

**THE EFFICACY OF CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP ON GUEST LOYALTY
IN TOURIST ACCOMMODATION FACILITIES IN MASAI MARA
NATIONAL RESERVE, NAROK COUNTY, KENYA**

BY

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my beloved husband Simon, my children Victoria and Lee Emmanuel and my late mother Beatrice you are my source of inspiration.

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First, I thank the Almighty God for His grace upon my life as I embarked on this study. He has given me the strength and the will power to come this far. Secondly, my supervisors Dr. Shem Wambugu Maingi and Dr. Rayvisic Mutinda for their support and tireless effort to ensure this thesis come to an end. Thirdly, the lodge and camp managers in Masai Mara for allowing me collect data from their guests. Fourthly, the guests who agreed to answer the questionnaires. Fifthly, all lecturers in the school of Hospitality and Tourism for contributions you have made for this piece of work to be a success. Finally, all friends who have encouraged me, God bless you.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

Commitment exists when the exchange partners believe the relationship is so vital, that deserves maximum efforts to maintain it definitely.

Communication is the ability to give or pass timely and reliable information.

Complaint handling is supplier's ability to avoid potential complaints, solve manifest complaints before they create problems and discuss solutions openly when problems arise.

Customer Relationship is the way in which the lodges and tented camps communicates and deals with existing customers, which was measured on ordinal values.

Efficacy capability of customer relationship producing effective results in influencing guest loyalty.

Guest Loyalty is commitment from a guest to keep on doing business with an accommodation facility on an on-going –basis, nominal/categorical measurement applied.

Resources are the units of selection that are relatively durable such as employees knowledge and skills, organisational culture, guest and suppliers information and relationship with guest and suppliers that constitute to a comparative advantage for a competitive advantage.

Satisfaction feelings of well-being and pleasure as a result of gaining what a person expects from a product or service

Trust is generalized expectancy held by an individual that the word of another can be relied on respectively.

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CFA	Confirmatory Factor Analysis
CFI	Comparative Fit Index
CL	Customer Loyalty
CON	County of Narok
CR	Customer Relationship
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
DF	Degrees of Freedom
GFI	Goodness-of-fit Indices
GoK	Government of Kenya
IFI	Incremental Fit Index
KCB	Kenya Commercial Bank
MMNR	Masai Mara National Reserve
NFI	Normed Fit Index
R	Correlation Coefficient
R ²	Coefficient of Determination
RA	Resource Advantage
RMSEA	Root Mean Square Error of Approximation
SD	Standard deviation
SE	Standard error
SEM	Structural Equation Modeling
SME's	Small Micro Enterprises
UK	United Kingdom
WBR	World Bank Report
VARs	Variables

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ABSTRACT

Kenya's hospitality sector operates in a very competitive environment leading to business instability. Thus there was need to assess whether customer relationship initiative would be a means of influencing loyalty in accommodation facilities in Masai Mara National Reserve (MMNR) as an issue of concern in research, policy and practice. In particular, the study sought to establish the trust level of guests on tourist accommodation facilities in MMNR, examine the intensity of commitment from the guests on tourist accommodation facilities, assess the level of communication in tourist accommodation facilities, evaluate guest's satisfaction of tourist accommodation facilities, and examine the level of complaint handling. The study was carried out by use of cross-sectional descriptive survey research design. Accommodation facilities with over 20 rooms were considered as sampling units. Guests of lodges and tented camps formed the target population for this study. A total of 384 questionnaires were sent out to 32 accommodation facilities, 321 questionnaires were returned and filled successfully. Pre-testing of the research instruments was carried out in Fig-Tree Camp that was not included in the study sample. Cronbach's coefficient Alpha was used to assess the reliability of the research instruments and alphas greater than 0.6 were considered adequate. Descriptive statistics was employed to summarize the demographic profile of respondents and analyze quantitative data in line with the research objectives. Structural Equation Modeling was used to reduce large numbers of measured variables of the selected five CR construct and reduced them to a smaller manageable CR constructs. Logistic regression analysis was used to test the hypothesis. Hierarchical regression was used to test moderation effects of age, other factors, income and gender. Findings of the five objectives were positive and significant (trust, commitment, communication, satisfaction and complaint handling) predict guest loyalty at 95% confidence level. In addition, commitment predicted guest loyalty highest. It was concluded that CR is very critical in predicting guest loyalty and thus the managers and the stakeholders in the hospitality sector need to establish and maintain it to increase guest loyalty which in turn will enhance business stability in this competitive era.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Competition has made business environment become very unstable. The most critical issues business managers are faced with is no longer provision of excellent quality products and services but also to maintain loyal customers (Kibeh, 2013). Loyal guest has been defined as a guest who repurchases from the same facility whenever possible, who continues to recommend and who maintains a positive attitude towards it (Zineldine, 2006).

Loyalty is a long-term commitment to repurchase involving both repeated patronage and favorable attitude. A customer who is loyal resists pressure to switch to another brand and keep recommending the business to other people (Ou, Vries, Verhoef & Wiesel, 2014). Furthermore, loyal customer is argued to tell an average of 12 people about the hotel which they feel favorable (Anabila & Awunyo, 2013).

While a discontent customer is claimed to tell between 10-20 people of his/her bad experience (Mattila, 2001), customers who have the right attitude and behavioral commitment will repurchase from a business regardless of their dissatisfaction in their last experience (Weiner, 2000). These customers provide predictability, security and prosperity for the business.

According to Avcikurt and Dogduby (2012) service businesses approximately lose about 50% of their customers every five years due to dissatisfied customers in comparison to positive referrals from satisfied customers. In addition Dyche' (2000), argues that it costs a company six times more to sell a product to new customer than existing in terms of time, effort and finances. It is also noted that a 5% increase of

loyalty increases profitability by 30-80% depending on the industry. Customer loyalty is a key influence of long-term financial performance in business. Increased loyalty can substantially increase profits in the service industry in particular (Chiu, Hvang & Tsaur, 2002).

In light of this, organizations have found Customer relationship (CR) as a practice that builds strong relationship with their customers hence loyalty (Mohammed & Rashid, 2012). It is traced back before pre-industrial era when the owner of a general store and the staff recognized their customers by name, knew their preferences and wants, hence a strong bond between customer and the proprietor. The results were repeat purchases thus loyalty (Byun & Gray, 2001).

Mass production eroded the CR concept with middlemen reducing the frequency between proprietors and consumers. As a result, the customers have become unpredictable in their purchase behavior. They move to suppliers who provide desired object at lowest cost or with major features (Parvatiyar & Sheth, 2002). However, competition and advent of technology is making customer relationship popular. Industries such as; airlines, banking, insurance, computer software's and hotels have embraced it (Byun & Gray, 2001; Chung, 2007; Kotler, 2002; Li & Wu, 2011; Parvatiyar & Sheth, 2002;).

In India, hotels that have practiced CR have increased customer satisfaction and customer loyalty thus impacting on increased market share and high profitability (Banga, Kumar & Goyal, 2013). South Africa and Ghana hotels that practices CR have enjoyed loyalty, customer retention and high profitability (Amoako, Arthur, Bandoh, & Katah, 2012; Dubihlela & Molise-Khosa, 2014; Madhovi, 2014).

In Kenya, CR has been studied mainly in banking, pharmaceuticals, petrol stations and mobile telecommunication on competitiveness, customer retention, business sustainability and loyalty (Chenuos, Kosgei, Kiprop, Nkobe, & Kiplagat, 2014; Daniel, Nicholas, & Ronald, 2012; Odhiambo, Okibo, & Ooko, 2014; Thuo, Obonyo & Wainaina 2011; Wanjau, 2013). The studies found out that loyalty in those industries was positively affected by level of trust and level of communication effectiveness.

In addition in the same studies customers valued a relationship in which service providers acknowledge when wrong and provided a remedy. In Kenya's, hospitality sector studies have focused on customer satisfaction as an outcome of quality service and loyalty as an outcome of quality service or satisfaction (Mwangeka, Majalia, Karim, & Nyatichi, 2014; Mutisya, 2011; Mbuthia, Muthoni, & Muchina, 2013).

The MMNR is famous for its Seventh Wonder of the World (Davies, 2013). According to GoK (2007) Vision 2030 Narok County which hosts Masai Mara National Reserve is marked as one of the fundamental counties for achieving economic pillar through tourism. The reserve is well known for a variety of tourism activities such as game drives, bird watching, hiking, nature walks, balloon safaris, picnics and visiting Masai villages (Trillo, 2002).

As a result, the reserve has the highest accommodation facilities among the national parks and reserves, hence stiff competition among the facilities (WB, 2014). Therefore, this study sought to assess the efficacy of CR on guest loyalty among lodges and camps in the reserve. The findings if adopted can assist in better

management of facilities relationship with their guests to achieving higher loyalty and improving on profitability.

1.2 Problem Statement

Kenya Vision 2030, cited tourism as the first sector to enable the country attain economic growth. One of the strategies to achieve the growth was for the government to allow increase of hotel beds from 40,000 by 2006 to 65,000 by 2012 while focusing on quality service. In addition, to increase revenue from premium safari parks such as Masai Mara by targeting high-end tourist, who desire unique experiences (Gok, 2007).

These strategies are being achieved among them by investors who are putting more lodges and camps in Masai Mara with number increasing from 72 in 2006 to 118 by 2014, this represents a rise of 61% (CoN, 2013). The strategy is good for the country's economic growth but for the businesses in Masai Mara the initiative is deemed as competition. New facilities are lowering their prices to attract new and existing customers from old facilities.

This poses a challenge to the facilities to lower standards, in order to remain within certain cost levels (Richard, 2013). As a result of this, the ministry of tourism has pointed out in the Tourism National Strategic Plan of 2013-2018 one of the threat facing the country as a tourism destination is lost of brand loyalty. This has been aggravated by tourism players not focusing and responding to customer needs (GoK, 2013). The pertinent question the study sought to address was; why is it becoming difficulty to attain brand loyalty? Could it be the industry stakeholders are not focusing on customer relations that build loyalty?

1.3 Purpose of the Study

Overall, this study sought to examine how the selected determinants of CR influence guest loyalty in accommodation facilities in MMNR. This was done with an aim of providing guests perspective on customer relationship and loyalty to assist tourism key players build loyalty based on guests needs instead of management perception of loyalty.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The study assessed the efficacy of Customer Relationship on guest loyalty in tourist accommodation facilities in MMNR, Narok County, Kenya.

To achieve this main objective the study specifically sought to;

- i. To establish the efficacy of level of trust on guest loyalty in tourist accommodation facilities in MMNR.
- ii. To examine the efficacy of intensity of commitment on guest loyalty in tourist accommodation facilities in MMNR.
- iii. To assess the efficacy of level of communication on guest loyalty in tourist accommodation facilities.
- iv. To evaluate the efficacy of guest satisfaction on guest loyalty in tourist accommodation facilities in MMNR.
- v. To examine the efficacy of level of complaint handling on guest loyalty in tourist accommodation facilities.

1.5 Study Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no relationship between level of trust and guest loyalty in tourist accommodation facilities.

H₀₂: There is no relationship between intensity of commitment and guest loyalty in tourist accommodation facilities.

H₀₃: There is no relationship between level of communication and guest loyalty in tourist accommodation facilities.

H₀₄: There is no relationship between level of satisfaction and guest loyalty in tourist accommodation facilities.

H₀₅ There is no direct positive relationship between level of complaint handling and guest loyalty in tourist accommodation facilities.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The study found out CR influences guest loyalty therefore, the ministry of Tourism can implement them in policy development and implementation. Especially on conservation and sustainability of Masai Mara National Reserve as many of the guests in accommodation facilities attach their intention to go back to the facility on the great and natural location of the Mara.

The hospitality managers can create a model of CR which they can use as a reference point in planning and implementing guest products and services that enhances loyalty of the guests to the facility. Looking at the five constructs and how they influence guest loyalty the managers may come up with policy that will be used by human resource department in liaison with the departments in recruiting, selecting, inducting, training, staff appraisal and promotion of staff.

The managers, can use the findings to leverage their organizational resources to enhance marketing productivity and organizational competitiveness. The stakeholders in the industry especially the investors can use the findings in

allocating financial resources in areas of customer relationships to increase loyalty in their facilities.

1.7 Scope of the Study

The study was delimited by subject and geographical area. In terms of subject, the study concentrated on the efficacy of CR determinants on guest loyalty. Its focus was on trust, communication, satisfaction, commitment and complaint handling and how they influence guest loyalty in tourist accommodation facilities. Whereas CR means different things in different cultures and therefore, the five constructs are not a universal solution (Palmer, 1997).

On geographical area the study was carried out in Masai Mara National Reserve, Kenya. It is found in the Rift Valley Province of Kenya, covering an area of 1,510 km² (CoN, 2013). The National Reserve is a key tourism destination which attracts many tourists due to its vast wild attractions (Voices, 2013) and has 118 lodges and tented camps as established in the Kenyan Accommodation Listings World Bank Report (WB, 2014).

1.8 Limitations of the Study

The study was conducted under the following limitations: firstly the study was conducted in tourist accommodation facilities in Masai Mara National Reserve only. This forms a small sample size (118) compared to the number of tourist accommodation facilities in Kenya (906). Based on this, there is need to exercise caution in generalizing the research findings to represent the entire population of accommodation facilities in Kenya.

Secondly, the study only focused on the efficacy of CR determinants and guest loyalty. As a result, conclusions have been made on the efficacy of CR determinants on guest loyalty and not on other outcome variables such as business performance.

Thirdly, descriptive cross-sectional survey research design has been used in assessing the efficacy of CR determinants on guest loyalty. As a result, any future changes in the efficacy of CR determinants on loyalty will not be considered in the present study.

Lastly, the study was carried out in April, May, and June 2015 during low season when Tourism Industry in Kenya was at blink. Some of the facilities targeted as samples were found closed down and very few guest in other samples. Therefore the findings may be different if the study is done during high season.

1.9 Assumptions

The study assumed that;

- i. The guest are logical whenever making purchase decisions therefore, selecting accommodation facility was based on some information they had about the establishment.
- ii. Guest will be truthful in exposing their experience with CR determinants in the accommodation facilities.
- iii. Guests are rational and therefore will demonstrate loyal and non-loyal behavior towards the accommodation facility based on the experiences they had with the establishment.
- iv. Guest chose the accommodation facility for themselves.

1.10 Conceptual Frame Work

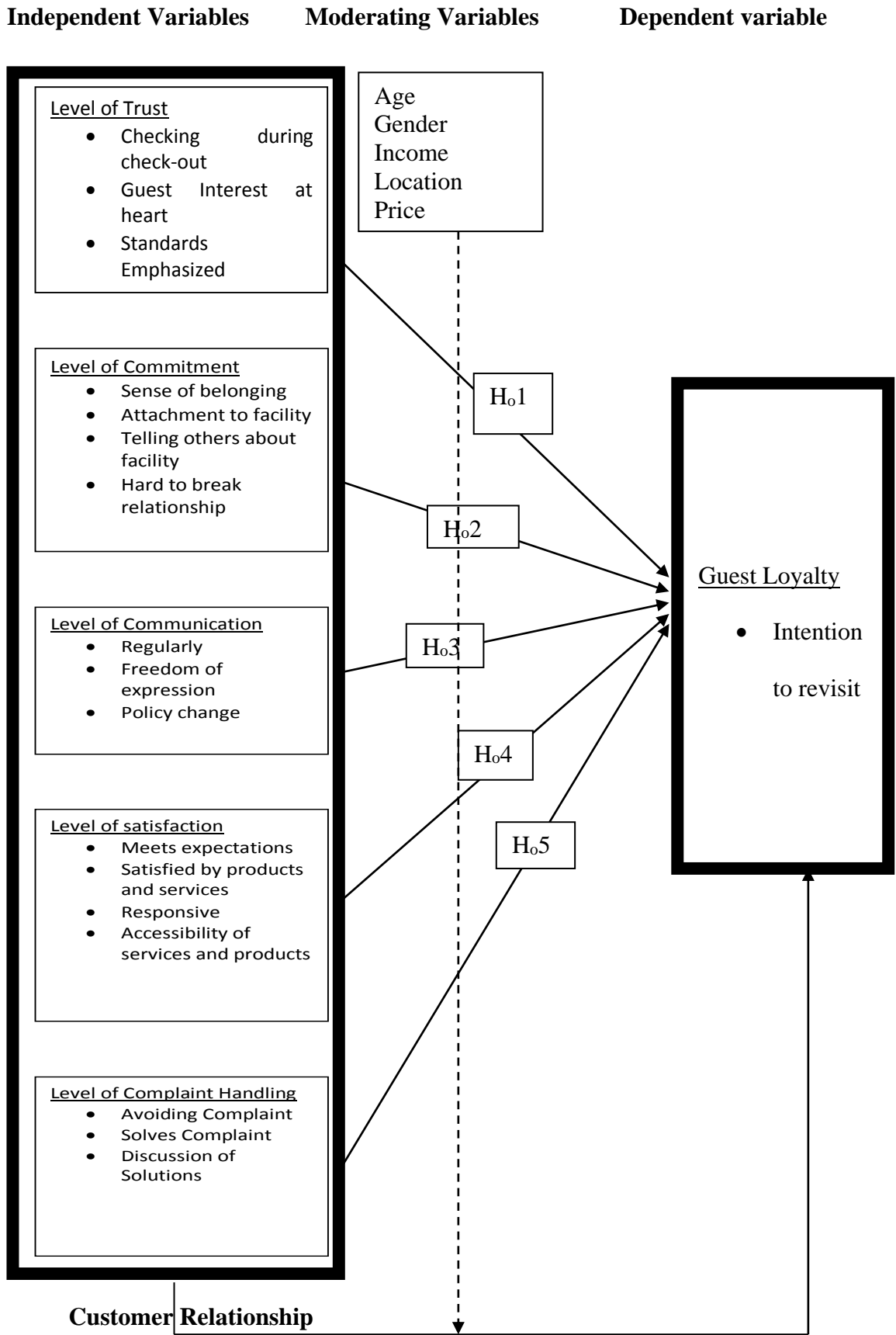


Figure 1.1 Own conceptualized relationship between guest loyalty and other variables

The conceptual framework shows the interrelationship between predictor, moderating and outcome variables. The predictor variable in this case is customer relationship determinants. It is a variable that is made up of five sub-variables namely, trust, commitment, communication, satisfaction and complaint handling. The relationship between predictor variable and outcome variable can be moderated by guest demographics, location and price. The outcome variable is guest loyalty which is measured by intentions to visit again.

The independent variables trust exists when one party has confidence in an exchange of partners' reliability and integrity (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). When level of trust is present in a relationship a guest may intend to visit the accommodation facility again in future. This is supported by attraction theory (Aronson, 1965), people are attracted to a relationship on the basis of personality. Personality is demonstrated in a relationship by reliability, honesty, constancy and responsibility. *This led to the hypothesis there is no significant relationship between level of trust and guest loyalty in tourist accommodation facilities in Masai Mara National Reserve.*

Level of commitment is a desire for continued valued relationship which is manifested by willingness to invest resources into it (Gounaris, 2005). Guests analyze commitment on a subjective cost-benefit. Whenever the benefits of a relationship are more, the relationship is stronger but if the costs are more than the rewards, then guest will seek to dissolve the relationship. This premise is supported by social exchange theory (George, 1959). Highly committed guest will be willing to reciprocate efforts to the accommodation facility due to past benefits received. *Thus the hypothesis there is no significant relationship between level of commitment*

and guest loyalty in tourist accommodation facilities in Masai Mara National Reserve.

