide at ease knowing that if the service they render is good, then they will get their tip. Tour companies should also, inform the tourists beforehand of any extra excursions or activities together with prices. This will not only help the tourists with planning but also protect them from financial exploitation by tour guides.

4. Tour operators should ensure that they have well maintained tourist vehicles. Having a checklist of items to use when assessing the quality of their or hired vehicles is important. A policy of selling off older vehicles and renewing their fleets every five or so years can help in this. Besides, tour companies should, possibly through their associations arrange for specialist training of tour guides in skills such as off-road driving, defensive driving and safe tourist transportation. Tourists will perceive such skills from the onset helping them to relax and settle down to enjoy their tour.

6.5 Recommendations for Further Research

This study provides a general picture of both satisfying and unsatisfying aspects of tour guiding service quality. There is room for further research and the following recommendations for related studies are made.

1. There is need to investigate whether the tour guides in Kenya are equipped with the relevant competencies that the tourist considers important to their satisfaction.
2. There is need for further research in core service delivery aspects of tour guiding in the Kenyan context. The tour guides' perspective would be important so as to compare with the tourists' perspective in this study and determine whether a gap exists and interventions required to bridge the gaps.
3. There is need to further investigate the key issues that determine a tour guide's orientation. Issues around employment and remuneration of tour guides in Kenya such as guiding fees, tips, commissions and salaries/wages would be interesting to investigate. A financially stable tour guide is critical to service quality of the entire safari experience.
4. Tourist transport is another area that is not well researched and documented in the Kenyan context. This study highlights the importance of the status of the Sightseeing

vehicle on the tour guiding service quality. However, the present study focussed on only a few elements of just one aspect of transport; the vehicle. Further research in this area focussing on more aspects of tourist transportation is highly recommended.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Letter of Introduction

James Nguya

Department of Tourism & Hospitality Management

Kenyatta University

P. O. Box 43844-00100

Nairobi

March 2019

Dear Sir/ Madam,

TO ESTEEMED RESPONDENTS

I am a post graduate student at Kenyatta University (MSC Tourism Management) undertaking a research project titled “Tour guide service quality effect on customer satisfaction in Masai Mara National Reserve, Narok County, Kenya”. You have been identified as one of the respondents to facilitate data collection for the study. Please assist by filling the attached questionnaire as objectively as possible. All responses will be treated with strict confidentiality and data collected will be used purely for academic purpose only

Thank you for your co-operation

Yours faithfully,

James Nguya

Principal Researcher

SECTION C: IMPACT OF CORE SERVICE DELIVERY ASPECTS ON QUALITY TOUR GUIDING SERVICES

7. By ticking in the appropriate box please fill the table below to indicate the aspects of core service delivery that the tour guide should adhere to during tour guiding that ensure you receive quality services.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
Delivery of promised service					
Knowledge of the destination					
Ability to solve problems					
Honesty and trustworthiness					

SECTION C: TOUR GUIDES' CUSTOMER ORIENTATION

8. By ticking in the appropriate box please fill the table below to indicate the aspects of the tour guide's orientation that contribute to poor tour guiding service quality.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
Pressure to buy extra excursions e.g., Masai Village					
Changing itinerary without consulting the guests					
Imposing Personal Views					
Soliciting for a tip					

SECTION D: STATUS OF SIGHTSEEING VEHICLE

By ticking in the appropriate box please fill the table below to indicate the aspects of the status of sightseeing (safari) vehicle that ensure you receive quality services.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
Working Air Conditioning					
Driver Uniformed and clean					
Mature Careful Driver					
Quality Seat belts					
Regular cleaning					
Emergency/exit doors					

SECTION D: INFLUENCE OF TOUR GUIDING SERVICE QUALITY ON TOURIST SATISFACTION

9. Please fill the following questionnaire on a scale of **1 to 7** as interpreted below pertaining to service quality. Complete **PART A** by indicating your expectations of the guiding services you are about to receive. Then complete **PART B** indicating your perceptions of the guiding services offered by the tour guide.

