



SERVICE TANGIBILITY AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION IN FIVE STAR HOTELS IN SOUTH COAST, KENYA

Manyara M. P., & Mutuku, B.

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Manyara M. P.,^{1*} & Mutuku, B.²

^{1*} MBA Candidate, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture & Technology [JKUAT], Kenya

² Ph.D, Lecturer, Kenyatta University of Agriculture & Technology [JKUAT], Kenya

Accepted: June 3, 2020

ABSTRACT

The main objective of this study was to establish the influence of service tangibility on customer satisfaction in the hotel industry in Kenya: A case study of five star hotels in the South Coast. A descriptive survey design was used in this study. The target population of the study included all the four five star hotels at the South Coast of Kenya namely Leopard Beach Resort, Swahili Beach Resort, Diani Reef Beach Resort as well as The Sands at Nomads. The sampling frame of the study included 400 study participants who had spent at least a day in hotel before the actual data collection. A sample size of 200 respondents was sampled from the target population using convenience sampling. The study used primary data collected using a structured questionnaire. Pilot study was conducted to test the reliability and validity of the data collection instrument. Data was analyzed both descriptively and inferentially. Pearson correlation analysis was carried out to determine the relationship between study variables while regression analysis was used to test the study hypotheses. The results of the study showed that all the general landscape of the hotels was appealing to the eyes, and the general appearance of the hotel premises and compound was excellent and that the visitors felt good to stay in hotels that had well-manicured lawn. The study concluded that the general landscape of the hotels was appealing to the eyes, the general appearance of the hotel premises and compound was excellent. The study also concluded that the visitors felt good to stay in hotels that had well-manicured lawn. The study recommended that the hotels management should have properly designed and up to date advertisement tools both in social and mass media to market their hotels. The study recommended that the management of the hotels should ensure that physical facilities of the hotels like ambience, menu of the cuisine and drinks, transport, parking and laundry services are excellent and impeccable.

Key Words: *Premise Appearance, Advertisement Tools, Service Process, Hotel Personnel, Customer Satisfaction*

CITATION: Manyara M. P., & Mutuku, B. (2020). Service tangibility and customer satisfaction in five star hotels in South Coast, Kenya. *The Strategic Journal of Business & Change Management*, 7(2), 341 – 358.

INTRODUCTION

Hospitality industry has long been viewed as a global industry whose services become a way of life for many individuals. In the recent years, the volume and needs for hotel service seem to be outgrowing the traditional hotel offer, imposing a question on the top management whether the quality and offer of services match the needs and desires of customers, and, even more importantly, whether they meet and surpass their expectations (Wai & Low, 2016). For these reasons, modern hotel industry inevitably places a significant accent on service quality. The demands of hotel guests and their expectations tend to change dynamically in the modern hotel industry (Mola & Jusoh, 2014). Muthoni and Muchina (2013) studied hotel service quality: perceptions and satisfaction among domestic guests in Kenya. The study found out that tangibility as a service is rated highly. This study revealed moderate influences of quality dimensions such as reliability, responsiveness and communication as given in their path coefficients on service quality. The study concluded that emotional satisfaction is dependent on service quality which supports that that emotional satisfaction is dependent on service quality. In addition, emotional satisfaction was derived from service-quality evaluation and cognitive evaluations precede emotional responses.

Kenya has the best developed hotel industries in Sub-Saharan Africa, offering an average of 31,400 beds per night (Kim & Kim, 2015). As a result there has been unprecedented entry of international Hotel brands in the Kenyan Hotel industry. Kenya was set to host nine new international hotels which were planning to put up 1437 hotel rooms to cater for the growing demand for travel and accommodation in the country by 2015 (Kenya economic survey 2013). These hotels included Marriot, Accor, Radisson blu, Park inn, Lonrho, Rezidor (2 hotels) and Hilton (2 new hotels). Hotel occupancy in Kenya is relatively stable throughout the year, other than December due to

Christmas and New Year celebrations in December and January which reduce demand during those months. Although the reasons for the visit to the country vary, with leisure being a significant driver, the market shows limited seasonality pattern. Nairobi's main source markets are the UK, the USA and Italy. Europe is the most important region accounting for 47% of total international arrivals in Nairobi. Arrivals from Asian markets are also becoming increasing important especially China and India. In 2011, for example, arrivals from China and India grew by 31% and 24% respectively. This is partly due to large construction projects being undertaken by Chinese companies.