Level of communication initiates and builds relationships, it mediates ideas, thoughts and feelings, transfers information, solves problems and connects people (Berry, 2010). Attraction theory 1965, posits that people are attracted to those people they are familiar with. Communication plays a role of exposing the character of the other partner in a relationship for partners to be familiar with each other. In case of service failure or guest dissatisfied communication tells the guest what the facility is doing about it. *Thus the hypothesis there is no significant difference between level of communication and guest loyalty in tourist accommodation facilities in Masai Mara National Reserve.*

Level of satisfaction is defined as customer's affective or emotional state toward a relationship brought about by the sum of experiences derived from different guest areas in the facility (Berry, 2010). Whenever the accommodation facility delivers its promises consistently the guest gets satisfied hence loyalty. This argument is supported by attraction theory 1965 that argues a person is attracted to another based on physical appearance. Satisfaction reveals the outcome of a pleasure from a product or service.

In this case, positive perception of features of the restaurant, food, recreation facilities and easy accessibility to the accommodation facility will influence guest loyalty. *Thus the hypothesis there is no significant relationship between level of satisfaction and guest loyalty in tourist accommodation facilities in Masai Mara National Reserve.*

Level of complaint handling is the ability of the supplier to avoid potential conflicts, solve manifest complaints before they create problems and discuss solutions openly when problems occur, Dwyer (as cited by Chenuos et al., 2014). When complaints are solved amicably there exists direct influence on loyalty. This argument is supported by attraction theory, as people are attracted to people with a personality that is able to solve complains and avoids complains in a relationship. *Hence the hypothesis there is no direct positive relationship between level of complaint handling and guest loyalty in tourist accommodation facilities in Masai Mara National Reserve.*

Guest loyalty is a deeply help commitment to revisit again an accommodation facility in the future consistently, despite situational and marketing efforts that have potential to cause switching behavior. This premise was supported by two theories used in the study; attraction theory, 1965 and Social exchange theory, 1959. The former posits that, one is attracted to another on the basis of similarity and reciprocity. This means one likes others because those others like them. The later theory states that, human relationships are formed by the use of subjective cost benefit analysis and comparison of alternatives that people develop relationships which yields the greatest profits. When benefits exceed cost people want to strengthen the relationship. Therefore, if customer relationship determinants are perceived as positive by the guests and are found to benefit them then, the loyalty will be realized as they reciprocate to the accommodation facilities. The moderating variables are other factors such as age, gender, income and reasons given by guest besides CR determinants that influences loyalty.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

The current chapter reviews empirical research that helps in understanding the whole study of CR and loyalty. It is structured under the following aspects: Concept of CR and loyalty, customer relationship determinants, relative importance of CR determinants, other factors responsible for guest loyalty and finally, the theoretical framework.

2.1 The Concept of CR and Loyalty

2.1.1 Customer Relationship

Branson, (2014) defines customer relationship as the way in which the firm/ firms communicates and deals with existing customers. While Morgan and Hunt (1994) define CR as all marketing activities directed towards establishing, developing and maintaining successful relational exchanges. CR was first studied by Berry in 1983. Later more studies articulated CR as a concept that is concerned with establishing relationships, enhancing strong relationships, maintaining relationships with customers and other stakeholders through a mutual exchange and fulfillment of promises for a profit. The success of the relationship is customer satisfaction (Gronroos, 1990; Berry & Parasuraman, 1993; Sheth & Parvatiyar, 1995; Kotler & Armstrong, 1999; Sin, Tse, Yau & Chow, 2002; Murphy & Wang, 2006).

Creating and maintaining relationships has been one of the objectives of marketing strategies in the current business environment for building customers commitment to a brand. CR practice has been found by Mohammed and Rashid (2012) to be one of the ways of building a relationship with the patrons in all their lives cycle to reduce

cost and gain market share in order to create competitive advantage. (Kangu et al., 2013; Kumar & Reinartz, 2012) argues that the definite aim of strong relationships is to convert indifferent patrons into loyal ones and moving target customers up the ladder of loyalty.

CR creates stability and reduces business uncertainty by blocking competitor entry hence solidifying the customer base. Patrons benefit from long-term relationship from their brands by familiarity, friendship, information sharing, discounts, complimentaries and tailor made services/products (Kumar et al, 2012). CR is a multi-dimensional construct consisting of; trust, commitment, communications, complaint handling, satisfaction, control, power, balance of power, interdependence, cooperation, idiosyncratic investments (Berry, 2010; Morgan et al., 1994; Lacobucci & Hibbard, 1999).

Drawing from the definitions, (Berry et al., 1993; Gronroos, 1990; Kotler et al., 1999; Murphy et al., 2006; Sheth et al., 1995; Sin et al., 2002;) this study used commitment, trust, satisfaction, communication and complaint handling as determinants of CR as they have been found significant among others (Berry, 2010; Chenuos et al., 2014; Sorce, 2002). Furthermore, the study considered CR as a relationship between the accommodation facilities and the external customer but not all business stakeholders as some of the definitions have put it. Nevertheless, Palmer (1997) cautions that customer relationship means different things in different cultures and therefore marketers should avoid prescribing universal solutions.

2.1.2 Loyalty

Loyalty has been defined as “ *a deeply held commitment to re-buy or re-patronize a preferred product or service consistently in the future, thereby causing repetitive same brand set purchasing, despite situational influences and marketing efforts having the potential to cause switching behavior*” (Oliver, 1997, p. 392). This premise led researchers to build loyalty models to show the relationship of the argument with loyalty such as: Service Quality Model that shows the relationship between service quality, satisfaction and loyalty is directly correlated (Zeithmal, Berry & Parasuraman, 1996; Parasuraman, Zeithmal & Berry, 1991; Zeithmal, 2000).

Value Model found that there is a direct link between value of service and loyalty whereas service quality and satisfaction are an antecedent of value (Sweeney, Soutar & Johnson, 1999). Satisfaction Model which shows satisfaction directly influences customer loyalty (Hallowell, 1996) and Integrative Model that shows the correlation of service quality, service value and satisfaction variables on loyalty.

The above discussed models signify a multivariate relationship of service quality, value and satisfaction with the intentions to repurchase. Studies show differing conceptualization of whether the service quality, value and satisfaction directly or indirectly determine loyalty. However, researchers agree that these variables are key determinants of building loyalty (Cronin et al., 2000; Salegna & Goodwin, 2005).

Variance in perspective and conceptualization of loyalty has resulted into different approaches of measuring loyalty. It has therefore become very complex to measure and conceptualize loyalty. Researchers view it as a multi-dimensional facet

nevertheless it has not been agreed how many dimensions they are. For example Reichheld (2003) in his study on service organizations loyalty was measured on willingness to recommend others to the brand, which is attitudinal, therefore resulting to one dimension of loyalty.

2.1.2.1 Dimensions of Loyalty

Chitty, Ward and Chua (2007) explored two dimensions of loyalty: behavioral (repeat purchase) and attitudinal inherent (affective and cognitive). Behavioral loyalty involves buying or using the product or service for instance staying at a lodge or a camp. It does involve both current and future purchasing and intentions to choose a particular brand over other similar brands (Rabbai, 2013). Affective is customers liking of a brand which have resulted from multiple purchases from the brand that have been satisfying. Cognitive is whereby the customer prefers a brand based on its superior brand attributes. Attitudinal approach considers emotional and psychological aspects in building loyalty.

For example, a guest may have a favorable attitude towards a hotel brand, may recommend others to the hotel though he/she may never stay in it because it is expensive. This type of customer has deep commitment to patronize or re-patronize a preferred brand in the future despite situational influences and marketing efforts having the potential to cause switching behaviour (Kumar et al., 2012). It takes a period of time to build positive attitude towards a product/ service in order to create attitudinal loyalty.

Behaviour loyalty has been criticized by (Dick & Basu, 1994; Reichheld, 1994) because it only measures repeat of purchase without factoring what influences purchasing decision-making process. Repeat purchase does not always emanate from deep psychological commitment. For example, a guest may stay in a hotel because of its convenient location but will switch to another hotel that comes nearby that offers better value (Donnelly, 2009).

To overcome the challenges of behavior dimension (Bowen and Chen, 2001; Zins', 2001) found out that loyalty can also be measured on composite dimension. It combines both behavioral intentions and attitudinal. It is measured by customers' products preferences over competitors because they satisfied their need, frequency of purchase-how long does it take for the customer to purchase-when was the last time the customer purchased, recency of purchase, total amount of purchase-how much does the customer spend and propensity of brand-switching-due to advertisements and situational influences.

Pritchard and Howard (1997) contend that, attitude and behaviour dimension of measuring loyalty enhances probability of building loyalty significantly. Consequently, composite dimension has been utilised and found as beneficial in understanding customer loyalty and its profitability. This argument is supported by a five year study by Reinartz, Wener and Kumar (2002) on whether loyal customers are more profitable in four businesses.

They tested composite dimension indicators as well as the premise of loyal customers were less costly to serve, are willing to pay more for brand choices than non loyal and they acted as word of mouth marketers for the company. In terms of

behaviour loyalty the results found that the correlation between profitability and loyalty was weak to moderate. However attitudinal dimensions loyalty effect was strong and significant.

For instance the grocery customers who had attitudinal dimensions of loyalty were 120 % more profitable than behavioural customers. While in the corporate services the customers who had attitudinal dimensions were 50% more profitable than behavioural dimensions. Therefore, composite dimension is an effective indicator of customer loyalty. Nevertheless, composite dimension of loyalty appears suitable when using longitudinal survey design (Reinartz et al., 2002). Cross-sectional survey design studies have used four-stage loyalty model (Evanschitzky & Wunderlich, 2006; Harris & Goode, 2004; Olsen, 2002). The model shows that loyalty does not appear at random but does happen in stages (Oliver, 1997).

The first stage is cognitive which happens as a result of information received of the product or service. Information received from friends who had experience with the product or service and marketing information on issues such as price, quality and convenience. The customer evaluates the performance to price to get the value of the product/service/brand. It is the weakest as it is based on cost and benefit of the offering and not at the brand.

The second stage is affective which is caused by favorable attitude towards the brand or the product. The customer consumes the product/service/brand based on the benefits. Once the expectations have been confirmed, the customer is satisfied in turn effectuates affective loyalty (Evanschitzky & Wunderlich, 2006). However it can suffer set back if there is increased attractiveness of competitive offerings and

enhanced liking for competitive brands. For example through imagery and association conveyed through competitive communication.

Third stage is conative loyalty which says attitudinal loyalty must be followed by a desire to intend an action for instance intentions to repurchase a particular brand or product or service (Oliver, 1997). This stage can be likened with what some studies have called customer delight (Mutisyya, 2011). The customer is delighted with the product/service/brand and as a result desires an action of intention to repurchase. If a customer experiences a series of service failure, conative loyalty suffers blow and want to try alternative.

Finally, action loyalty is whereby the customer has evaluated the first three stages and is a point of repurchase without considering competitive offerings as alternatives. At this stage customers experience action inertia. This is the most ideal stage of loyalty. This study conceptualized loyalty measurement from the third stage of (Oliver, 1997) loyalty model intentions to repurchase as "*intentions to visit again*".

This was based on one of study limitations, that the study was carried out during low season (April, May and June) and there was likelihood of finding first time customers (Trillio, 2012). The findings of this study ascertained the premise as 81% were first time guests. A first time customer has undergone through cognitive, affective and conative stages of loyalty (Evanschitzky & Wunderlich, 2006). In addition, the study used cross-sectional survey design, at this point loyalty can be considered high as it captures all the behavioural and attitudinal aspects (Harris & Goode, 2004; Olsen, 2002).

2.1.2.2 Types of Loyalty

Loyalty type is determined by the strength of the relationship between relative attitude and repeat patronage. Adeniyi, Baloglu, Bose, Sunny (as cited in Rabbai, 2013) explain four types of loyalty based on emotional commitment, trust, switching cost and advocacy. These are Premium/ True loyalty, Latent loyalty, Spurious loyalty and No/ Low loyalty. Premium or truly loyal customers have strong or higher attitudinal attachment, have high repeat patronage as a consequence of clearly communicated long term benefits, less vulnerable to competition, advocacy of the brand. It results from affective commitment.

Latent loyalty is described by high relative attitude and low repeat patronage, low patronage is as a result of inadequate resources, increase in pricing, accessibility and the influence of other people. Spurious loyalty is characterized by low relative attitude, high patronage, high switching cost, advocacy of the brand, long term benefits offered by the service provider. The customers frequently purchases although they are not emotionally attached to the brand which are explained by issues such as habitual buying, tangible rewards, convenience and lack of alternatives. No loyalty or low loyalty is whereby customers do not develop loyalty to certain products or services.

2.1.2.3 Benefits of Loyalty

Firstly, loyal customers are less price sensitive than non-loyal as they have become familiar with the establishment services as well as prices thus continuous usage of the products and services regardless of the price (Tsaur et al., 2002; Rabbai, 2013). Secondly, loyal customers are cheaper to serve as they buy repeatedly. Their needs are known by the service provider hence provision of services and products that

match their tastes and preferences (Dyche', 2000). Marketing cost and effort is also less.

Thirdly, since loyalty dimensions are both behavioral and attitudinal, customers spend more time in the company where they feel committed and they are likely to keep on re-patronizing whenever an opportunity arises. Thus increases average spending power whether in the restaurant, fitness centre, accommodation or business centre. As a result increased profitability is realized by the establishment (Weiner, 2000; Zineldine, 2006).

Fourthly, there is greater advocacy of the brand by the satisfied customer. The positive word of mouth is very credible form of advertisement and cheap (Kandampully et al., 2000; Shoemaker et al., 1999). Lastly, loyal customers imply a higher market share compared to the competitors. This is as a result of promotions being done by loyal customers and also lower rate of defection (Weiner, 2000).

2.2 Level of Trust in Accommodation Facilities

Trust exists when one party has confidence in an exchange of partners' reliability and integrity Morgan (as cited in Schumann, Wangerheim, & Stringfellow, 2010). Moorman, Rotters (as cited by Morgan et al., 1994) conceptualize trust as willingness to rely on an exchange partner in whom one is confident; trust is generalized expectancy held by an individual that the word of another can be relied on respectively.

Drawing from these definitions it can be claimed that for trust to survive there is confidence between customer and the facility, reliability of each other, firm belief with one another, integrity in the relationship, honesty among partners, consistency,

responsibility and willingness to rely on each other. Besides other studies have defined trust from the outcome point of view.

According to Anderson (as cited in Gedafaw, 2014) describes trust as when one partner believes another partner will perform actions that will result in a positive outcome for the partnership and will not take unexpected actions resulting to negative outcomes. For example, customers expect the receptionist of an accommodation facility will book them in clean rooms and not otherwise. Therefore, trust changes from trusting the product or service to trusting the service provider. Consequently, this ability to trust the service provider leads to commitment in the relationship.

Schumann et al. (2010) in a study on drivers of trust in relational service exchange in banking, found service provider's ability to provide the promised product and service, benevolence, predictability and integrity were key in building trust. Patrons will have a strong relationship with an accommodation facility when they are certain that their needs will be met and promises will be delivered (Ou, Vries, Wiesel, & Verhoef, 2014).

A study on the determinants of CR on firm-customer relation quality of Ethiopian Airlines by Gedefaw (2014), revealed that trust has a positive significant contribution. Thus, perceived quality by the customer leads to satisfaction hence loyalty (Mutisya, 2011). Differently, a research by Bataineh, Al-Abdalla, Salhab and Shoter (2015) on the effects of CR on customer retention in the Jordanian's pharmaceutical sector indicated trust had a positive weak (29%) but insignificant effect on customer loyalty.

This was explained by how trust changes from trusting the product or service to trusting the person selling the product or delivering the service Anderson (as cited by Gedafaw, 2014). Therefore in the Jordan Phamaceutical study the suppliers of phamaceuticals could not be trusted by their customers. According to Morgan et al., (1994), in commitment- trust theory, trust is a central pillar to all relationship exchanges. The reason behind this is that relationships bound by trust are highly valued and parties to such relationships highly desire to commit themselves to the relationship. But where there is mistrust in a relationship it decreases commitment to the relationship.

Whenever there is trust in the provider affective commitment is built which is an emotional attachment to the brand that creates a sense of belonging and personal identification with the product or service Mattila, Baloglu, Sui (as cited in Tanford, Raab & Kim 2011).

2.3 Level of Commitment in Tourist Accommodation Facilities

According to Gounaris (2005) commitment is a desire for continued relationship manifested by willingness to invest resources into it. For instance time, money and effort with an aim of keeping it indefinitely and increase its quality. This definition is in line with Morgan et al., (1994) who says commitment exist when the exchange partners believe the relationship is so vital that deserves maximum efforts to maintain it definitely.

Furthermore, Moorman (as cited by Morgan et al., 1994) defined commitment as enduring desire to maintain a valued relationship. Other researchers have found it to be psychological attachment or a force that binds an individual into buying from a

particular supplier Meyer, Dwyer, Gruen (as cited in Bricci, Fragata & Antunes, 2016).

Depicting the definitions from above authors it can be concluded that for commitment to exist there is a relationship between individuals and organisations motivated by psychological affection whereby the partners believe the relationship should be worked on by the two parties tirelessly for it to last indefinitely. For commitment to be in existence there must be mutual trust on the individuals (Berry et al., 1991).

This argument can be supported by a study on effect of trust, commitment and satisfaction on customer loyalty in the distribution sector in Portugal which revealed that there is a positive and direct effect of trust on commitment (Bricci et al., 2016). Nevertheless, studies have also shown commitment is not equal to both service providers and patrons for instance service providers are more concerned about gaining commitment from their customers while the customers are not (Morgan & Hunt, 2004).

There are two types of commitments; affective and calculative. The former explains the commitment between the service provider and the customer while the latter explains vice-versa. According to, Gounaris (2005) affectively committed service provider desires a continued relationship as it enjoys the partnership and in return experiences sense of loyalty. On the other hand affectively affected customer has an emotional attachment to the brand. These emotions helps in creating a sense of belonging and personal identification with the product (Matilla, 2006).

While calculative committed patron anticipates switching cost associated with leaving the relationship which leads to negative emotions hence continued commitment (Tanford et al., 2011). Unfortunately this commitment is as a result of obligation or lack of choice probably as a result of inconveniences faced by switching or penalties associated with termination.

A number of studies define switching cost from the perspective of monetary cost, time and effort related to leaving an organisation which you have been patronizing (Baloglu, 2002; Sui et al., 2003). But according to Fullerton (as cited in Tanford et al., 2011) switching cost is equated to scarcity of suitable alternatives. Furthermore, Jones, Reynolds, Mothersbaugh and Beatty (2007) are of the premise that switching cost can be viewed from social cost and lost benefit perspective.