PART A (To be completed BEFORE guiding service starts)								
7-Strongly Agree, 6-Somehow Agree, 5-Agree, 4-Not Sure 3-Disagree, 2-Somehow Disagree, 1-Strongly Disagree (SERVIQUAL TEST INSTRUMENT)								
	Tangibility	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
1	The guide has guiding tools like binoculars, books and maps							
2	The tour vehicle is in good condition and adequate for viewing							
3	The tour guide will be dressed in neat uniform and well groomed							
4	The tour Vehicle will be fitted with communication gadgets							
	Reliability							
5	Guiding services will be timely							
6	The tour guide will solve every problem encountered							
7	The tour guide will render guiding services professionally							
8	The tour guide will provide service at the time and location as promised							
9	The guide will provide error-free services							
	Responsiveness							
10	The tour guide will brief me any issue promptly							
11	The tour guide will provide prompt guiding services							
12	The tour guide will be willing to help me when needed							
13	The tour guide will not be too busy to respond to me							
14	The tour guide will instil confidence in me in the tour							
	Assurance							
15	I will feel safe in the hands of the tour guide							
16	My guide will be consistently courteous							
17	The tour guide has knowledge and will answer all questions accordingly							
18	The tour guide will give individualized attention							
19	The tour guide will have adequate guiding time							
	Empathy							
20	The tour guide will give personal attention							
21	The tour guide will prioritize clients' interests							
22	The tour guide will understand specific needs of the client							

PART B (To be completed AFTER guiding services are offered)								
7-Strongly Agree, 6-Somehow Agree, 5-Agree, 4-Not Sure 3-Disagree, 2-Somehow, 1-Strongly Disagree (SERVIQUAL TEST INSTRUMENT)								
	Tangibility	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
1	The guide had guiding tools like binoculars, books and maps							
2	The tour vehicle was in good condition and adequate for viewing							
3	The tour guide was dressed in neat uniform and well groomed							
4	The tour vehicle was fitted with communication gadgets							
	Reliability							
5	Guiding services were timely							
6	The tour guide solved every problem encountered							
7	The tour guide rendered guiding services professionally							
8	The tour guide provided service at the time and location as promised							
9	The guide provided error-free services							
	Responsiveness							
10	The tour guide briefed me any issue promptly							
11	The tour guide provided prompt guiding service as required							
12	The tour guide was willing to help me when required to do so							
13	The tour guide was not be too busy to respond to my queries							
14	The tour guide instilled confidence in me on my expectations							
	Assurance							
15	I felt safe in the hands of the tour guide							
16	My guide was consistently courteous							
17	The tour guide was knowledgeable and answered all questions accordingly							
18	The tour guide gave individualized attention							
19	The tour guide had adequate guiding time							
	Empathy							
20	The tour guide gave personal attention							
21	The tour guide had clients' interests at heart							
22	The tour guide understood specific needs of the client							

10. Please outline any memorable experience the tour guide assisted you to realise

Appendix III: Interview Schedule for Tour Operators

Thank you for agreeing to take on this interview; I am a student at Kenyatta University pursuing a Master's Degree in Tourism Management. I am undertaking a study entitled **'Influence of Tour Guiding Service Quality on Customer Satisfaction around Masai Mara National Reserve in Narok County, Kenya'**. Your help is highly appreciated.

1. Background profile of stakeholder

- a) Which tour operator's association does your organization belong?
- b) What is the total membership (if applicable) to your organization?

2. Tour guiding competencies that influence customer satisfaction

- a) What are the competencies that a tour guide should have to satisfy the customers?
- b) What feedback from tourists regarding tour guiding competencies do you get?

3. Core Tour Guiding service delivery aspects (delivering the itinerary, ability to solve problems, destination knowledge, honesty and trustworthiness)

- a) Are the tour guides delivering on these aspects?
- b) What feedback from tourists regarding these aspects do you get?

4. Tour guides' customer orientation

- a) What is your policy on tipping and extra excursions?
- b) What tourist feedback do you get regarding orientation of the tour guides?

5. Status of the sightseeing vehicle

- a) Do you carry out regular quality control (QC) on the sightseeing vehicles you use?
- b) What tourist feedback from tourists regarding the vehicles do you get?