Based on social cost viewpoint it can be likened with brutally killing personal relationship that has been initiated, nurtured and developed between a facility with its employees and the customer. Drawing from social cost stand point, then this switching cost becomes affective commitment because of the emotional bond related to the relationship of the buyer and the seller. (Baloglu, 2002; Sui et al., 2003) concurs this type of loyalty is positive. These authors and Matilla (2006) argue that affective commitment is a key driver of loyalty in hospitality industry such as hotels, casinos and airlines.

Jones et al. (2007) argue lost benefit cost include discounts and special services that would be sacrificed by terminating a relationship for instance losing accumulated points in a reward program, complimentaries and room upgrades. This cost is associated with value commitment, the greater the value a customer places on the

benefits earned from a facility will lead to higher switching cost to give up those benefits. Thus a negative consequence of switching.

Besides this, other studies have shown positive and significant relationship between commitment and relationship quality in Ethiopian Airlines. A study by Gedefaw (2014) on determinants of CR on quality relationship concealed, commitment was the second strongest and positive determinants of quality relationship. This is inline with other studies by Ndubisi (2007) in Malaysian retail banking, Kibeh (2013) Kenyan mobile telecommunication, Bataineh et al. (2015) Jordan pharmaceuticals sector.

2.4 Level of Communication in Tourism Accommodation Facilities

Anderson (as cited in Velnampy and Sivesan, 2012) defines communication as formal as well as informal sharing of meaningful and timely information between customer and a service provider on the efficacy of the information rather than the quantity and the amount. In addition, Sheth (as cited by Motamedifar, Nadim, Mojdehi, Kandsari & Razavipour, 2013) defined communication as ability to provide timely and trustworthy information.

Berry (2010) contends that communication initiates and builds relationships, it mediates ideas, thoughts and feelings, transfers information, solves problems and connects people. Therefore, ability to give or pass timely and reliable information enhances relationships. Thus in customer relationship, communication is key in expressing thoughts, feelings and emotions from the service provider to the customer.

A study on CR on customer loyalty in mobile telecommunication Kenya found effective communication to have positive role in influencing the customers' perceptions on the relationships consequently, the extent of loyalty of the patrons (Kibeh, 2013). Comparable to another study in Kenya petrol stations, on effects of CR on customer loyalty, level of effective communication had a positive and a significant effect on loyalty (Chenuos et al., 2014). The participants were willing to bear with service failure if it had been communicated effectively.

Moreover, a study by Velnampy and Sivesan (2012) on impacts of CR on customer value creation in mobile service providers a Sri-Lankan experience found that, dimensions of communication quality are timeliness, frequency, openness and accuracy which enhanced positive relationship and influenced trust and commitment resulting to loyalty. Similarly a study on effects of CR on customer loyalty in pharmaceuticals sector in Jordan found communication to have significant but negative effect on trust, commitment and satisfaction which impacts on loyalty (Bataineh et al., 2015).

These studies show a significant influence of communication on customer relationship but how it influences commitment and trust that impact loyalty differs. In the mobile sector trust and commitment are affected positively by communication unlike in the pharmaceutical where trust and commitment affects the same variable negatively.

2.5 Guest Satisfaction in Accommodation Facilities

Berry (2010) defines relationship satisfaction as customer's affective or emotional state toward a relationship. Whereas, customer satisfaction has been defined by World Trade Organization (as cited by Kangogo, Musiega and Manyasi, 2013) has feelings of well-

being and pleasure as a result of gaining what a person expects from a product or service. Therefore customer satisfaction can be viewed as personal assessment of a product or service which is affected by expectations and experience. Thus relationship satisfaction may only survive if the customer's expectations have been met by the product offered or service delivered by the service provider.

A study in Pakistan on customer switching in mobile telecommunication found that satisfaction comes as a result of trust in a relationship hence leads to customer loyalty (Aamir, Ikram, & Zaman, 2010). The study shows that satisfaction of the service suffice when the customer believes in the mobile service provider. Whatever the service provider promised was delivered consistently for a period of time building trust in the service provide which culminated to satisfaction.

While in another study on the effect of CR on customer retention in the Jordanian's pharmaceutical sector, satisfaction had a strong positive significant effect of 62.9 % on customer retention (Bataineh et al., 2015). Similary to a study in distribution sector in Portugal on the effect of trust, commitment and satisfaction on customer loyalty which indicates that satisfaction has a positive and direct effect on loyalty (Bricci et al., 2016). A model of customer trust, perceived value and customer loyalty shows long term relationship with customers is as a result of network of mutual benefit resulting from satisfaction (Chu, Kuo-Ming, 2010). Thus, satisfaction is intertwined in trust and commitment which leads to customers' perceived value of the product or service. Whenever guest perceives value of the service or the product they end up being loyal to the service provider.

2.6 Level of Complaint Handling in Tourist Accommodation Facilities

Complaint handling is supplier's ability to avoid potential conflicts, solve manifest conflicts before they create problems and discuss solutions openly when problems

arise Dwyer (as cited by Chenuos et al, 2014). Loyalty is determined by how well conflicts are handled. Conflicts lead to disloyalty, switching to another service provider or voicing negatively by advising other people against its use (Jones et al., 2007).

A case study on relationship and customer loyalty in a store in Iran revealed that, unresolved conflict will result to departing customers (Motamedifor et al., 2013). Crosby (2002) shows organisations ability to handle conflict is a virtue underpinning CR. This in turn affects customer loyalty positively. This is in agreement with a study of Malysian banks on antecedents of quality relationship, complaint handling was very important is building customer relationship (Ndubisi, 2007).

In respect to these studies it can be argued that it is difficult to achieve perfect or satisfactory service all the time. Moreover, switching factors may not be a problem re-curring par se but the manner in which the problem was handled. So, accommodation facilities need to develop problem solving strategies which are both proactive and reactive. Consequently, a major problem that is resolved well may leave a happy and loyal customer but a minor matter that is not resolved effectively could result to switching or negative word of mouth.

2.7 Relative Importance of CR Determinants on Guest Loyalty

Studies in hotels (Amako et al., 2012; Madhovi, 2014), airline (Gadefaw, 2014), banking (Anabila & Victor, 2013; Thuo et al., 2011; Wanjau, 2013), pharmaceuticals (Odhiambo et al., 2014; Bataineh et al., 2015), petrol station (Chenuos et al., 2014), mobile telecommunication (Daniel et al., 2012; Kibeh, 2013)

distribution sector (Bricci et al., 2016) and stores (Motamedifor et al., 2013) have found CR having a positive and significant effects on customer loyalty.

Nevertheless, some studies have shown CR is not significant to loyalty in hotels in Jordan and the United Kingdom (Akroush, Dahita, Gharaibeh, & Abu-Lail, 2011; Osman, Hemmigton, & Bowie, 2009). Besides the CR construct showing positive significance, among the constructs there are those that have more predictive power than others. According to Ndubisi (2007) trust is the first determinant of loyalty, followed by good conflict resolution, commitment and communication.

This study was in agreement with another study on determinants of CR in Ethiopian Airlines. In the order of, trust, complaint handling, commitment and communication are significantly positive determinants of relationship quality. Ethiopian airline study argues that *“the higher the level of trust, the more committed the employees are and the greater the ability of the employee to handle conflict, the better the satisfaction of the customers”* (Gedefaw, 2014 p. 48).

In contrast Jela (as cited in Gedefaw, 2014) view commitment to be most important to other relationship determinants and trust the last contributor. Similarly, Negi (as cited in Gedefaw, 2014) postulate that complaint handling is the highest contributor to customer relationship. Apparently, there is no agreement among the researchers on which variable of the customer relationship is greatest in contributing to loyalty.

2.8 Other Factors Responsible for Guest Loyalty

Research shows there is possible effect of personal factors on loyalty. It has been used as a moderator variable in consumer behavior to study satisfaction and loyalty as well as perceived value and loyalty (Evanschitzky & Wunderlich, 2006). Men are

more willing to take risk than women and it is likely for them to switch a provider if their satisfaction levels change. On the other hand women react less strongly to satisfaction changes than men. Thus the relationship between satisfaction and repurchase for men is stronger than women.

Women are more emotive than men. Whenever women get adequate emotional attachment or enjoy social experience with product or service or brand, there is a likelihood of repurchase. Otherwise, men are more functional in their purchase attitudes. In order to repurchase the product or service or brand, it should satisfy its function (Cyr, Hassanein, Head, & Ivanov, 2007). Self-construal theory males have more individualistic goals than their female counterparts. Hence achieve more success in purchasing by gathering information about a product and price combinations for themselves (Noble, Griffith, & Adjei, 2006). Therefore if they realize cost benefit of a product or service they will be motivated to repurchase than women.

In terms of age as a personal factor that influences loyalty, studies show younger people seek more alternative information than older people (Evanschitzky & Wunderlich, 2006). Therefore, the younger people are less likely to be satisfied by product or service. When satisfaction is low they seek for alternative from the information they have unlike the older people. According to Evanschitzky and Wunderlich (2006) in an examination of moderator effects on the four stage loyalty model a survey in German DIY market revealed that income is related to consumer loyalty. There is a strong relationship between low income earners on satisfaction and loyalty than higher income earners. People with higher income have achieved

higher levels of education therefore higher knowledge in evaluative process. Higher income earners search for more information than his current level of satisfaction.

Customers have expressed different factors that determine their intentions to repurchase. *Image* has been identified as one of the factors that influence loyalty. Image is a mental picture that is formed by guest as to whether the facility matches any other category of facilities experienced in the past (Keaveney & Hunt, 1992). A study by Kandampully and Suhartanto (2000) on the role of satisfaction and image on guest loyalty in hotels in New Zealand, found that hotel image was positively correlated to customer loyalty.

Image influences guest's perception of the goods and services offered. The perception of image are determined by a combination of advertisements of the facility, public relations the facility sends to the public, the physical image (design and architecture, colours), negative or positive word of mouth and experiences with goods and services. For example, if the management reduces price to attract customers, it may attract guests who are of low status and this gives a perception of what kind of guest patronize such a facility. It may send away high status customers.

Customer-perceived value for money has been cited as another factor that influences loyalty. The concept emanates from the equity theory, customers feel equitably treated when they evaluate the cost incurred to purchase the good or service and the cost of the input from the service provider (Han & Ryu, 2009). The perceived cost by the customer includes things such as time consumed in search of the good or service, energy used and stress experienced. It has both monetary and non-monetary perspective.

A study on customer perceived value, satisfaction and loyalty carried out for internet users, revealed that perceived value was very significant in influencing loyalty (Yang & Peterson, 2004). The accommodation facilities ought to provide the products and service together with value-added free services that are demanded by guest in order to increase their competitive advantage. It is important for facility management to bear in mind whatever product or service they offer, the guest will have to compare with its competitors.

Physical environment or servicescapes as it is called in service marketing has been found to determine loyalty. Servicescapes include things like the décor, artifacts, spatial layout and ambience (Han & Ryu, 2009). Bitner (1992) refers servicescape as the built environment or the man-made environment and not the natural or social environment that pulls the guest to stay in a facility or repurchase. Guests have used physical environment to assess the quality and level of service provided (Gamet, 1997).

The perception they get from the physical environment and the image they form will cause the guest to react. If it is positive they will approach but if it is negative they will avoid (Mehrabian & Russel, 1974). A survey study on the role of physical environment in the restaurants of northwestern and southeastern USA showed that physical environment such as artifacts, ambience and spatial layout influenced repurchase behavior. The physical environment makes a facility to differentiate itself from the competitor.

Price has been defined as something that is sacrificed to obtain a product (Zeithaml, 1988). It has been found that customers use price as an indicator to measure the

performance of a product or service and evaluate their experience with the product or service. It is also used to shape their attitude towards a service provider (Bolton & Lemon, 1999). Therefore a price of a product or service is very subjective to customers view. If a customer perceive the price charged to be reasonable and appropriate they will take it objectively and will have a desire to come back.

2.9 Theoretical Frame Work

The study built its theoretical framework from the psychological perspective of relationship. It focused on theories that show how relationships are built and how they contribute to loyalty. Business relationships exist when there is an association between individuals and companies for commercial purposes. Building closer relationships with guests result to better returns to the business through increased use of firm's products and services by loyal guests and referrals by satisfied customers brings new guests (Reichheld, 1994).

Relationship theories have been contributed by social psychology that has described how people's thoughts, feelings and behaviours' influence individual relationship with others. The study adopted two theories, that would explain how CR determinants (Trust, Commitment, Satisfaction, Communication and complaint handling), would influence guests in tourists accommodation facilities to becoming loyal.

2.9.1 Attraction Theory (Arosen, 1965)

The theory claims that a person is attracted to others on the basis of: Physical appearance and personality, Proximity (liking others who are physically close to us), Similarity (liking others who are like us), familiarity (liking those who have frequent

contact with us), reciprocity (liking others who like us) and barriers (liking others we cannot have).

Based on this theory of attraction, if a relationship gives us more reward and pleasure than cost and pain, we will like that relationship and wish it to continue. Similarly, guests can be attracted to accommodation facility due to physical appearance. The study measured physical appearance on satisfaction variable of CR. It looked at physical appearance of the products such as food, drinks, rooms, restaurant environment and recreation facilities. While personality, was measured in trust, commitment, communication and ability to resolve complaints.

2.9.2 Social Exchange Theory (Thibault & Kelley, 1959)

This theory posits that all human relationships are formed by the use of a subjective cost-benefit analysis and the comparison of alternatives that people develop relationships, which yield the greatest profits. When costs exceed rewards people seek to dissolve relationship. Customer relationship theory argues that customers enter into relational exchanges with firms when they believe that the benefits derived from such relational exchanges exceed the costs.

The current study conceptualized this theory from commitment variable of CR. Commitment is both affective and calculative. Affective customers have positive emotional attachment to the facility but calculative customers anticipate the cost of switching from a particular facility.

2.10 Summary of the Reviewed Literature and Identified Gaps

Foremost, CR is a multi-dimensional marketing approach with many factors coming into play to make it successful which are also interrelated. Among the factors are

communication, trust, commitment, satisfaction and complaint handling. Majority of the studies have concentrated on trust, commitment and satisfaction, few studies studied communication and complaint handling and a few have researched on the five determinants of customer relationship and how it influences guest loyalty.

The studies done in Kenya are in banking, mobile telecommunication, pharmaceuticals and petrol stations. Majority of these studies are case studies making generalization difficult. Very few have been done in hospitality sector of Kenyan economy. Therefore, there is scarce information on tourist accommodation facilities on CR determinants on loyalty. Thirdly, literature has also reviewed majority of the studies have been done in Middle East, Europe, US and few in Africa which may pose a challenge to generalize the findings in a third world economy.

Literature has shown majority of the studies have looked at CR from the supplier point of view. It may be difficult to generalize their findings and conclude the guest has the same opinion as the supplier in relation to CR and loyalty. Studies have also limited the studies of loyalty on CR not considering other factors that may explain the relationship.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This current chapter discusses the methodology that was used to achieve the study objectives as well as testing of the hypothesis. It describes in details the following; the research design, study area, target population, sampling techniques, sample size, instruments, validity and reliability, pre-testing, data collection procedures, analysis techniques, data presentation and finally logistical and ethical considerations.

3.1 Research Design

According to Kombo and Tromp, (2006), research design is a structure of research, while Orodho (2003) views it as a method of obtaining answers to a research problem. Research design has also been described as a plan that guides the researcher on ways of collecting, measuring and analyzing data in order to provide solutions to a problem (Kothari, 2004).

In view of the above definitions, this study used cross-sectional descriptive survey. Studies based on this research design have been conducted to determine the status quo and are concerned with the gathering of facts rather than manipulation of variables (Nassiuma, 2008). The design was found appropriate for the current study as it permits a consideration of a cross section of the population at one point in time (Robson, 1993).

The study was interested in gathering facts on the efficacy of CR on guest loyalty in lodges and tented camps without manipulating variables. The design was useful to demonstrate the relationship between CR determinants and guest loyalty as it is (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2008). 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 (Anabila, Narteh, & Koduah, 2012).

The survey method was used to generalize whether CR variable influenced guest loyalty. The study variables were measured by developing statements that explained each of the five CR 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 Study Area

The study was conducted in Masai Mara National Reserve in Narok County in Kenya. Masai Mara National Reserve is a prime tourism destination which attracts many tourists due to its vast wild and nature attractions (Voices, 2013) and has 118 number of lodges and tented camps as established in the Kenyan Accommodation Listings World Bank Report (WB, 2014). It is one of the parks that Vision 2030 has cited that through tourism will support economic pillar (GoK, 2007). Furthermore, 19% of the respondents were repeat guest table 4.9.

3.3 Target Population

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) population is an entire group of individuals, cases or objects having some common characteristics. The target population for this study consisted guests of purposively selected lodges and camps in Masai Mara National Reserve. Guests were perceived to be infinite in nature as there was uncertainty in determining the number. However, hypothetical projections would have been used but still would prove a challenge bearing in mind the low season when data was collected.

The proposed lodges and tented camps with over twenty rooms were thirty two facilities (12 lodges and 20 tented camps) (refer appendix B). However, during data collection it was found two (2) lodges and seven (7) camps had closed down due to low or no business at the time. This left ten (10) lodges and thirteen (13) camps. Therefore, data was collected from guest in 23 facilities.

3.4 Sample Size

The sample comprised of guests of lodges and tented camps. Since there was no estimate available of the proportion guest in the target population assumed to have the characteristic of interest, the researcher used Fisher, Laing, and Stoeckel (1983) formula to attain the sample size of the guests as follows: $n_0 = Z^2pq / e^2$, where n_0 is the sample size, Z^2 is the standard score at 95 per cent confidence level (1.96), p is the estimated proportion of an attribute that is present in the population (50 per cent), q is $1-p$ and e is the desired level of precision (5 per cent): $n_0 = 1.96^2 * (.5) (.5) / (.05)^2 = 385$ guests. The estimated guests from the formula was 385, since there were 23 facilities in operation at the time of data collection, total number of guest from the formula was divided by the 23 facilities to arrive at approximately 17 respondents of guests per facility. The total sample size is shown in table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Sample Size

Number of Sampling Units	Respondents Guests
10 Lodges	170 [10*17]
13 Tented Camps	221 [13*17]
Total	Total
23	391
Response Rate	321
Response Rate %	82.1%

[Based on Fisher et al., (1983) formula]

3.5 Sampling Techniques

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) and Orodho (2003), sampling involves selecting a number of individuals, cases or objects from a target population to ensure the selected group has elements representative of the characteristics found in the whole group. Two sampling techniques were applied: Purposive sampling was used to select facilities with more than twenty rooms from which simple random sampling was used to select guests from the target population to include in the sample. Random sampling technique made it possible for each respondent to have equal chances of being represented in the sample (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003)

3.6 Research Instruments

Research instruments are tools that are developed by the researcher to help in collecting the necessary information regarding the study. This study used semi-structured questionnaires. Semi structured questionnaires were used to collect data from the guest. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), semi structured questionnaires are cost effective means of collecting data. Semi-structured questionnaires have also been found to be less expensive to administer, they enable collection of data in a structured and manageable form at the same time analyzing of data is quick (Wilkinson & Birmingham, 2003).

The questionnaires were used to provide information on the customer relationship determinants and guest loyalty in the accommodation facilities. This questionnaire had two sections: section A had mainly close ended questions and dealt with demographic characteristics of the respondents and B collected information on the customer's perception of CR determinants. The questions on CR construct were

based on the five selected determinants of trust, commitment, communication, customer satisfaction and complaint handling.

Each determinant had a number of statements that were used to measure CR. They were tested on a close ended 5-point Likert scale; one was strongly disagree whereas five was strongly agreed. The scale made it easier for filling in and for quantitative data analysis (Nardi, 2006). Table 3.2 illustrates a summary of the statements of the constructs, other factors and the source.

Table 3.2. Questionnaire References

S/no.	Construct	No. of statements	Source
1	Trust	Five	Morgan & Hunt, 1994 Daniel et al., 2012 Deshpande et al., 1993 Chenuos et al., 2014, Berry, 2010 Lacobucci et al., 1999
2	Commitment	Seven	Gounaris, 2005 Morgan et al., 1994 Meyer et al., 1997 Berry et al., 1991 Tanford et al., 2011
3	Communication	Four	Berry, 2010 Kibeh, 2013 Chenuos et al., 2013 Velnampy, 2012
4	Satisfaction	Five	Berry, 2010 Aamir, 2010 Chu et al., 2010
5	Complaint handling	Three	Chenuos et al., 2014 Jones et al., 2007

			Crosby, 2002 Motamedifor et al., 2013 Ndubisi, 2007
6	Guest Loyalty	1	Jacob et al., 1978 Uncles et al., 2003 Oliver, 1999 Reinartz et al., 2002
7	Other Factors	3	Evanschitzky et al., 2006 Cyr et al., 2007 Noble et al., 2006

Source: Research Data, 2015

All the questionnaires were accompanied by a cover letter which elucidated the purpose, value, ethical assurances and objectives of the survey to the respondents, (see appendix A).

3.7 Pre-Testing of Study Instruments

A pre-test of the research instruments was conducted to assess the applicability of the instrument to the study. There was need to pre-test research instruments with respondents that are not considered in the sample but have shared characteristics as noted by Bryman and Bell, (2003) and therefore one accommodation facility that was not in the sample was considered for pre-testing. The accommodation facility considered for pre-testing was Fig Tree Camp in MMNR. The camp was similar to other sample since it was in the same location and had 70 rooms. The pre-test findings were not included in the final study. The questions distributed were twenty four (24); this was 6 % of the entire sample size.

The sample size of pre-test was within range of between 1-10% of the whole sample size (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). Twenty two questionnaires were returned amounting to 91.67%. In order to embark on pre-testing, permission was sought

from the camp manager, who gave the researcher the Front Office Manager to help administer the questionnaires to the guests. Pre-testing was done to check on deficiencies in the questionnaire and any unexpected errors. It also allowed the researcher to observe time it took to fill in the questionnaire.

3.7.1 Validity of the Research Instruments

The research instrument is valid if it measures what it was supposed to measure and accurately achieves the purpose of which it was designed (Orodho, 2012) and (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). To ascertain validity, content validity technique was used to assess the extent to which the research instruments provided satisfactory coverage of the topic at hand (Kothari, 2012). This was achieved by supervisors' reviews and judgments to assess whether the set questions were measuring the intended phenomenon.

3.7.2 Reliability of the Research Instruments

Reliability refers to the measure of the degree to which a research instrument yields consistent results after repeated trials (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). The reliability of the survey instrument was assessed using internal consistency technique. It showed the extent to which items on the questionnaire were measuring the same thing (Orodho, 2012). Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha was used to measure the internal consistency of the scales used in the questionnaire and Alpha's greater than 0.7 was considered as appropriate (Berstein & Nunnaly, 1994). Although 0.6 threshold of Cronbach Alpha is also considered sufficient (Du Plessis, 2010; Vinzi, Chin, Henseler & Vang, 2010). The reliability statistics for the questionnaire are presented in table 3.3.

Table 3.3. Reliability Statistics

Constructs	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient
Communication	4	0.838
Trust	5	0.690
Commitment	9	0.905
Satisfaction	5	0.865
Complaint Handling	3	0.954

Source: Researcher (2015)

From Table 3.3 it is clear that Cronbach's Alpha for all five constructs factored in the study was above threshold of 0.60. Thus confirms that the scales used are reliable.

3.8 Data Collection Techniques

The researcher got an introduction letter from Kenyatta University graduate school, which was used to seek for research permit from National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI). 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.

This was done by calling the managers and others emails in the month of March 2015. Since the occupancy rates at Masai Mara were very low the managers asked the researcher to target Easter Holiday in April 2015. The process of administering self-completion questionnaires to guests in lodges and tented camps kicked off in April.

With the help of Front Office Managers, Food and Beverage Supervisors and tour guides the questionnaires were administered to the guests. The managers would give the questionnaires to the guests who were present in their area of operation for

example in the restaurant, at front office during check-out and in the van as they went for game drive. This enabled the guest to be sampled randomly to ensure each guest and an equal chance of being presented in the sample.

The process ran from beginning of April to mid-June 2015, this allowed the respondents to answer questions at their own consent and without being hurried (Bryman, 2001). Three hundred and eighty four (n=391) questionnaires were distributed out of which sixty three (n=70) were not returned. Three hundred and twenty one (n=321) were returned and appropriately filled, making a response rate of 82.1%.

These result findings were in consistent with Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) the response rate of 50% is adequate, 60% is good, and 70% is very good for reporting and analysis. The study response was above very good at 82.1% therefore good enough for reporting and data analysis.

3.9 Data Analysis

Data analysis began after successful completion of data collection. Three important steps were carried-out: editing, coding and entering data into statistical package (Pearson, 2010). Evaluation of completeness and accuracy of filling the questionnaire was done during editing. Sixteen questions were left unanswered which were completed using the statistical procedure for getting the missing entries. In this case the researcher used the central tendencies and regression approaches to fill in the missing entries (Szwarc, 2005). This was done to ensure that there were no missing entries which could affect the reliability of the analysis later.

Data was coded by assigning numbers to the values of each variable (Leech, Barrett, & Morgan, 2015). The numbers ranged from VAR 001 for the first question to VAR 011 for the last question, for sub variables under each question were also assigned numbers. For example question one was asking about gender, gender was assigned VAR 001 denoting male with 0 and female 1.

The variables representing the questions were then entered into Statistical Package, data set was then cross checked before carrying out various data analysis to ensure precision of all entered cases and that the analysis output reflected the respondents' response. The process was found critical in boosting the reliability and validity of the research findings.

Cross tabulations were used to summarize the demographic characteristics of the respondents such as gender, age and income levels. Descriptive statistical analysis such as percentages, frequency distribution, mean, standard deviation and mean ranking were applied to describe and express data. Descriptive statistics was then presented using bar graphs and pie charts.

Logistic regression analysis was conducted to assess the relationship between CR determinants and guest loyalty because the dependent variable was a categorical variable with yes and no answers (Menard, 2002; Kleinbaum & Klein, 2010). It formed a basis for testing the study hypotheses in line with research objectives.

Factor analysis deduces the presence of unobserved variable (latent factor) which accounts for the shared variance in a set of observed variables (Brown, 2006). In this study customer relationship and its five construct (Trust, Commitment,

Communication, Satisfaction and Complaint handling) were latent variables which accounts for the shared variance in the observed variables of each construct.

Factor analysis was used to explore the inter-relationships among observed variables to discover if those variables can be grouped into a smaller set of unobserved factors. These observed variables shows the causal impact of the unobserved factors. Confirmatory Factor Analysis was used for data reduction where large number of observed or measured variables were reduced into a smaller and more manageable number of unmeasured variables (factors) by creating a factor score for each measured variable (Harrington, 2009). This generated a parsimonious set of unmeasured variables that better accounted for the underlying variance (causal effect) of the measured variables. It was done through Structural Equation Modeling and presented in Amos Path Diagram

Qualitative data was organized and arranged according to open ended question on other factors that may influence guest to be loyal. Content analysis was performed in order to generate themes that were applied to deduce relationships in the data collected and to offer more understanding of the quantitative results.

3.10 Ethical Considerations

The research approval was obtained from Kenyatta University Post-Graduate Board and NACOSTI. Before data collection, formal consent was obtained from respective managers of lodges and tented camps. During data collection respondents were informed about the purpose of the study. Each research instrument had a cover letter that promised respondents anonymity. Collected data was handled with utmost confidentiality.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter elaborates on the findings of the study that were gathered by questionnaires. The chapter is based on the analysis of demographic characteristics of the guests (gender, age, income) and their relationship with guest loyalty, descriptive statistics of each CR construct, logistic regression of selected CR construct on guest loyalty, testing of the hypotheses and predictive nature of CR construct (Trust, Commitment, Communication, Satisfaction and complaint handling) on guest loyalty.

Structure Equation Model was used to show the relationship of the selected CR constructs. Qualitative analysis was used to deduce reasons why guests would be loyal to accommodation facilities in MMNR. The categories drawn from the qualitative analysis were used together with guest demographics to show how they mediated CR and guest loyalty.

4.1 General Findings

4.1.1 Gender Profile

Figure 4.1 shows the findings of gender who visited the tourist accommodation facilities in MMNR. Male respondents were 52 % more than their female counterparts at 48 %.

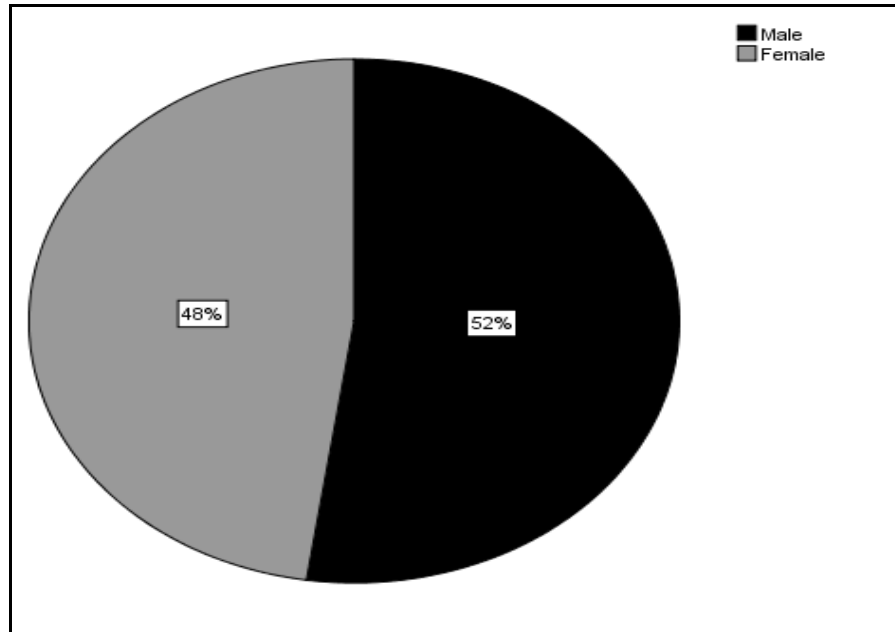


Figure 4. 1. Gender Profile

This finding is in conformity with a study in the Caribbean Island of Barbados that argues male tourists prefer a destination with more recreation and activity (Jonsson & Devonish, 2008). MMNR is a tourist destination that is coupled with lots of activities like game drives, balloon safaris, hiking besides relaxations like bird watching and watching the big-five (Trillo, 2002). Thus explaining why there are more male respondents than females. Men are also known for gathering information on purchasing about product and price combination, once they realize cost benefit of a product or service they are motivated to purchase (Noble et al., 2006).

Table 4.1 reveals a cross tabulation of gender and intention to visit again, 92.2% of male would like to visit again and 94.7% of female likewise.

Table 4. 1. Gender Versus Guest Loyalty

			Intention to Visit Again		
			Yes	No	Total
Gender	Male	Count	162	8	170
		% within Gender	95.2%	4.8%	100.0%
	Female	Count	143	8	151
		% within Gender	94.7%	5.3%	100.0%
Total	Count		305	16	321
	% within Gender		95.0%	5.0%	100.0%

Source: Research Data (2015)

The results shows that both male and female are truly loyal guests in accommodation facilities in MMNR. Truly loyal customers have a strong or higher attitudinal attachment to the establishment (Rabbai, 2013). They purchase from the firm frequently, are not price sensitive and probably that is why price was cited at 1.67% in Table 4.24. They are less vulnerable to competition and advocate the facility to others.

Table 4.2 shows cross tabulation of gender and income. Male guests earn the highest income that was studied of KSh. >150,000 at 59.8%.

Table 4. 2. Gender and Income

		<u>Income (KSh.)</u>			
		50,000-99,999	100,000-149,999	>150,000	Total
Gender Male	Count	35	33	101	169
	% within Gender	20.7%	19.5%	59.8%	100.0%
	% within Income	53.0%	44.6%	55.8%	52.6%
	% of Total	10.9%	10.2%	31.5%	52.6%
Female	Count	31	41	80	152
	% within Gender	20.4%	27.0%	52.6%	100.0%
	% within Income	47.0%	55.4%	44.2%	47.4%
	% of Total	9.7%	12.7%	24.9%	47.4%
Total	Count	66	74	181	321
	% within Gender	20.8%	23.4%	55.8%	100.0%
	% within Income	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% of Total	20.8%	23.4%	55.8%	100.0%

Source: Research Data (2015)

The findings support a study by Evanschitzky and Wundelich (2006) that was done in German DIY market that argue, high income earners search for purchase information than low income earners. In addition Cry et al. (2007) men are more functional and therefore in their purchasing decisions search for more information than their female counterparts. Therefore, based on these evidences it could explain why there are more men with high income than female.

Table 4.3 Shows cross tabulation of gender and number of visits. Male guests have repurchased from the accommodation facilities two times and above slightly higher at 19.1% as compared to 17.1 % female.

Table 4. 3. Gender and Number of Visits

			<u>Number of Visits</u>					
			1 Time	2 Times	3 Times	4 Times	>4 Times	Total
Gender	Male	Count	136	12	7	3	10	168
		% within Gender	81.0%	7.1%	4.2%	1.8%	6.0%	100.0%
	Female	Count	124	12	10	2	5	153
		% within Gender	80.9%	7.9%	6.6%	1.3%	3.3%	100.0%
Total	Count	260	24	17	5	15	321	
	% within Gender	81.0%	7.5%	5.3%	1.6%	4.7%	100.0%	

Source: Research Data (2015)

From the results it can be argued that men are more loyal than women, this could be explained by the fact that they get satisfied from the service if it fulfills its functions. The results support Cyr et al. (2007) study that contends men repurchase when functional goal of purchase has been fulfilled. Therefore, the facilities in MMNR are satisfying the functional needs of men.

4.2.2 Results for Age of Guest

Table 4.4 shows the frequency distribution of age of guest in accommodation facilities in MMNR. Most of the guests were above 41 years at 41.6%.

Table 4. 4. Age of the Customer

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	17-20 Years	4	1.2	1.3	1.3
	21-30 Years	77	23.9	24.2	25.5
	31-40 Years	103	32.0	32.4	57.9
	>41 Years	137	41.6	42.1	100.0
	Total	321	98.8	100.0	
Total		321	100.0		

Source: Research Data, (2015)

The above findings support the facts that old adults find more satisfaction in products and services than younger people (Evanschitzky & Wunderlich, 2006; Carpenter & Yoon, 2013). In addition they like personalized service, which is highly provided by accommodation facilities in MMNR based on results of Table 4.24. Reputation of the facility and the location is also significant factor for elderly when making purchasing decisions (Steve & Gabbote, 1995).

Table 4.5 shows cross tabulation of age and income, the results are significant $X^2=189.2$; $P=0.000$

Table 4. 5. Age of the Customer and Income

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	189.202 ^a	4	.000
Likelihood Ratio	193.782	4	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	143.878	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	306		

Source: Research Data, 2015

Age of the customer had a significant relationship with income. The middle age and elderly respondents are earning higher income and vice versa. The results are inconsistent with study on aging and consumer decision making in the United States

(U.S) across 45 industries and government agencies, which revealed that young people earn more than older people. The difference could be explained by the fact that current study looked at the tourist only not entire working population.

Table 4.6 shows correlation on age and intention to visit again, $X^2=3.27$; $P=0.352$

Table 4. 6. Age and Intention to Visit Again

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	3.270 ^a	3	.352
Likelihood Ratio	4.263	3	.234
Linear-by-Linear Association	2.808	1	.094
N of Valid Cases	321		

Source: Research Data, 2015

The results show no significant relationship between age and intention to visit again.

Hence, age does not determine whether the guest will be loyal or not.

4.2.3 Income of the Guests

Table 4.7 Shows income of the respondents, majority of the guests (57.1%) earn above KSh. 150,000.

Table 4.7. Income of the Guests

Income	Count	Column N %
50,000-99,999	64	19.9%
100,000-149,999	72	22.4%
>150,000	183	57.1%
Total	321	100%

Source: Research Data, (2015)

Table 4.7 shows the respondents with high level of income patronize accommodation facilities most and probably income enhances their travel and utilization of the accommodation facilities. Higher income earners have greater knowledge on products and services and the financial ability to select best

destinations. Rates charged by accommodation facilities in MMNR are also high for example, between Ksh. 10,000-35,000 for full board (Voices, 2013), based on the quality that is delivered. This means that, those who are able to patronize the facilities must also be earning high.

Table 4. 8. Income and Guest Loyalty

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1.112 ^a	2	.574
Likelihood Ratio	1.259	2	.533
Linear-by-Linear Association	.009	1	.923
N of Valid Cases	306		

Source: Research Data, (2015)

Table 4.8 shows no significant relationship between income and guest loyalty $X^2=1.112$, $p= 0.57$. Income does not determine guest loyalty rather, the satisfaction derived from quality of products and services as evident on Table 4.18.

4.2.4 Summary of Guest Demographics Results

There were 52% men patronizing accommodation facilities in MMNR as compared to 48% women. Men who were above 41 years frequented accommodation facilities in MMNR more. Men were found to earn higher than their female counterparts. Thus the dominating gender in terms of income and age is male. The findings revealed that tourists who frequent MMNR are men who have high disposable income and older adults.

The implication of these results is that there is need for lodge and camp managers to understand their market segment. They should provide product and services that meet their needs. The advantage with this kind of segment is that they get satisfied

easily by products and services that are functional (Cry et al., 2007). On the other hand, if the products and services do not meet their expectations, then they are likely to try other competitors who have products and services that meet their expectations (Evanschitzky & Wunderlich, 2006). In addition, men seek information of products, services, places before making purchasing decisions, then it is very important what was communicated during pre-purchase and purchase stages to be delivered (Noble et al., 2006).

Furthermore, the findings found men had high disposable income therefore, would make informed decisions to achieve value for their money. They analyze cost benefit of a product or service before purchasing (Han & Ryu, 2009). Hence, the accommodation facilities need to personalize their services and exceed their expectations.

The findings revealed that there is no significant relationship between demographic characteristics of the respondents (income, gender and age) and guest loyalty. The findings resonates with a study in Taiwan on moderating effect of gender and age by Soong, Kao and Juang (2011), who found no significant relationship between gender and age on customer loyalty. Therefore, age, gender and income may not predict guest loyalty but they influence purchasing decisions.