Appendix IV: Interview schedule Results

Respondent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Background a) Association	KATO	KATO	KATO	KATO	TOSK	KATO	KATO	KATO	KATO	KATO
b) Number of members	KATO: 751 TOSK:									
2. Competencies a) 2 Most important	Communication punctual	Spanish Academics	Creative Humor	Communication Outgoing	French Teamwork	Culture communication	Communication adaptable	Flexible flexible	German outgoing	Spanish culture
b) Tourist feedback										
3. a)2 Most important touring aspects	Honesty knowledge	Trustworthy Problem solving	Trustworthy Fair	Problem solving knowledge	Honesty First aid	Honesty interpretation	Knowledge honesty	Problem solving honesty	Trustworthy interpretation	Honesty knowledge
b) written itinerary	none	outline	detailed	outline	none	Oral	Oral	oral	none	outline
4. Tour guide orientation a) Tipping guideline	none	Oral	Written and shared	none	none	Written and shared	Oral	written	none	oral
b) Extra excursions policy	none	available	Strictly followed	none	none	available	none	Not allowed	none	none

5. Status of sightseeing vehicle	Insurance License driver	Communication gadget insurance	Compliance Newness of vehicle	Seats comfort TLB compliance	Communication insurance	Clean driver wheels	TLB compliance insurance	Fridge newness	Road compliance Clean driver	Driver competency insurance
a) critical issues										
b) negative Feedback	Speeding breakdowns	No fridge dusty	Breakdown dirt	Uncomfortable seats No communication	Worn out tyres dirty	Too slow breakdowns	Old cars Little legroom	no ac long driving hours	Long drives Dangerous traffic	Dusty Old cars

Appendix V: Masai Mara Map



Appendix VI: 2018 Masai Mara Visitor Data

Month	NUMBER OF VISITORS			
	Non-Resident	Resident	Citizen	Total
January	5903	580	2913	9396
February	8218	541	3111	11870
March	8324	834	3698	12826
April	9423	540	4495	14458
May	7898	559	2512	10970
June	19554	925	6056	26653
July	37360	1671	15363	54395
August	40958	1922	17094	59974
September	20382	1013	6608	28003
October	15798	726	6485	23009
November	5151	746	3134	9031
December	19049	1710	9938	30697
Total				291164

Source: GOK, 2019

Appendix VII: Study Sampling Frame

Camps and Lodges in Main MMNR (Excludes Camps in Private Conservancies)

	Facility	Category
1	AA Lodge	Standard
2	Mara Sopa Lodge	Standard
3	Mara Simba Lodge	Standard
4	Keekorok Lodge	Standard
5	Mara Intrepids Lodge	Luxury
6	Siana Springs Camp	Standard
7	Entim Mara Camp	Luxury
8	Fig Tree camp	Standard
9	Governors Camps	Exclusive
10	Cottars Camp	Exclusive
11	Rekero Camp	Standard
12	Sarova Mara Camp	Luxury
13	Sentrim Mara Camp	Standard
14	Kichwa Tembo Camp	Exclusive
15	Mara Bushtops	Exclusive
16	Basecamp Mara Explorer	Standard
17	Azure Mara Camp	Standard
18	Il keliani Camp	Standard
19	Sekenani Camp	Standard
20	OI Moran Camp	Budget
21	Enkorok Camp	Standard
22	Mara Sidai Camp	Budget
23	Mara Bush Camp	Standard
24	Mara Leisure Camp	Standard
25	Oloshaiki Camp	Standard
26	Entumoto Camp	Luxury
27	Tipilikwani Camp	Standard
28	Sala's Camp	Exclusive






	Facility	Category
29	Aruba Camp	Budget
30	Rhino Tourist Camp	Budget
31	Oldarpoi Camp	Budget
32	Kichakani Camp	Budget
33	Crocodile Camp	Budget
34	Mara Ndovu Camp	Budget
35	Duma Camp	Budget
36	Ashnil Mara Camp	Luxury
37	Sand River Camp	Exclusive
38	Elewana Camps	Exclusive
39	Manyata Camp	Budget