4.2.5 Number of Visits to the Accommodation Facilities

Table 4.9 shows the findings of number of times guest visited tourist accommodation facilities in MMNR. Most guests 81% were first time visitors.

Table 4. 9. Number of Visits to the Accommodation Facilities

Category	N	%
One Time	260	81
2 Times	24	7
3 Times	17	5
4 Times	5	2
Greater than 4 Times	15	5
Total	321	100.0
Repeat guests(2 times and above)	61	19%

Source: Research Data, 2015

One time customers were many with 81%, this probably could be explained that the study was done during low season and during low season majority of the accommodation facilities lower their rates (Khweza, 2015). Thus attracting those customers who have never visited the destination at relatively affordable rates and have always desired to visit the place because of recommendation they have received from their friends, relatives and the social media.

The facilities are in a renowned location, that is known for vast wildlife that majority of the customers desire to see with serene natural setting (Voices, 2013). As a result of these characteristics of the national reserve, the location is very popular and anyone who may not afford during high season would prefer to visit in low season. Nevertheless, repeat visitors 19% were also found in the accommodation facilities meaning the facilities also attracted some loyal guests.

Table 4.10 shows a cross tabulation of number of times guests visited tourists accommodation facilities in MMNR and loyalty. Most of the guests 95% have got intentions to repurchase from the same facilities, only 5% have no intentions to visit again.

Table 4. 10. Number of Visits and Guest Loyalty

			Guest loyalty		
			Yes	No	Total
Number of Visits	One Time	Count	244	14	258
		% within Number of Visits	94.6%	5.4%	100.0%
	Two Times	Count	22	2	24
		% within Number of Visits	91.7%	8.3%	100.0%
	3 Times	Count	17	0	17
		% within Number of Visits	100.0%	.0%	100.0%
	4 Times	Count	5	0	5
		% within Number of Visits	100.0%	.0%	100.0%
	>4 Times	Count	15	0	15
		% within Number of Visits	100.0%	.0%	100.0%
Total	Count		303	16	319
	% within Number of Visits		95.0%	5.0%	100.0%

Source: Research Data, (2015)

The fact that 95% of the guests found in accommodation facilities in MMNR are loyal to the facilities, shows that loyalty within these facilities can be described as premium or true loyalty (Rabbai, 2013; Oliver, 1999). These guests have strong attitude and loyalty behavior towards the facilities. The guests are less vulnerable to competition unless they experience multiple service failure from the accommodation facilities.

4.3 Level of Trust

The first objective was to establish the trust level of guests on tourist accommodation facilities.

H₀₁: There is no relationship between level of trust and guest loyalty in tourist accommodation facilities.

The primary data on trust level of guests on the accommodation facilities was collected from the respondents by use of a questionnaire. Trust determinant was a latent variable that was observed by five VARs that were structured on a five point Likert scale, 1 was lowest and 5 was highest. The guests were asked to put a tick on the scale that they agreed with concerning the VARs. Trust level was analyzed by use of descriptive statistics which included mean and standard deviation.

Table 4.11 shows the descriptive statistics of trust level on accommodation facilities. The mean of the VARs ranged from 3.9 to 4.7, with the overall mean of trust level being 4.4.

Table 4. 11. Level of Trust

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Overall Mean	Skewness	Kurtosis
Overall trustworthiness	321	4.6822	.66986		-2.744	8.909
Have our best interest at heart	321	4.5888	.76998		-2.334	6.157
Job is done right even without us	321	4.4829	.92222	4.4	-1.969	3.138
No need for questioning customer's motives	321	4.0093	.99839		-.984	.673
No checking is done during check-out	321	3.9283	1.17706		-1.050	0.144
Valid N (list wise)	321					

Source: Research Data, (2015)

Table 4.11 shows the mean of trust level was narrow, the guests being in agreement with the trust variables. Noticeably, overall trustworthiness of the accommodation facility had the highest mean while no checking out during check-out had lowest mean. The tourist establishment communicates these characteristics to the guest who

believes (trust) in their word. A survey on building trust by signaling trustworthiness in service retail on five star hotels in UK, found it was important to build trustworthiness perceptions for the service organizations (Kharouf, Lund & Sekhon, 2014). Whenever guests perceive trustworthiness in a service provider trust is enhanced which strengthens customer relationships hence increases guest loyalty.

It is therefore important for managers to design strategies that build trustworthiness among customers. Moreover, it is beneficial for managers to strategically design an overall trustworthy image of the accommodation facility while still managing individual customer's trust through customer relationship marketing efforts. The trustworthy image of the accommodation facility can be reflected through the establishment's service delivery such as, adequate personnel knowledge and skills and to deliver service reliably and ensuring the guest's experience with the facility is consistent with that image.

The item with the lowest mean could probably be explained by Table 4.9, which showed 81% of the visitors were first timers, hence had not experienced check out. From the findings it can be argued that the accommodation facilities can be trusted by guest thus confidence in their relationship. The results are in agreement with (OU et al., 2014).

The study affirms guests believe the facility would perform actions that would produce positive outcomes. The facilities that would go out of their way to search for their guest needs, tastes and preferences, meeting and exceeding those needs will enjoy guest loyalty. Such facilities will not have to question guest motives of being in the facility as they already know why they are there. The facility has already

formed a relationship with the guest, when the guest visits, the aim of the facility is to ensure they have an experience which they live to tell about the facility.

This level of trust promotes overall reliance on the facility. It also implies the guests no longer hold their trust on product or service but the service provider. It is only the service provider who makes the product and delivers the service in a consistent manner.

Logit model was found suitable because the outcome variable (guest loyalty) was tested by intention to visit again has a categorical variable (Yes or No) (Kleinbaum & Klein, 2010). The model was deemed fit for the data thus to predict the relationship between the level of predictor variable trust and dependent variable (guest loyalty), since it was significant with a likelihood ratio Chi-square(χ^2) of 111.85 and a p-value of 0.000. The study relied on a 95% level of confidence thus a p-value of equal or less than 0.005 was significant to predict the association of independent and outcome variable. Table 4.12 shows the logit model of trust and guest loyalty at log likelihood of -48.33, Wald $\chi^2=111.9$, $\text{Prob}>\chi^2=0.000$, $\beta=2.65$, $P=0.000$

Table 4. 12. Logit Model: Level of Trust and Guest Loyalty

Guest Loyalty	Log-likeli.	Wald Chi 2	Prob > Chi 2	Coeff β	Std Erro r	Z	P> Z	95% Confi	Interval
Trust	-48.33	111.9	0.000	2.65	0.25	10.58	0.000	2.16	3.15

Prob>Chi² =0.000

P=0.000

Source: Research Data, (2015)

Table 4.12 shows the findings of trust is statically significant positively at P of 0.000. It means the logistic regression coefficient give the change in the log odds of

the guest loyalty for a unit increase in the trust variable. Therefore, for every one unit change in trust, the log odds of guest loyalty increase by 2.65, holding all other factors constant. The null hypothesis was rejected, thus the study shows there is a significant positive relationship between trust and guest loyalty.

The study holds resonance with Gedefaw (2014) and Ndubisi (2007) who studied customer relationship and customer loyalty in different service industries. Therefore, the facilities have to be trusted by the guest for loyalty to exist. In addition, customers in Kenya attest trust is one of the pillars in relational exchanges. Facilities that have valued trust in their relationship are likely to promote emotional attachment with the guests. This kind of attachment is likely to aid a sense of belonging and personal identification with the products and services.

The results of such a relationship will definitely cause guests to come back to the facility, send positive word of mouth to friends, relatives and promote the facility through technology such as social media. Studies have referred to this kind of guest loyalty as attitudinal (Zeithaml et al., 1996). This is facilitated by the guest confidence in an exchange of the establishment's reliability and integrity (Schumann et al., 2010). Guests believe in honesty in their partnership, consistency of the products and services delivered responsible partnership that is willing to rely on each other.

Trust is linked with loyalty both in banking, telecommunication and petrol station (Chenuos et al., 2014; Daniel et al., 2012; Thuo et al., 2011). Studies on measures of loyalty behaviors from the customers' show direct increase in sales and profits (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001; Helgesen, 2006). Thus, if managers design trust

image in their strategies and market it to individual customers it will not only increase loyalty but also sales and profitability of the facilities.

4.4 Level of Commitment

The second objective was to examine the intensity of commitment from the guests on tourist accommodation facilities. Besides, hypothesis was used that stated;

H₀₂: There is no association between level of commitment and guest loyalty in tourist accommodation facilities.

Commitment determinant was a latent variable that was observed by nine VARs that were structured on a five point Likert scale, 1 was lowest and 5 was highest. The guests were asked to put a tick on the scale that they agreed with concerning the VARs. Commitment level was analyzed by use of descriptive statistics which included mean, mean ranking and standard deviation.

Table 4.13 in the next page shows the level of commitment of guest towards the accommodation facilities. The mean ranges between 3.0 to 4.6 and an overall mean of the determinant as 3.9.

Table 4. 13. Level of Commitment

Commitment	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Overall Mean	Mean Ranking	Skewness	Kurtosis
I would be happy to visit the establishment again	321	4.6822	.76155		1	-3.037	9.812
I am proud to tell others about the establishment	321	4.6075	.78371		2	-2.648	7.941
I feel personally attached to the establishment	321	4.3115	.89241		3	-1.320	1.494
I feel a strong sense of belonging to the establishment	321	4.2897	.85157		4	-1.359	2.080
I really feel that I can contribute to solving the problems experienced by the establishment	321	4.1059	1.02835	3.9	5	-.990	.372
Visiting the establishment has a great deal of personal meaning to me	321	4.0903	.96563		6	-.915	.423
I visit the establishment because it's hard to break the relationship	321	3.1340	1.28603		7	-.032	-1.016
I have no worthwhile alternative of the establishment	321	3.0467	1.36965		8	.007	-1.285
It would cost me highly if I change the establishment	321	3.0062	1.41199		9	.093	-.306
Valid N (list wise)	321						

Source: Research Data, (2015)

The results on Table 4.13 posit that, the guests are highly committed towards the accommodation facility. According to Oliver (1999), commitment is both affective and behavioral. This kind of commitment is represented by result of mean ranking 1-6. This is an indication that guest commitment is geared towards loyalty. On calculative commitment guest are undecided, mean ranking 7-9. The guests may or not switch the accommodation facilities.

Gounaris (2005), affectively committed customers have an emotional attachment to the brand. The guest emotional attachment on the accommodation facility is important in building a sense of belonging and personal identification with the establishment. The results support this argument where the respondent feel attached to the facility with a mean of 4.3115 and a strong sense of belonging of 4.2897.

When people belong to a family, an organization, a club or a group, they direct their energy towards certain goals, share same value system and solve challenges facing the institution. The research joins other researchers in emphasizing that guests who are psychologically committed to a facility will repurchase products and services of that particular establishment. It is in this regard that respondents show a mean of 4.6822 when expressing happiness by visiting the establishment once more. Moreover these respondents would be proud to tell others about the facility.

Based on their feelings of happiness it means they would be speaking positively about the facility. Positive sharing of the guest will promote increased market share, increased customer base and increased loyalty. To test the null hypothesis whether or not there was a relationship between commitment and guest loyalty in tourist accommodation facilities, logistic regression was used.

Logit model was found suitable to tests the predictive power of commitment determinant because the outcome variable (guest loyalty) that was tested by intention to visit again was categorical (Yes or No). The model was deemed fit for the data thus to predict the relationship between the level of predictor variable commitment and dependent variable (guest loyalty), since it was significant with a likelihood ratio Chi-square(x^2) of 107.74 and a p-value of 0.000.

The study relied on a 95% level of confidence thus a p-value ≤ 0.005 was significant to predict the association of independent and outcome variable. Table 4.14 shows the logit model of commitment and guest loyalty at log likelihood of -45.74, Wald Chi $^2=107.74$, Prob>Chi 2 0.000, $\beta=0.78$, P=0.000.

Table 4. 14. Logit Model: Level of Commitment and Guest Loyalty

Guest Loyalty	Log-likeli.	Wald Chi 2	Prob > Chi 2	Coef β	Std Error	Z	P> Z	95% Conf .	Interv .
Commitment	-45.74	107.74	0.000	0.78	0.075	10.38	0.000	0.63	0.92
		Prob>Chi2 0.000				P=0.000.			

Source: Research Data, (2015)

From the findings on Table 4.14, commitment is statically significant positively at log odds 0.78 and P value of 0.000. It means the logistic regression coefficient give the change in the log odds of the guest loyalty for a unit increase in the commitment variable. Therefore, for every one unit change in commitment, the log odds of guest loyalty increase by 0.78. The null hypothesis was rejected, thus the study shows there is relationship between commitment and guest loyalty.

The findings on intensity of commitment support research of Dimitriades (2006), thus commitment positively affects guest loyalty. Guests who are committed to the

establishment will speak positive word of mouth (Kandampully et al., 2000). Commitment comes as a result of service provider being trustworthy in all his dealings with the customer (Morgan & Hunt, 1994).

The service provider keeps the word promised in all marketing campaigns and ensures all the products and services are meeting and exceeding guest expectations. As a result, the guests develop a positive disposition towards the service provider. The inclination towards a facility makes the guest patronize the facility regularly, spend his finances in purchasing products and services and keep advocating the facility to others.

4.5 Level of Communication

The third objective was to assess the level of communication in tourist accommodation facilities. The formulated null hypothesis was;

H₀₃: There is no relationship between level of communication and guest loyalty in tourist accommodation facilities.

There were four observed variables on level communication that were tested and results analyzed by use of descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation and median. Table 4.15 shows results of level of communication with a mean ranging from 2.4 and 4.1. The median is 2 and 4 and an overall mean of 3.5.

Table 4. 15. Level of Communication

Communication	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Median	Overall Mean	Skewness	Kurtosis
I freely express opinions to the staff of the establishment	321	4.1963	.83411	4		-1.098	1.002
I am able to express my dissatisfaction towards the staff	321	4.1277	.92831	4	3.5	-1.115	.898
The staff in the establishment frequently communicates to me	321	3.3396	1.32993	4		-.511	-.949
When there is a change in the policy or any relevant issue, the establishment communicates to me	321	2.4393	1.43294	2		.455	-1.205
Valid N (list wise)	321						

Source: Research Data, (2015)

The results on Table 4.15 show diverse responses of guest on communication levels of the tourist accommodation facilities. The mean varied from disagreement 2.4393 to 4.1963. Communication determinant had a indifferent mean of 3.5. It can be argued that, the accommodation facilities are not doing very well in terms of communications to their guests. The variable of facilities communicate whenever there is change in policy or important issues had a median of 2. This result could be explained by 81% of the guests were first timers in the accommodation facilities.

The desire of majority of the guests is for the establishment to offer personalized communication, advice, provide clear, accurate and timely information on important issues that affects their purchase decisions. Such kind of communication has been

found to enhance trust, commitment, satisfaction and loyalty (Velnampy & Sivesan, 2012).

It is very critical for the accommodation facilities to keep the lines of communication with the guest open and communicate frequently (Chenuos et al., 2014). Communication with the guest before purchase, during purchase and after purchase ought to be increased. The service providers should be aware what to communicate with the guest in the three stages of purchase. This will enhance positive relationship and influence loyalty.

The findings revealed that, for a relationship to thrive the partners need to exercise openness, timely delivery of information, accurate and frequently communicate with each other. In this case since the study looked at the service provider communication with the guest and not vice versa then, the tourist facilities need to take time to build it. With the advent of the technology, means of communication such as emails, instagrams, short messages, whatsapp and social media has become very easy and fun too. The service providers may explore their data bases to find out some of the preferred means of communication by their guest. This will form a base of sharing meaningful and timely information with the patrons.

On the other hand guest agree that the establishment allows them to express their opinions ($M=4.1963$; $SD=0.83411$). It may be a good thing that enables the facilities to understand their guest needs. Guest needs are diverse whether individual or collective. For example, you may find a guest who is visiting the Mara because of its serenity as well as demanding for an establishment that has Wi-Fi not considering

the remoteness of the reserve for instance, *“the camp is absolutely fantastic, able to view hippos, Wi-Fi available and a swimming pool.”*

Others who don't mind about the Wi-Fi as long as the accommodation is comfortable and able to view wildlife for example, *Very comfortable and luxurious tents, I am able to view game, no Wi-Fi but that is not what brought me here”.*

When the facilities encourage freedom of expression it becomes easy to meet guest expectations resulting to satisfaction hence guest loyalty. The guests also agree the facilities allow them to express dissatisfaction to staff (M=4.1277; SD=0.92831).

To get reliable results on null hypothesis for dependent variable with categorical data, (Kleinbaum and Klein 2010) advocates for logistic regression to show relationship. The logit model was used to test null hypothesis whether or not there was a relationship between level of communication and guest loyalty. Table 4.16 shows the results of logistic regression of level of communication and guest loyalty. There was a log likelihood of -52.6, Wald Chi ²=114.82, Prob>Chi²= 0.000, β =0.14, P=0.000.

Table 4. 16. Logit Model: Level of Communication and Guest Loyalty

Guest Loyalty	Log-likeli	Wald Chi 2	Prob> Chi 2	Coef β	Std Error	Z	P> Z	95% Conf	Interv
Commu	-52.6	114.82	0.000	0.14	0.11	10.72	0.000	0.93	1.34

nication

Prob>Chi²= 0.000

P=0.000

Source: Research Data, (2015)

The results of Table 4.16 found the model fit for the data thus was able to predict the relationship between the level of predictor variable communication and outcome

(guest loyalty), since it was significant with a likelihood ratio Chi-square(x^2) of 114.82 and a p-value of 0.000. The study relied on a 95% level of confidence thus a p-value ≤ 0.005 was significant to predict the association of independent and outcome variable.

From the above findings communication is statically significant positively ($\beta=0.14$, $P=0.000$). It means the logistic regression coefficient give the change in the log odds of the guest loyalty for a unit increase in the communication variable. Therefore, for every one unit change in communication, the log odds of guest loyalty increase by 0.14. The H_03 hypothesis was rejected, thus the study shows there is relationship between level of communication and guest loyalty.

Therefore the accommodation facilities need to encourage communication in all the three stages of purchase; pre-purchase, during and post-purchase (Ndubisi & Chan, 2005). In hospitality purchasing stages can be likened with guest cycle. Pre-purchase stage is the pre-arrival of guest cycle; guests seek information on the hotel they would like to visit. They seek information on products and service, payments methods, rates and accessibility. They get the information from travel agents, websites, and friends with past experiences and reservation systems.

During purchase could be viewed as arrival and occupancy stage of guest cycle. These time guests are seeking information on directions within the facility, rates and methods of payment, transport outside the facility and activities. Pre-purchase in hospitality context could be departure stage of guest cycle. In this stage guests are seeking for formation about their next destination either in the same chain or different chains.

The hotel maintains guest history record for their future reference. In view of the fact that communication positively and significantly determines guest loyalty, the accommodation facility ought to ensure the communication is meaningful and timely Velnampy and Sivesan (2012).

4.6 Guests Satisfaction

The forth objective was to evaluate guests' satisfaction of tourist accommodation facilities. The null hypothesis to test the relationship of guests' satisfaction and guest loyalty was stated as follows:

Ho4: There is no significant relationship between level of satisfaction and guest loyalty in tourist accommodation facilities.

Guest satisfaction was measured using five VARs that described areas of satisfaction such as products, service and process, on a 5 point Likert scale. The results on guests' satisfaction for the accommodation facilities were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation and median. Table 4.17 shows guests satisfaction the overall mean was 4.3; meaning guests are satisfied with the products and service of the tourist accommodation facilities.

Table 4. 17. Level of Guest Satisfaction

Satisfaction	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Median	Overall Mean	Skewness	Kurtosis
The establishment and all its services are easily accessible	321	4.7072	.62368	5		-2.747	9.382
I am satisfied with the product and services	321	4.6137	.72478	5		-2.593	8.312
Has always responded to my needs	321	4.5171	.79874	5	4.3	-1.877	3.293

Constantly meets my expectations	321	4.3801	.80938	5	-1.493	2.413
Emphasizes on customer satisfaction as opposed to rules and procedures	321	4.1625	1.00086	4	-1.369	1.619
Valid N (list wise)	321					

Source: Research Data, (2015)

It is worth noting from Table 4.17 that the highest mean was 4.7 and lowest being 4.2. The findings disclose that guests agree to satisfaction determinant indicators. It emerges that satisfaction determinant is strong. According to these result then, it can be posited that the accommodation facilities may enjoy guest loyalty. The findings confirm the study by (Bataineh et al., 2015; Bricci et al, 2016).

The study emphasizes that patrons exert a feeling of well-being and pleasure whenever they gain what they expect from a service provider. In this case the measure of products and service was given a mean of 4.6. The experience from the product or service has met their expectation leading to satisfaction. The pleasure stimulates affection or raises emotions towards the relationship. In addition the service provider has always met customers' needs M=4.5. The results posit that, guests expectations have not been met once or twice by the accommodation facilities but consistently and constantly.

This is evident from the respondents who had visited the facility more than four times, *"the establishment satisfactorily meets my needs"*. *"I always feel at home when I am here"*. The consistency of the products and services being delivered over a period of time will increase trust of the accommodation facility by the guest. For instance a respondent said the reason he would be loyal was, *"because of the trust I*

have towards the establishment, good satisfaction towards my expectations have been met by the establishment”.

The null hypothesis on whether or not there was a relationship between level of satisfaction and guest loyalty was tested by logistic regression. The outcome variable (guest loyalty) was categorical (Yes or No). The model was deemed fit for the data thus predicted the relationship between the level of predictor variable satisfaction and outcome (guest loyalty), Table 4.18 shows significant positive relationship between guest satisfaction and guest loyalty, with a likelihood ratio Chi-square(x^2) of 111.29 and a p-value of 0.000.

Table 4. 18. Logit Model: Level of Satisfaction and Guest Loyalty

Visit- Again	Log- likeli.	Wald Chi 2	Prob> Chi 2	Coef β	Std Error	Z	P> Z	95% Conf	Interv
Trust	-47.77	111.29	0.000	0.73	0.07	10.55	0.000	0.59	0.86

Prob>Chi²0.000 P=0.000

Source: Research Data, (2015)

The findings on Table 4.18 relied on a 95% level of confidence thus a p-value \leq 0.005 was significant to predict the relationship between guests satisfaction and guest loyalty of independent and outcome variable. Table 4.18 shows the logit model of satisfaction and guest loyalty at log likelihood of -47.77, Wald Chi $^2=111.29$, Prob>Chi 2 0.000, $\beta=0.73$, P=0.000

From the above findings satisfaction is statically significant positively ($\beta=0.73$, P=0.000). It means the logistic regression coefficient give the change in the log odds of the guest loyalty for a unit increase in the satisfaction variable. Therefore, for every one unit change in satisfaction, the log odds of guest loyalty increase by 0.73. The H₀₄ hypothesis was rejected, thus the study shows there is relationship between level of satisfaction and guest loyalty.

Furthermore, the significant effects of satisfaction on guest loyalty, the open ended response on reasons for visiting again, the variable was cited most by 66.51% (Table 4.24). The respondent associated their satisfaction with met expectations from food, accommodation and service received from the accommodations facilities. The respondents give such reasons of intentions to visit again; *“great food, friendly staff, clean and comfortable rooms”*. *“Exceeded my expectations”*, *“The camp beat my expectations, very friendly and knowledgeable staff”*; *“The facility exceeded my expectations in all areas of food service, safari drives and luxurious tents”*.

Accommodation facilities need to keep on seeking for ways of creating and maintaining satisfied customers. The guest will increase their loyalty to the facilities. Satisfied and delighted customers are less likely to switch to the competitor due to price, they make more purchase than non-loyal, they help in promoting the camps and lodges, and they provide a strong word of mouth, create business referrals and provide references.

There is need to tailor make needs of the customers to be in a position to exceed their expectations which leads to delight. Some of the accommodation facilities in MMNR are trying to delight guest in this way as some guest expressed; *“Great staff is very flexible even to cooking the food I needed besides what was in the buffet, exceeded my expectations, I even cried the whole day”*. *“Variety of food including vegetarian, personalized service”*.

4.7 Complaint Handling

The fifth objective was to examine level of complaint handling in tourist accommodation facilities. Null hypothesis was stated as follows:

H₀₅ There is no direct positive relationship between level of complaint handling and guest loyalty in tourist accommodation facilities.

The data to test this objective was collected by a questionnaire. The latent variable complaint handling was observed on three VARs on a Likert scale of 1-5 points. The lowest point was 1 and the highest 5. The data was analyzed using descriptive such as mean, standard deviation and median. Table 4.19 shows a descriptive analysis for complaint handling. The standard deviation was narrow between 0.84 and 0.91, the median was 5. The guest strongly agreed that the accommodation facilities solved their complaints effectively.

Table 4. 19. Level of Complaint Handling

Complaint Handling	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Median	Overall Mean	Skewness	Kurtosis
Solves any complaints that arise	321	4.4766	.84053	5		-2.171	5.463
Tries to avoid complaints	321	4.4268	.86337	5	4.4	-1.945	4.170
Discusses solutions openly with the customers	321	4.4112	.90781	5		-1.994	4.248
Valid N (list wise)	321						

Source: Research Data, (2015)

The results from Table 4.19 reveal that the guests agreed strongly on complaint handling indicators. The results are supported by table 4.16 that showed a mean of (M=4.1277; SD=0.92831) on whether guests are allowed to express dissatisfaction to the staff. Once dissatisfaction has been expressed by the guest it is not left at that but the staff take up the matter. The respondents agree that any issue of complaint is sorted out. The issues that have been worked on are also communicated to the guest with their solutions.

Although the respondents tended to be indifferent on frequency of communication with the establishment in Table 4.15 they agree when it comes to complaint the solutions are discussed. Besides, the establishments try to avoid conflict with their guest mean of (4.43). Complaints are inevitable in service due to service characteristics however, can be avoided when the service provider delights the guest. Guest delight goes behold satisfaction whereby guest experience with the facility exceeds expectations (Mutisya, 2011). This argument is supported by table 4.24 that shows strong results of satisfaction.

The null hypothesis whether or not there was a direct positive relationship between level of complaint handling and guest loyalty was tested by use of logistic regression. Logit model was found suitable because the outcome variable (guest loyalty) that was tested by intention to visit again was categorical (Yes or No). The model was deemed fit for the data thus to predict the relationship between the level of predictor variable complaint handling and outcome (guest loyalty). The relationship was significant with a likelihood ratio Chi-square(x^2) of 107.64 and a p-value of 0.000. The study relied on a 95% level of confidence thus a p-value ≤ 0.005 and was found significant to predict the association of independent and outcome variable. Table 4.20 shows the logit model of complaint handling and guest loyalty at log likelihood of -48.18, Wald Chi $^2=107.64$, Prob>Chi 2 0.000, $\beta=0.81$, P=0.000.

Table 4. 20. Logit Model: Level of Complaint Handling and Guest Loyalty

Visit- Again	Log- likeli.	Wald Chi 2	Prob > Chi 2	Coef β	Std Error	Z	P> Z	95% Conf	Inter v.
Complaint Handling	-48.18	107.64	0.000	0.81	0.78	10.38	0.000	0.66	0.96

Prob>Chi 2 0.000 P=0.000

Source: Research Data, (2015)

From the findings on Table 4.20 complaint handling is positive and significant at regression coefficient of $\beta=0.81$, $P=0.000$. It means the logistic regression coefficient give the change in the log odds of the guest loyalty for a unit increase in the complaint handling variable. Therefore, for every one unit change in complaint handling, the log odds of guest loyalty increase by 0.81. The H_05 hypothesis was rejected, thus the study shows there is a direct positive relationship between complaint handling and guest loyalty.

Therefore the accommodation facilities need to enhance complaint resolutions in all their dealings with guests to build customer loyalty (Ndubisi, 2007). Besides, conflict resolutions will reduce chances of customer switching to competitors. Ability to resolve conflicts before they create a problem and discuss solutions openly with the affected customers increases loyalty (Motamedifor et al., 2012).

Complaints contribute to disloyal customers who switch to other facilities, speak negatively about the organization and advise their friends against the establishment. Since it is inevitable to avoid conflict in service organizations it is of utmost importance accommodation facilities to develop strategies of solving complaints, proactively and reactive. The reason why guests defect as a result of complaint is not complaint per se but how the complaint was resolved. In addition ability to solve complaint has been found to underpin customer relationship (Ndubisi, 2007).

4.8 Relative Importance of Customer Relationship Determinants on Guest Loyalty.

The essence of testing relative importance of customer relationship determinants is to find out among the five constructs which of them predicted guest loyalty more. The results shows that the model was significant ($\text{Prob}>F=0.000$), therefore suitable

for the data. Coefficient of determination (R^2) is 0.999. This indicates that CR determinants (Trust, Commitment, Communication, Satisfaction and Complaint Handling) together determine guest loyalty.

An R^2 of 0.999 was obtained indicating that all the independent variables in the logistic regression analysis explain approximately 99.9% of variance in the dependent variable guest loyalty. The 99.9% positive change in the level of guest loyalty in the accommodation facilities could be deduced as resulting from increased selected CR determinants.

Table 4.21 shows the logistic regression of relative importance of the selected CR determinants on guest loyalty. Commitment predicted guest loyalty more by ($\beta=0.119$, $P= 0.000$) while complaint handling was last at ($\beta=0.0.009$, $P=0.000$).

Table 4. 21. Relative Importance of Selected CR Determinants

Independent Variables	R ²	Prob>F	Root MSE	df	Coef	Std Error	t	p> z	95% Confidence	Interval
	0.999	0.000	0.160	5						
Commitment					0.119	0.005	25.59	0.000	0.110	0.128
Satisfaction					0.059	0.004	15.69	0.000	0.052	0.067
Trust					0.041	0.017	2.44	0.015	0.008	0.075
Communication					0.015	0.002	6.02	0.000	0.010	0.019
Complaint Handling					0.009	0.001	4.66	0.000	0.054	0.013

Dependent Variable: Guest Loyalty

Note P= \leq 0.005

From the findings in table 4.21, selected CR determinants can individually predict guest loyalty as well as collectively. The findings agree with Jela (as cited by Gedefaw, 2014) who found commitment to be the most important predictor. As with other researchers there is no agreement on the order of the other determinants. The non-uniformity may be explained by different meaning ascribed by different customers in different cultures and what they perceive customer relationship to be (Palmer, 1997).

Therefore, in accommodation facilities in MMNR the managers ought to focus on maintaining and improving emotional attachment with the guest to increase loyalty, since any increase in commitment will increase guest loyalty by 0.119 log odds. Emotions enhance creation of belongingness and personal identification with the brand (Matilla, 2006). A guest who has higher emotion attachment with the brand desires a continued relationship and is loyal to the service provider (Gounaris, 2005).

This study is no different from other relationship marketing research that shows close association between satisfaction, trust and commitment (Aamir et al., 2010; Bricci et al., 2016; Morgan & Hunt, 1994; Vureen et al., 2012). Customer satisfaction is personal assessment of a product or service which is affected by expectations and experience. The results prove that the CR exists when guests' expectations have been met by the product offered and service delivered by the accommodation facilities.

Customer satisfaction comes as a result of trust in service provider, believing that what was promised will be delivered consistently for a period of time. Satisfaction

influences trust hence bonding. Guest bond in a relationship that is based on trust, buyers who have a strong bond are committed in a relationship. Thus the managers of accommodation facilities in MMNR, more importantly need to develop strategies to ensure services offered by the establishments matches or exceeds the guest expectations.

To achieve this interaction time with the guest could be prolonged especially during dinner, during game drives to better understand the needs of the guest and meet them more effectively. Empirical findings show guests are more satisfied, trust and committed to a service provider who offers personalized service (Vureen et al., 2012).

Communication emerged the forth predictor of guest loyalty, which shows that for every increase in unit of communication, guest loyalty would increase by 0.015 log odds. This implies that the guest desires meaningful and timely information shared by the establishment to strengthen the level of relationship. It is critical for the facilities to demonstrate they have best interest at heart and are willing to serve guest in a timely manner.

In the same vine complaint handling need to be managed professionally, timely and effectively. Though among the selected CR determinants complaint handling emerged the last does not mean is less important. In fact, it was positive significant at ($\beta=0.009$, $p=0.000$). Thus need for the facilities to sensitize to their staff the need of handling complaints, equip staff with the relevant skills of handling complaints and empower staff to be able to resolve customer issues.

4.9 Confirmatory Factor Analysis

The intention for using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was to build the five constructs of customer relationship (Trust, Commitments, Communication, Satisfaction, and Complaint Handling). This assisted in determining the values for the latent's variables. This was done using the Structure Equation Models (SEM) and path analysis. Table 4.22 shows the SEM of the constructs, comprises of a complete list of estimate in appendix C. The measured constructs were positive and significant at 95% confidence, thus the model was fit for the data.

Table 4. 22. Estimate of the Coefficient

			Estimate β	S.E.	C.R.	P value
TR1	<---	TRUST	1.000			
TR2	<---	TRUST	2.701	.984	2.745	0.006
TR3	<---	TRUST	.820	.348	2.357	0.018
TR4	<---	TRUST	3.839	1.380	2.781	0.005
TR5	<---	TRUST	2.867	1.093	2.623	0.009
CMT1	<---	Commitment	1.000			
CMT2	<---	Commitment	1.117	.043	26.057	<0.001
CMT3	<---	Commitment	.967	.049	19.832	<0.001
CMT4	<---	Commitment	1.105	.053	20.700	<0.001
CMT5	<---	Commitment	.930	.048	19.573	<0.001
CMT6	<---	Commitment	.592	.080	7.416	<0.001
CMT7	<---	Commitment	1.032	.094	10.939	<0.001
CMT8	<---	Commitment	1.173	.098	11.970	<0.001
CMT9	<---	Commitment	1.082	.104	10.432	<0.001
SAT1	<---	Satisfaction	1.000			
SAT2	<---	Satisfaction	.903	.044	20.382	<0.001
SAT3	<---	Satisfaction	1.044	.079	13.174	<0.001
SAT4	<---	Satisfaction	.900	.050	17.832	<0.001
SAT5	<---	Satisfaction	.586	.049	12.025	<0.001
CMP1	<---	Complaint	1.000			
CMP2	<---	Complaint	1.041	.033	31.526	<0.001
CMP3	<---	Complaint	1.085	.038	28.626	<0.001
COMM1	<---	Communication	1.000			
COMM2	<---	Communication	1.391	.127	10.978	<0.001

			Estimate β	S.E.	C.R.	P value
COMM3	<---	Communication	1.481	.136	10.870	< 0.001
COMM4	<---	Communication	.459	.073	6.247	< 0.001

Note: $P \leq 0.005$

Source: Research data, (2015)

Amos SEM findings on Table 4.22 show that trust, commitment, satisfaction, complaint handling and communication influenced customer relationship positively and significantly. It is in this regard that it can be argued the selected constructs are responsible for establishing relationships, enhancing strong relationship, maintaining relationship with guest through a mutual exchange and fulfillment of promises for a profit (Berry, 1983).

Thus it is possible for the facilities to build relationships with the guest in all purchasing cycles (pre-purchase, purchase and post purchase) to reduce cost and gain market share in order to create competitive advantage. The strong relationship that is built by the accommodation facilities is certainly going to convert indifferent patrons into loyal ones (Kumar & Reinartz, 2012).

The SEM is described graphically in Figure 4.2, Amos Path diagram was found suitable in explaining the relationship between the latent constructs and the observed indicators. Maximum likelihood estimation was used to estimate the covariance structures for both measurement model and structural model. The Amos findings on absolute fit indices sought to measure on overall whether the implied covariances were significantly different from the observed covariances.

Table 4.23 shows the SEM goodness of fit model. The model fit was acceptable with absolute fit indices, incremental fit indices and parsimonious fit measures being within limit and good fit.