Appendix VIII: Item-Total Statistics for research questionnaire

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Strong communication skills	228.48	245.162	.822	.748
Improvisational skills	229.05	244.048	.512	.748
Enthusiasm	228.86	241.429	.580	.746
Punctuality	228.43	262.257	-.447	.766
Keen sense of direction	228.81	270.562	-.853	.774
Delivery of promised service	228.43	262.257	-.447	.766
Knowledge of the destination	228.86	248.629	.492	.752
Ability to solve problems	228.62	260.248	-.243	.764
Honesty and trustworthiness	228.62	260.248	-.243	.764
Pressure to buy extra excursions e.g. Masai village	230.90	247.990	.152	.758
changing itinerary without consulting the guests	231.86	253.429	.184	.757
Imposing personal views	231.81	268.162	-.712	.772
working air conditioning	230.48	217.962	.648	.729
Driver uniformed and clean	229.52	217.762	.813	.724
Mature careful driver	228.48	245.162	.822	.748
Quality seat belts	229.62	241.448	.315	.751
Regular cleaning	229.62	260.648	-.154	.768
Emergency/exit doors	230.48	245.162	.822	.748
The guide have guiding tools like binoculars, books and maps	227.00	264.400	-.240	.773
The tour guide will be dressed in neat uniform and well groomed	227.48	247.962	.332	.753
The tour vehicle will be fitted with communication gadgets	227.00	256.800	-.042	.765
Guiding services will be timely	226.71	234.114	.813	.738
The tour guide will render services professionally	227.38	213.248	.825	.720
The tour guide will provide service at the time and location as promised	226.90	239.590	.614	.744
The tour guide will brief me any issue promptly	227.95	221.848	.626	.732
The tour guide will be provide prompt guiding services	226.90	239.590	.614	.744
The tour guide will be willing to help me when needed	226.71	234.114	.813	.738
The tour guide will not be too busy to respond to me	227.10	247.390	.344	.752
The tour guide will instil confidence in me in the tour	226.90	239.590	.614	.744
My guide will be consistently courteous	227.00	276.400	-.798	.780

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
The tour guide will have knowledge and will answer all questions accordingly	227.48	255.562	.018	.761
The tour guide will give individualized attention	228.52	250.962	.056	.765
The tour guide will have adequate guiding time	228.05	262.048	-.202	.769
The guide had guiding tools like binoculars, books and maps	227.00	274.000	-.558	.780
The tour vehicle was in good condition and adequate for viewing	227.76	251.390	.013	.772
The tour guide was dressed in neat uniform and well groomed	229.67	245.933	.393	.751
The tour vehicle was fitted with communication gadgets	228.14	265.429	-.190	.787
Guiding services were timely	229.90	233.190	.506	.742
The tour guide rendered guiding services professionally	228.62	257.848	-.074	.763
The tour guide provided service at the time and location as promised	229.95	278.848	-.663	.784
The guide provided error-free services	229.14	203.629	.859	.712
The tour guide briefed me any issue promptly	229.71	213.314	.604	.729
The tour guide provided prompt guiding service as required	229.00	257.200	-.053	.766
The tour guide was willing to help when required to do so	228.05	258.848	-.187	.762
The tour guide was not too busy to respond to my queries	229.90	223.990	.604	.734
The tour guide instilled confidence in me on my expectations	228.62	262.648	-.391	.767
My guide was consistently courteous	227.29	245.514	.355	.751
The tour guide was knowledgeable and answered all questions accordingly	229.33	242.533	.257	.754
The tour guide gave individualized attention	228.90	250.390	.119	.759
The tour guide had adequate guiding time	227.67	241.133	.588	.746

Appendix IX: NACOSTI Research License

 REPUBLIC OF KENYA	 NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION
Ref No: 434114	Date of Issue: 10/October/2019
RESEARCH LICENSE	
	
This is to Certify that Mr. JAMES GITONGA of Kenyatta University, has been licensed to conduct research in Narok on the topic: INFLUENCE OF TOUR GUIDE SERVICE QUALITY ON CUSTOMER SATISFACTION IN NAROK COUNTY, KENYA for the period ending : 10/October/2020.	
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Appendix X: Research Approval



KENYATTA UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL

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P.O. Box 43844, 00100
NAIROBI, KENYA
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Internal Memo

FROM: Dean, Graduate School

DATE: 25th September, 2019

TO: James Nguya Gitonga
C/o Hospitality & Tourism
Management Department.

REF: T129/MSA/12173/2009

SUBJECT: APPROVAL OF RESEARCH MASTERS PROPOSAL

We acknowledge receipt of your revised Proposal as per our recommendations raised by the Graduate School Board at its meeting of 26th July, 2019, Entitled, **"Influence of Tour Guide Service Quality on Customer Satisfaction in Narok County, Kenya"**.

You may now proceed with your Data Collection, Subject to Clearance with Director General, National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation.

As you embark on your data collection, please note that you will be required to submit to Graduate School completed Supervision Tracking Forms per semester. The form has been developed to replace the Progress Report Forms. The Supervision Tracking Forms are available at the University's Website under Graduate School webpage downloads.

Thank you.


REUBEN MURIUKI
FOR: DEAN, GRADUATE SCHOOL

C.c. Chairman, Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management.

Supervisors:

1. Dr. Albert C. Kariuki
C/o Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management.
Kenyatta University
2. Mr. Sisinio Muthengi
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RM/nn