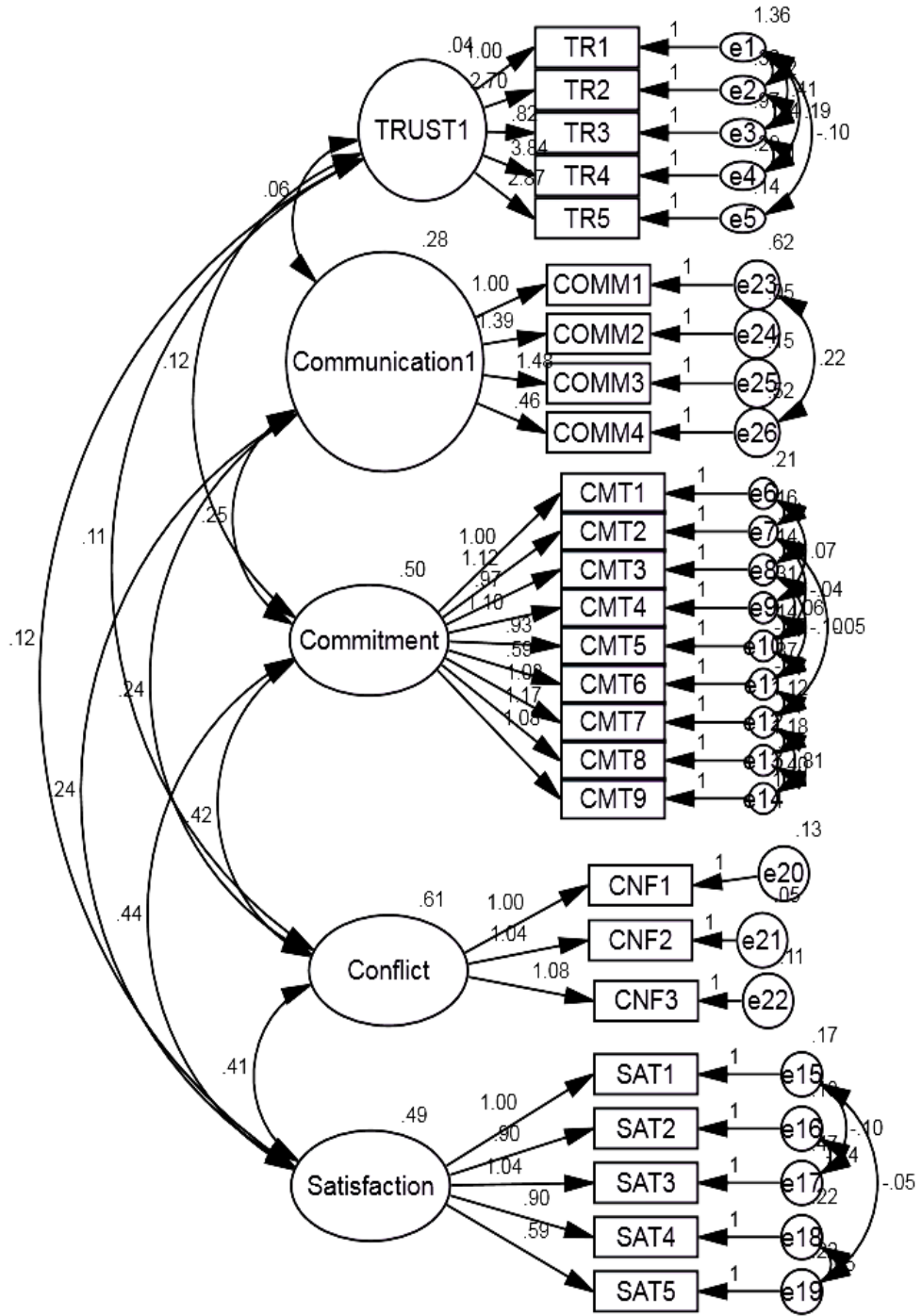
Table 4. 23. Goodness of Fit Indices

Absolute Fit Indices	Default Model	Saturated Model	Level of acceptance	Comment
Goodness of Fit Index (GFI)	1.000	1.000	0.90	Perfect Fit
Chi-Square (χ^2)	839.82			Sensitive to large samples
	df 265			
	Sig 0.000			
Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)	0.82	0.26	>1.(Poor Fit)	Acceptable
Incremental Fit Indices				
Normed Fit Index (NFI)	0.89	1.00	0.90 or close to 1	Good fit
Incremental Fit Index (IFI)	0.92	1.000	>0.9	Good fit
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	0.90	1.000	0.90-0.95	Acceptable
Parsimonious Fit Indices			Lower limit=1	Within limit
Normed Chi-Square (χ^2 /df)	3.17		Upper limit=3-5	

Note: df= Degree of Freedom; Sig= P-Value of Close Fit

Source: Research Data, (2015)

The model illustrated on Table 4.23, was found adequate to impute the latent constructs and customer relationship. Figure 4.2 Shows Amos Path Diagram of Customer Relationship Constructs.



$\chi^2=839.82$ df=265 Sig=0.000

Figure 4.2: Amos Path Diagram

4.10 Qualitative Analysis of Reasons for Guest Loyalty

The last item of the questionnaire enquired from the guest if they had intentions to visit the facility in future. The aim of was to establish beside the guest relationship determinants that influenced guest loyalty if there was other factors that determined loyalty. The factors were categorized and put into different themes. Table 4.24 shows categories that were cited by guest that would influence their repurchase from the accommodation facilities. Service was cited the highest with 38.36 % and culture the lowest at 0.46%.

Table 4. 24. Qualitative Analysis for Other Factors of Guest Loyalty

Category	Theme	No. cited	%
Location	Relaxing Environment	198	30.14%
	Beautiful Sceneries		
	Interaction with animals		
	Serene		
	High nature expedition		
	Good climate		
	Accessible		
	Secure		
	Safe		
Food	Delicious	89	13.55%
	Variety		
	Sufficient portions		
Accommodation	Spacious rooms	95	14.46%
	Beautiful rooms		
	Clean rooms		
	Comfortable beds		
	Privacy		
Service	Value for money	252	38.36%
	Warm staff		
	Courteous staff		
	Knowledgeable staff		
	Professionalism		
	Personalized service		
	Quick service		
	Service enhancers like bon-fire at night, game drive, sun-		

	downer, hot-air balloon, hiking		
Price	Affordable	11	1.67%
CSR	Service to community	5	0.76%
Culture	Masai culture incorporated on décor Masai warrior share culture	3	0.46%

Source: Research Data, (2015)

From the findings on Table 4.24, service would influence guest loyalty more than any other reason given as why guests would be loyal. The appeal of the service is described by the staffs that are knowledgeable, courteous and professional, process that is quick and perceived value for their money, service enhancers and personalized. The factor of service reinforces satisfaction determinant.

The places where the facilities are located seem to play a role in influencing guest return to the facility. The location is described as serene, accessible, beautiful, highly nature expedition. It poses a challenge to CoN and to the Ministry of Tourism to take care of MMNR. For them to continue enjoying taxes that come as a result of tourist visit to the establishment, they will have to protect the environment, adhere to guidelines that are set on national parks, maintain and improve roads to the park and within the park and air strips.

Guest who had indicated why they were not to return to the facility cited bad road from Narok to the National Park *“need to repair Sekenani road”*. *“The infrastructure needs to be reconstructed, so poor, the government or the person responsible should do something to improve tourism industry”*. It is of almost importance for the roads to the national park to be repaired, as accessibility crowns a good location which influences loyalty to the establishment. Location is an external

factor that the accommodation facilities have no control about but it really affects the loyalty of their guest.

The products offered by the accommodation facility have been cited as food and accommodation. The food has been described as delicious, variety and enough quantity. While accommodation facility is described as spacious, clean, comfortable and private. The products emphasize the fact that the accommodation facilities are committed to satisfying their guest. Once guest expectations of the products have been met they are satisfied hence loyal to the facility (Bricci et al, 2016).

Studies have shown that customers use price as an indicator to evaluate their experience with a product and service (Bolton & Lemon, 1999; Zeithaml, 1988). However in this study price was not important in evaluating guest loyalty it was mentioned only eleven times at 1.67%. It implies that the respondents were excited by other factors such as customer relationship and location to repurchase. It means when accommodation facilities establishes and maintains customer relationship and they have a favorable location they are deemed to enjoy guest loyalty.

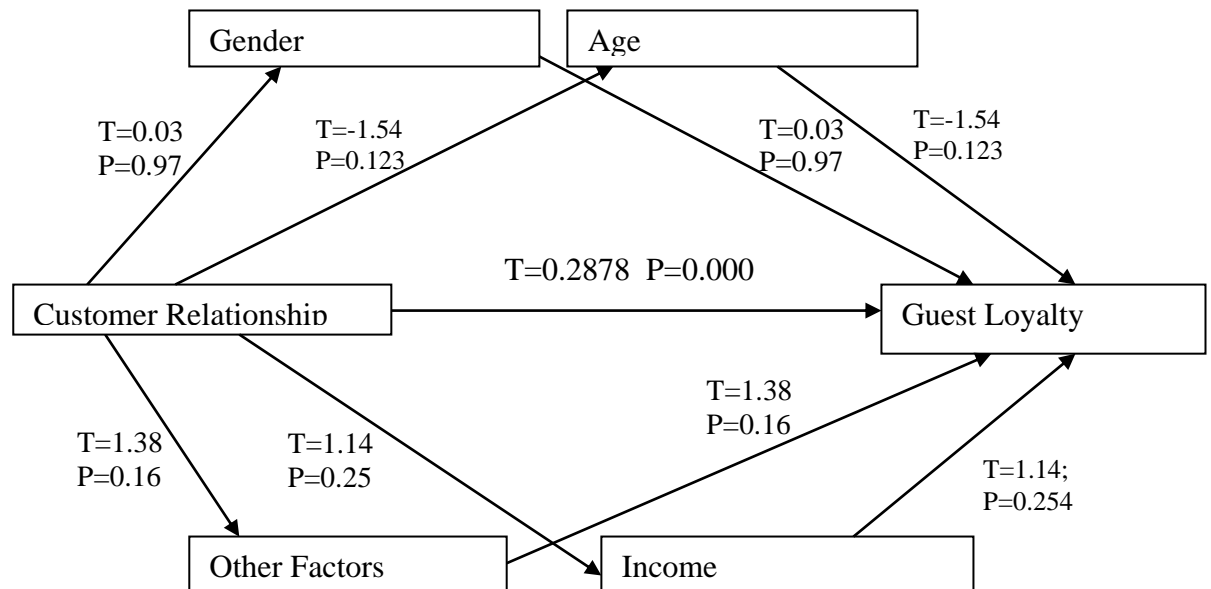
4.11 Customer Relationship on Guest Loyalty

The study found it important to test CR on guest loyalty as it was the overall objective of the study. Hierarchical Multiple Regression analysis was found appropriate to test the overall objective as it was able to predict the effect of customer relationship on guest loyalty, taking into account the effects of age, gender, income and other factors on guest loyalty.

Three-tier multiple regression was used as follows: step 1) introducing customer relationship underpinnings into the regression model; step 2) introducing the

moderators into the model; step 3) introducing the interaction (the product of the independent and the moderation variables).

Figure 4.3 shows the relationship of CR and guest loyalty with the effects of age, gender, income and other factors. The study establishes a direct relationship between customer relationship and guest loyalty. CR contribute significantly and positively ($F=70.1$, $P=0.000$) and predicts 53% of the variations in guest loyalty. The study relied on 95% level of confidence therefore, a P value ≤ 0.005 was significant to predict the relationship between CR and guest loyalty.



Note: $R=0.73$; $R^2=0.53$; $F=70.1$; $T=28.78$; $P=0.000$

Figure 4. 3 Hierarchical Multiple Regression: CR and Guest Loyalty

From the findings on Figure 4.3, CR has a direct relationship with guest loyalty. All the moderators (age, income, gender and other factors) introduced in the model did not moderate the effects of customer relationship and guest loyalty. The results show $R^2=0.53$ (53%) of guest loyalty is as a result of customer relationship. Therefore,

need for accommodation facilities in Masai Mara to create and maintain customer relationship as an objective of marketing strategy.

This will create stability and reduce business uncertainty by blocking competitor entry thus solidifying the customer base. In this case guest loyalty will facilitate the establishments to increase market share, profitability and reduce cost of acquiring new guest (Banga *et al*, 2013; Dyche', 2000; Tsauro *et al*, 2002). Noticeably, is the fact that the relationship of CR and guest loyalty is positive $T=0.2878$; $P=0.000$. It implies an increase in one unit of CR will increase guest loyalty by approximately 29% holding all other factors constant.

The results resonate with a study on impact of effective customer relationship management on repurchase, a case study of a hotel in Accra Ghana, which found Customer Relationship Management positive and significant (Amaoko *et al.*, 2012). However, the current study disagrees with Osman *et al.*, (2009) who studied transaction approach to customer loyalty in hotel industry in the United Kingdom, who found CR insignificant on loyalty. The difference could be attributed to the fact that the study was a survey that was carried in the entire country and in whole hotel industry whereas the current study concentrated on a particular region and lodges and camps only. There is thus, a possibility that some sectors of hotel industry are not achieving guest loyalty from customer relationship

CR has been found to be a resource to a facility that embraces it. The accommodation facility, service procedures such as time for delivery, service enhancers such as hot air balloon, game drives, wi-fi, swimming pools Knowledgeable human resource, effective communication and effective complaint

handling play a major role in establishing and maintaining CR. Therefore CR is a unit of selection that can exist through long period of time, be heritable and consequently withstand competition for comparative advantage. Therefore, the result supports the application of RA theory of competition.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the summary of the major findings of the study, conclusions and recommendations for future research.

5.1 Summary of the Research Findings

The purpose of this study was to assess the efficacy of Customer Relationship on guest loyalty in tourist accommodation facilities in MMNR, Narok County, Kenya. The CR determinants that were studied included trust, commitment, communication, satisfaction and complaint handling. Five hypotheses were cited to test whether or not each of the determinants had a relationship with guest loyalty. Guest loyalty was studied on whether or not guests would like to repurchase from the facilities in future and why.

The study was taken within the Kenyan context, by use of a semi structured questionnaire using data collected from 321 guests who had patronized the lodges and camps of over 20 rooms in MMNR from the month of March to beginning of June 2015. The questionnaire had two sections: general that included the guest demographics, measured on categories; CR determinants that was on a Likert scale of five points with one lowest and five highest. The results were analysed using descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation and median. The hypotheses were tested using logistic regression model.

Firstly, the demographic findings found male customers patronize the facilities at 52% more than females at 48%. The ages that frequented the facilities were above 41 years at 41.6% followed by 31-40 years at 32%. Income was seen as a factor that

facilitated customers to travel to MMNR as 57.1% of the respondents were earning above Ksh. 150,000. First time visitors were 81% however, above two times guests were 19%.

Trust determinant had a mean of 4.4, commitment 3.9, communication 3.5, guest satisfaction 4.3 and complaint handling 4.4. In addition the hypotheses that were to test the selected determinants were all rejected at a confidence level of < 0.05 . Thus each of the selected determinant of CR predicted guest loyalty positively and significantly at 95% confidence level. Therefore any increase of a unit of each selected determinant will increase the log odds of guest loyalty by the same unit holding all other factors constant.

Among CR determinants, commitment predicted guest loyalty more than others at $\beta=0.119$; $P= 0.000$, followed by satisfaction at $\beta=0.059$; $P=0.000$, trust was third at $\beta=0.041$; $P=0.015$, fourth was communication at $\beta=0.015$; $P=0.015$ and complaint handling was fifth at $\beta=0.009$; $P=0.000$. SEM was conducted to explain if the five selected determinants were explaining customer relationship, the estimate of the coefficients were all positive and significant at ≤ 0.005 . As a result the studied model of CR was found fit to predict guest loyalty.

Qualitative analysis was conducted to explore what other factors guests gave that would influence guest loyalty beside the selected five construct of CR. Service, accommodation, food, location, price, CSR and culture featured as categories. Although food, accommodation and service were highly cited at 13.55%, 14.46% and 38.36% respectively. Ideally the these three determinants explains guest satisfaction. Besides, location was cited the highest at 30.14%.

All these factors were grouped as other factors that were hierarchically regressed to show if they would moderate the relationship between CR and guest loyalty. Besides, age, income and gender were also hierarchically regressed to show if they would moderate the relationship of CR and guest loyalty. The results of moderation were all insignificant but CR showed a direct relationship with guest loyalty.

5.2 Conclusion

The study was set to assess the efficacy of CR and guest loyalty in tourist accommodation facilities in Masai Mara, Narok County, Kenya. The reason and the motivation to carry out the study was based on the Ministry of Tourism strategic plan 2013-2018, concern of tourism players not being focused on customer needs and as a result the country losing out to competition, lack of loyalty from the guests and failure to achieve Kenya Vision 2030. Kenya Vision 2030 cited tourism as a key sector to achieving economic pillar through delivery of quality service. Studies on CR in other disciplines shows a significant influence to loyalty. However, empirical knowledge on CR and customer loyalty in hospitality and tourism context in Kenya is limited and especially in lodges and camps. The general empirical findings in this study imply that CR is able to predict guest loyalty significantly. The following sections will synthesize the empirical results.

5.2.1 Level of Trust

Whether or not there was a relationship between level of trust and guest loyalty. The study established there was a significant positive relationship between trust and guest loyalty at $\beta=2.65$, $P= 0.000$. The significant relationship can be attributed to accommodation facilities studying the guest needs and ensuring they meet them even without consulting the guests. A mean of 4.4 for the variable implies that the

guests have confidence with the facilities. Accommodation facilities possessing a reliability and integrity with their product and service offering means increasing guest loyalty. Guests would continue using the facilities regardless the price as they know what was promised in pre-purchase will be delivered.

5.2.2 Level of Commitment

The second hypothesis was to test whether or not level of commitment had a relationship with guest loyalty. There was a significant and positive relationship at $\beta=0.78$ $P=0.000$. Guests would be committed to a relationship that is fulfilling their needs. They would be willing to support such a relationship. The accommodation facilities would benefit from such a relationship in that, the guest would advocate them to their friends or people within their network. The guest would also be willing to partner with the accommodation facilities to solving a problem the facility would be facing. It is also to the interest of the guest to remain with the accommodation facilities for future purchases. Switching to other facilities would be minimal or reduced unless when the guest encounters several service failure.

5.2.3 Level of Communication

The third hypothesis was to test whether or not the level of communication influenced guest loyalty. The results confirmed there was a significant positive relationship between level of communication and guest loyalty at $\beta=0.14$, $P=0.000$. The mean of level of communication was 3.5. Though, there was a significant relationship the accommodation facilities are not communicating as guest would like. Guest had diverse view when it came to communicating policy change as well as frequent communication with a standard deviation of 1.43 and 1.32 respectively. Guests are of the opinion that, strong relationship are maintained by frequent, timely

and effective communication. When there is change in policy that affects the guests it should be communicated on time in order to build strong relationship.

5.2.4 Guests Satisfaction

The fourth hypothesis was to test whether or not there was a relationship between level of satisfaction and guest loyalty. The results proved there was a significant positive relationship at $\beta=0.73$, $P=0.000$. The mean of guest satisfaction was 4.3. This implies guests are satisfied with the products and services they are receiving from the accommodation facilities. Majority of the sample (66.37%) agree food, accommodation and service are key to satisfying and exceeding their expectations. Some guests 5% attributed their dissatisfaction from inaccessibility of the facility resulting to poor Sekenani road.

5.2.5 Complaint Handling

The fifth hypothesis sought to assess whether or not there was direct positive association between level of complaint handling and guest loyalty. The results found a direct positive relationship between complaint handling and guest loyalty at $\beta=0.81$; $P=0.000$. Majority of guests mean of 4.47 supports facilities solving complaints boosts their commitment to be loyal to the establishment. Another attribute that strengthens relationship is providing solutions to complaints, had a mean of 4.41. Guests are delighted when the accommodation facilities fail in delivering service but provide a solution. It affirms in a relationship complaints are likely to happen but solutions soothe the complainant.

To conclude the study based on the purpose which aimed at assessing the efficacy of CR on guest loyalty in tourism accommodation facilities in Masai Mara, Narok

County. It is correct to concur with other studied in other disciplines that CR influences guest loyalty. On the same vine, the theoretical underpinning of attraction theory and social exchange theory grounds the study. Guests would be attracted in the relationship with the accommodation facility because of determinants of CR. As a result, guests would exchange their relationship with the facility because of the benefits they achieve from the facilities. However, this conclusion cannot be generalised in Tourism Industry in Kenya, since a national policy document Tourism Strategic Plan 2013-2018 had cited a threat in customer focus from industry players. Hospitality facilities in Masai Mara are focusing on guest but studies need to be done in other sectors of Tourism Industry to point out where the problem really is.

5.3 Recommendations for Policy

From the findings the following suggestions were made in relation to guest loyalty.

The study suggests the Ministry of Tourism provide close monitoring and evaluation of products and service being offered by tourist accommodation facilities to ensure consistent in quality. The ministry should also ensure there are guidelines or set benchmark or standards on quality delivery of product and service in tourist accommodation facilities.

The ministry should also control the development of accommodation facilities in the natural settings to protect the environment from being degraded as many of the customers are loyal to the facilities because they not only trust the service providers but also the location. In addition the ministry should be able to market the county as a destination that exceeds the expectations of the customers.

The Ministry of Tourism, Narok County should offer close control of illegal development of accommodation facilities to protect the area. The County should also secure and provide safety of the County to reflect what National Government markets about the country. The National Reserve should be protected from encroachment and poaching, this could be done by the County Government. The county should educate the community of the benefits they get from the reserve so that they work in conjunction in protecting and securing it.

5.4 Implication to the Managers

It is important for the managers to meet and exceed customer expectations by going through guest comments and establishing their needs by asking of their tastes and preferences before they arrive. It is also very critical for the managers to develop product and services that are in line with the expectations of their customers. The managers need to evaluate their products and services to ensure they are in line with guest expectations.

The managers ought to train all their new and current employees regularly on delivering the services they have promised and exceeding the expectations of the customers. The training should further include how to effectively handle conflict and resolve them, how to communicate to the guest and what to be communicated and the frequency of communicating to their loyal guest.

Managers need to aim at building customer base and increasing market share by incorporating customer relationship strategies. Consequently, it will act as a resource that will promote competitive advantage. Guest loyalty could then lead to high profitability for the business and future sustainability.

5.5 Implications to the Hospitality Stakeholders

Guest loyalty that leads to larger market share and greater profitability may not be achieved by the managers' only without the hospitality investors supporting them. It requires financial resources to put infrastructure and procedures in place to deliver and exceed the customer expectations, build trust and commitment. More resource allocation is inevitable for hiring, training and refurbishing to delight the guest.

5.6 Implications to Hospitality Academia

Theoretically, the results of this study provide empirical evidence on the influence of CR determinants (trust, commitment, communication, satisfaction and complaint handling) on guest loyalty. The research has added value to the literature by empirically linking these independent variables with the dependent variable as well as linking customer demographic with the dependent variable.

The study has built on past literature in the area of customer relationships and customer loyalty which had either assesses different construct of CR variables (Vuuren *et al*, 2012; Szwarc, 2005) or related them to relationship quality (Ndubisi, 2007) or customer retention (Bataineh, 2015) without considering the ultimate goal of any business which is to build loyal customers in order to increase customer base and assure sustainability of the business hence high profitability.

The research has widened the scope of applicability of CR model, as most of the previous studies concentrated in banking (Anabila *et al*, 2013), pharmaceutical (Bataineh, 2015), Airlines (Gedefaw, 2014), telecommunication (Daniel *et al*, 2012) petrol station (Chenuos *et al*, 2014), this study has shown evidence that CR also works in SME's sectors of hospitality industry such as lodges and camps.

5.7 Suggestions for Future Research

A future study could be done to continue assessing and examining the five construct more deeply and on a wider scope to further assist CR practices in tourist accommodation facilities in Kenya to survive and grow their businesses. It would also be very vital to determine whether the same CR model would influence customer loyalty in other sectors of tourism industry such as tour operators, tour agencies, budget and star rated hotels, restaurants, airlines and in a different destination like coast, town and cities.

This study assessed CR determinants on customer loyalty in tourist accommodation facilities; a future research may examine some aspects of these results in other business sectors. Furthermore, a study can be done in future to investigate the implication of CR in business to business sectors as the current research concentrated on business to customer sector. In addition other outcome variables such as business performance can also be studied.

The current research was carried out during low season in tourism sector thus a research can be done in high season to compare the results. It is also very important for another study to consider longitudinal technique to find out if the results of CR constructs will differ with time.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Research Instrument for Customers**KENYATTA UNIVERSITY****School of Hospitality and Tourism Management****Department of Hospitality Management**

My name is **Rosemary Mugito**, MSc student at **Kenyatta University** doing a study on the *The Efficacy of Customer Relationship on loyalty in Tourist Accommodation Facilities in Masai Mara National Reserve, Kenya*. I am kindly requesting you to participate in this study whose findings will help hospitality practitioners to comprehend the chief determinants creating guests loyalty. Kindly be informed that all information provided by you shall be treated with greatest privacy. Results shall be used for academic purposes only. In addition, participation in this study is voluntary and for any questions with reference to the study, please contact me on **0721 591 973**.

1. Gender: Male
Female
2. Name of the establishment:
3. Your age in years [*Tick appropriately*]
17-20 21-30 31-40 >40
4. What is your monthly income in Kenya shillings? [*Tick appropriately*]
KSh 50,000 –KSh 99,999/ \$588-\$1176
KSh 10,000- KSh 149,999/ \$1188 - \$1764
Above KSh 150, 000/ Above \$ 1764
5. How many times have you visited the establishment?.....
6. To what extent do you agree with the following statements with regard to the establishment? Use a scale of 1 to 5; *where 1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Undecided; 4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly Agree.*

Trust	1	2	3	4	5
1. No checking is done during check-out					
2. Have our best interests at heart					
3. No need for questioning customer's motives					
4. Job is done right even without us					
5. Overall trustworthiness					

Others (specify).....

7. Among the following factors please rate the extent of agreement. Use a scale of 1 to 5; *where 1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Undecided; 4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly Agree.*

Commitment	1	2	3	4	5
1. I feel a strong sense of belonging to the establishment					
2. I feel personally attached to the establishment					
3. I am proud to tell others about the establishment					
4. Visiting the establishment has a great deal of personal meaning to me					
5. I would be happy to visit the establishment again					
6. I really feel that I can contribute to solving the problems experienced by the establishment					
7. I visit the establishment because it is hard to break the relationship					
8. I have no worthwhile alternative of the establishment					
9. It would cost me highly if I change the establishment					

8. Please rate the extent of agreement with the following statements with regard to the establishment? Use a scale of 1 to 5; *where 1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Undecided; 4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly Agree.*

Communication	1	2	3	4	5
1. The staff in the establishment frequently communicates to me					
2. I freely express opinions to the staff of the establishment					
3. I am able to express my dissatisfaction towards the staff					
4. When there is a change in the policy or any relevant issue, the establishment communicates to me					

Others (specify).....

9. With regard to the establishment, please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements? Use a scale of 1 to 5; *where 1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Undecided; 4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly Agree.*

Satisfaction	1	2	3	4	5
1. Constantly meets my expectations					
2. I am satisfied with the product and services					
3. Emphasizes on customer satisfaction as opposed to rules and procedures					
4. Has always responded to my needs					
5. The establishment and all its services are easily accessible					

Others (*specify*).....

10. To what extent do you agree with the following statements with regard to the establishment? Use a scale of 1 to 5; *where 1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Undecided; 4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly Agree.*

Complaint Handling	1	2	3	4	5
1. Tries to avoid complaint					
2. Solves any complaint that arise					
3. Discusses solutions openly with the customers					

Others (*specify*).....

11. Given a chance, would you visit the establishment again?

Yes (*Go to question 12*)

No (*Go to question 13*)

12. Please indicate why you would visit the establishment again.

.....

.....

.....

13. Please indicate why you would not visit the establishment again.

.....

.....

.....

Thank You for Your Participation

Appendix B: Study Sampling Frame

LODGES		
Name of Facility	Category	No. of Rooms
Ngerende Island Lodge	Lodge	7
Olarro Lodge	Lodge	8
Fairmont Mara Safari Club	Lodge	50*
Royal Mara Safari Lodge	Lodge	8
Saruni Mara Camp	Lodge	6
Keekorok Lodge	Lodge	101*
Mara Intrepids Lodge	Lodge	30*
Mara Sopa Lodge	Lodge	90*
Mara Serena Safari Lodge	Lodge	73*
Mara Simba Lodge	Lodge	101*
Mara River Lodge	Lodge	82*
Mara West Lodge	Lodge	28*
Murera Springs Eco Lodge	Lodge	10
David Livingstone Safari Resort	Lodge	82*
Amani Mara Lodge	Lodge	9
Impala Wildlife Lodge	Lodge	10
Mara Paradise Lodge	Lodge	78*
Olkurruk Mara Lodge	Lodge	19
Nalepo Safari Lodge	Lodge	61*
AA Lodge	Lodge	72*
Notes: *Lodges with 20 rooms and above (Study Target Population)		
TENTED CAMPS		
Name of Facility	Category	No. of Rooms
Nyumbu Camp	Tented Camp	16
Cottars 1920's Safari Camp	Tented Camp	10
Elephant Pepper Camp	Tented Camp	8
Encounter Mara Camp	Tented Camp	12
Entim Mara Camp	Tented Camp	10
Exploreans Mara Rianta Camp	Tented Camp	20*
Fig Tree Camp	Tented Camp	70*
Governors Camp	Tented Camp	37*
Porini Lion Camp	Tented Camp	12
Rekero Camp	Tented Camp	9
Sanctuary Olonana	Tented Camp	12
Sarova Mara Game Camp	Tented Camp	75*
Saruni Wild	Tented Camp	3
Sentrim Camp Mara	Tented Camp	43*
Karen Blixen Camp	Tented Camp	22*
Kicheche Mara Camp	Tented Camp	11
KichwaTembo Tented Camp	Tented Camp	12
Kilima Camp	Tented Camp	14
Mara Bushtops	Tented Camp	10
Mara Eden Safari Camp	Tented Camp	8

Mara Explorer Camp	Tented Camp	10
Mara Porini Camp	Tented Camp	6
Mpata Safari Club	Tented Camp	23*
Naboisho Camp	Tented Camp	8
Basecamp Explorer	Tented Camp	12
Ol Seki Hemingways Mara Camp	Tented Camp	8
Siana Springs Camp	Tented Camp	39*
Ilkeliani Camp	Tented Camp	17
Sekenani Camp	Tented Camp	15
Oltome Mara Magic	Tented Camp	7
Ol Moran Tented Camp	Tented Camp	14
Offbeat Mara Camp	Tented Camp	6
Matira Bush Camp	Tented Camp	7
Mara Timbo Camp	Tented Camp	7
Mara Leisure Camp	Tented Camp	29*
Kimana Camp	Tented Camp	50*
JK Mara Camp	Tented Camp	14
Enkerende Tented Camp	Tented Camp	7
Camp Oloshaiki	Tented Camp	8
NgareSerian	Tented Camp	4
Serian Camp	Tented Camp	8
Richards Private Camp	Tented Camp	5
Entumoto Tented Safari Camp	Tented Camp	5
Kandili Camp	Tented Camp	20*
Mara West Luxury Tents	Tented Camp	6
Mara Ngenche Luxury Tented Camp	Tented Camp	6
Leleshwa Camp	Tented Camp	7
Big Time Safari Camp	Tented Camp	27*
Salt Springs Mara Camp	Tented Camp	5
ElangataOlerai Luxury Camp	Tented Camp	10
Olumara Camp	Tented Camp	11
Tipilikwani Camp	Tented Camp	20*
Main Naibor Camp	Tented Camp	10
Black Leopard Retreat Camp	Tented Camp	9
Mara Enkipai Safari Camp	Tented Camp	8
Mara Plains Camp	Tented Camp	7
Sala's Camp	Tented Camp	7
Kicheche Bush Camp	Tented Camp	6
Kicheche Valley Camp	Tented Camp	6
Richard's Camp	Tented Camp	9
Aruba Mara Camp	Tented Camp	20*
Rhino Tourist Camp	Tented Camp	22*
Mara Nubian Camp	Tented Camp	12
Ashnil Mara Camp	Tented Camp	40*
Governors' Il Moran Camp	Tented Camp	10
Governors Private Camp	Tented Camp	12
Little Governors Camp	Tented Camp	17

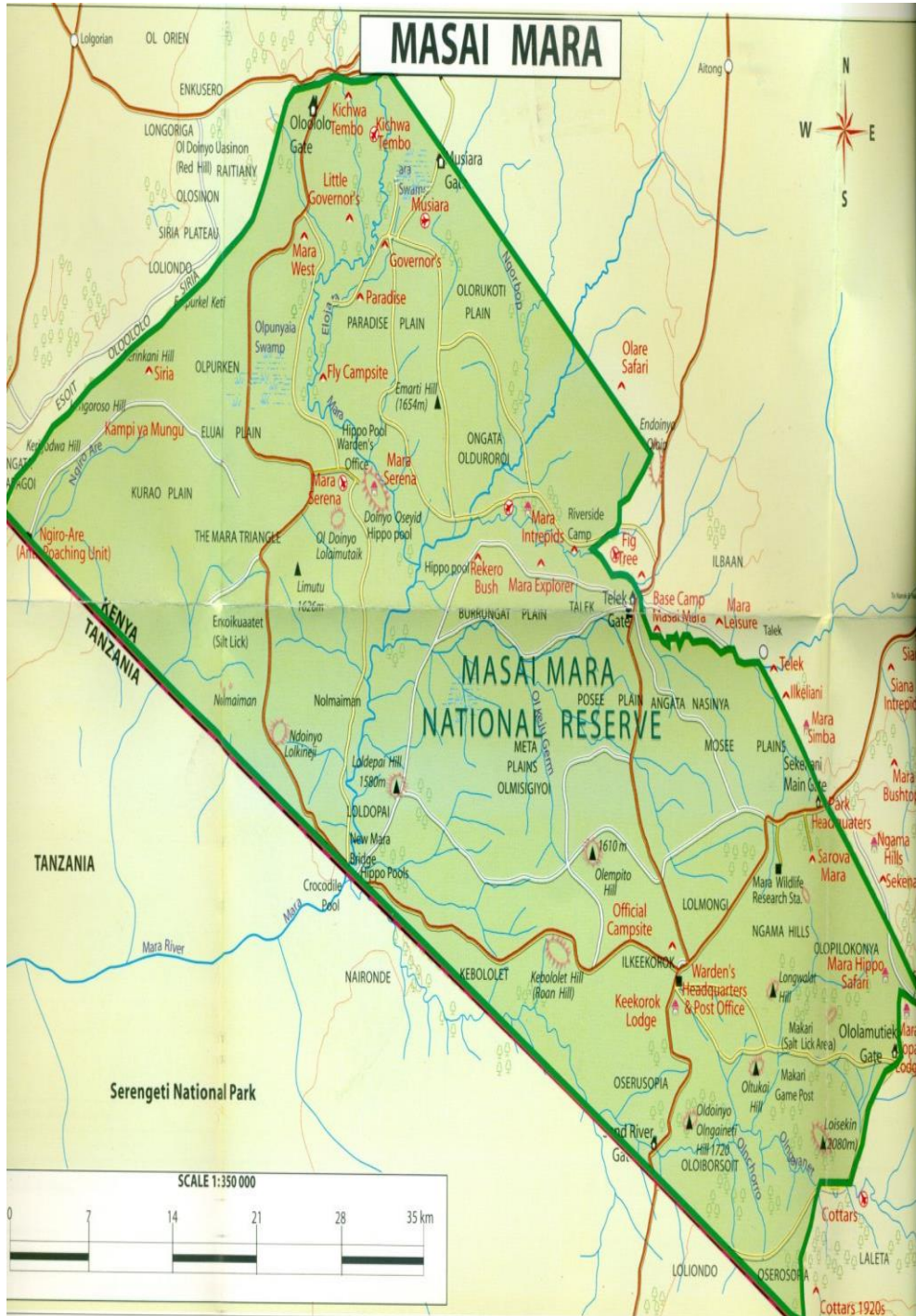
Olkeri Mara Camp	Tented Camp	12
Loyk Mara Camp	Tented Camp	10
Mara Springs Safari Camp	Tented Camp	9
Maji Moto Eco Camp	Tented Camp	9
Mara Bush Camp	Tented Camp	12
Kensington Mara West	Tented Camp	10
Enkolong Tented Camp	Tented Camp	8
Oldarpoi Mara Camp	Tented Camp	30*
Mara Sokonoi Camp	Tented Camp	5
Masai Mara Manyatta Camp	Tented Camp	10
Enchoro Wildlife Camp	Tented Camp	25*
Enkewa Mara Camp	Tented Camp	5
Riverside Camp	Tented Camp	10
Mara Siria Tented Camp	Tented Camp	14
Cheetah Tented Camp	Tented Camp	11
Dorobo Bush Camp	Tented Camp	10
Kichakani Camp	Tented Camp	20*
Mara River Camp	Tented Camp	18
Olowuaru Keri Mara Camp	Tented Camp	10
Duma Camp	Tented Camp	5
Olare Mara Kempinski	Tented Camp	12
Bateleur Camp	Tented Camp	9
Little Naibor Camp	Tented Camp	2
Dream Camp	Tented Camp	15
Aruba Mara Campsite	Tented Camp	5
Nalepo Mara Camp	Tented Camp	6
Mara Toto Camp	Tented Camp	5
Acacia Camp	Tented Camp	34*
MahaliMzuri Safari Camp	Tented Camp	12
Sand River Masai Mara	Tented Camp	16
Manyatta Camp	Tented Camp	24*
Notes: *Lodges and camps with 20 rooms and above (Study Target Population)		

Source: World Bank Report (2014)

Appendix C: Construct and Variables Used in the Study

Item	Descriptions	Construct
TR1	No checking is done during check-out	Trust
TR2	Have our best Interest at heart	
TR3	No need for questioning customer's motives	
TR4	Job is done right even without us	
TR5	Overall trustworthiness	
CMT1	I feel a strong sense of belonging to the establishment	Commitment
CMT2	I feel personally attached to the establishment	
CMT3	I am proud to tell others about the establishment	
CMT4	Visiting the establishment has a great deal of personal meaning to me	
CMT5	I would be happy to visit the establishment again	
CMT6	I really feel that I can contribute to solving the problems experienced by the establishment	
CMT7	I visit the establishment because it's hard to break the relationship	
CMT8	I have no worthwhile alternative of the establishment	
CMT9	It would cost me highly if I change the establishment	
COMM1	The staff in the establishment frequently communicates to me	Communication
COMM2	I freely express opinions to the staff of the establishment	
COMM3	I am able to express my dissatisfaction towards the staff	
COMM4	When there is a change in the policy or any relevant issue, the establishment communicates to me	
SAT1	Constantly meets my expectations	Satisfaction
SAT2	I am satisfied with the product and services	
SAT3	Emphasizes on customer satisfaction as opposed to rules and procedures	
SAT4	Has always responded to my needs	
SAT5	The establishment and all its services are easily accessible	
CMP1	Tries to avoid conflict	Complaint Handling
CMP2	Solves any conflict that arises	
CMP3	Discusses solutions openly with the customers	

Appendix D: Study Location Map



Appendix E: Research Authorization



NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

Telephone: +254-20-2213471,
2241349, 310571, 2219420
Fax: +254-20-318245, 318249
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When replying please quote

9th Floor, Utalii House
Uhuru Highway
P.O. Box 30623-00100
NAIROBI-KENYA

Ref: No.

Date:

24th March, 2015

NACOSTI/P/15/5194/5288

Rosemary Mugito Kirimi
Kenyatta University
P.O. Box 43844-00100
NAIROBI.

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

Following your application for authority to carry out research on "*Efficacy of customer relationship on loyalty in tourist accommodation facilities in Narok County,*" I am pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to undertake research in **Narok County** for a period ending **20th August, 2015**.

You are advised to report to **the County Commissioner and the County Director of Education, Narok County** before embarking on the research project.

On completion of the research, you are required to submit **two hard copies and one soft copy in pdf** of the research report/thesis to our office.


DR. S. K. LANGAT, OGW
FOR: DIRECTOR-GENERAL/CEO

Copy to:

The County Commissioner
Narok County.

The County Director of Education
Narok County.