Statement of the Problem

The aggressive nature of the hotel industry in attaining service perfection drives hotel operators to constantly seeking for a new approach in building strong positive experience towards their customers (Liat & Rashid, 2013). Subsequently, it is vital for hotel operators to stay adhered concerning the present and future needs to advance in the business and to react towards the needs and wants of hotel guests to improve on customer satisfaction. Innovation and creativity is a crucial element in maintaining competitive edge in this industry (Lahap, O'Mahony & Dalrymple, 2015). Thus, hotel operators have to explore hard especially in creating unique, tangible and distinctive service features that be able to meet and exceed customer's expectations. The hotel industry in Kenya is experiencing increasing competition with major international hotel brands increasingly setting up operations in Kenya. This is set to increase the competition in the hotel industry. To survive in this dynamic and highly competitive business environment the hotel operators are forced to critically acknowledge the importance of service improvement in order to gain competitive advantage. Despite increase in competition, majority of the hotels in the south coast are performing well especially after international tourism industry started

picking up in 2015 after the major scares of Al-Shabaab Attacks in the country. This can only be attributed to quality security, quality service delivery as well as improved customer satisfaction. Some of the local hotels like Diani Beach Hotel and the Leopard Beach Hotel have managed to outshine all the hotels in Africa to be Africa's best beach resort and the leading family resort respectively during the 2018 World Travel Awards. However, there was no recent study that has assessed how tangibility of services might have contributed to the successes of these hotels. However, there are a number of local studies that have been conducted in Kenya with regards to customer satisfaction and quality service in the hotel industry. Mbuthia, Muthoni & Muchina (2013) studied hotel service quality: perceptions and satisfaction among domestic guests in Kenya. The study found out that tangibility as a service is rated highly. The study concluded that emotional satisfaction is dependent on service quality. Njagi (2016) studied effect of customer satisfaction on performance of the hotel industry in the western tourism circuit of Kenya. The customers reported to be satisfied with reservation, reception, food quality and beverage quality. Costs, security and hotel amenities on the other hand registered fair ratings while provision of personalized services registered dissatisfaction. The researcher also noted that customer satisfaction has positive impacts on market share, service quality, hotel image, sales turnover, and that lack of customer satisfaction results in customer and employee turnover. As shown above, the existing studies on customer satisfaction have paid more attention on service quality as a whole but not tangibility of service focusing on different study variables from the specific variables of this study. In addition, none of these studies was conducted among the four five star hotels in the south coast of Kenya. In view of the above gaps in research, this study sought to fill these gaps by examining the service tangibility and customer satisfaction in five star hotels in South Coast, Kenya.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study was to investigate service tangibility and customer satisfaction in five star hotels in the South Coast, Kenya. The specific objectives were;

- To find out the influence of premise appearance on customer satisfaction in five star hotels in South Coast, Kenya.
- To establish the influence of advertisement tools on customer satisfaction in five star hotels in South Coast, Kenya.
- To determine the influence of service process on customer satisfaction in five star hotels in South Coast, Kenya.
- To investigate the influence of hotel personnel on customer satisfaction in five star hotels in South Coast, Kenya.

The research was guided by the following hypotheses;

- **H₀₁**: Premises appearance has no significant influence on customer satisfaction in five star hotels in South Coast, Kenya.
- **H₀₂**: Advertisement tools has no significant influence on customer satisfaction in five star hotels in South Coast, Kenya.
- **H₀₃**: Service process has no significant influence on customer satisfaction in five star hotels in South Coast, Kenya.
- **H₀₄**: Hotel personnel has no significant influence on customer satisfaction in five star hotels in South Coast, Kenya.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Value Expectancy Theory

This research was guided by the value expectancy theory (VET) that was proposed by Martin Fishbein in 1970 after refining the gratification theory (Watkinson, Dwyer & Nielsen, 2015). The theory postulates that behavior is a function of the expectancies that an individual has and the value of the goal towards which they are working to fulfill. The

theory states that when a particular behavior is exhibited and chosen, then it has the largest combination of expected success and value. The value expectancy theory posits that individuals are goal oriented and that goal is the aim that makes them pick up a particular behavior. This behavior is premised on the beliefs, and the beliefs are a function of the behaviours they exhibit with the purpose of achieving a certain outcome.

The feeling of gratification in the outcome of achieving a specific need through indulgence in a particular behavior is the manifestation of the users' satisfaction with hotel services, hence the provision of services impacts on the users utilization of the hotel services (Watkinson, Dwyer & Nielsen, 2015). This can be perceived in the context of the psychological and social needs of users. When users feel that they have got value from the use of the hotel services then there is a positive outcome in the feeling of being gratified and hence user satisfaction is realized. If the value is not commensurate with their expectations before they use the services, then dissatisfaction is realized. This theory was relevant in the study in assessing the role of service tangibility on customer satisfaction in the hotel industry in Kenya.

Assimilation-Contrast Theory

The study was also guided by assimilation-contrast theory. Assimilation-contrast theory was introduced by Anderson (2013) in the context of post-exposure product/service performance based on Sherif and Hovland's (2012) discussion of assimilation and contrast effect. Assimilation-contrast theory suggests that if performance is within a user's latitude (range) of acceptance, even though it may fall short of expectation, the discrepancy will be disregarded – assimilation will operate and the performance will be deemed as acceptable. If performance falls within the latitude of rejection, contrast will prevail and the difference will be exaggerated, the produce/service deemed unacceptable.

The assimilation-contrast theory has been proposed as yet another way to explain the relationships among the variables in the disconfirmation model. This theory is a combination of both the assimilation and the contrast theories. This paradigm posits that satisfaction is a function of the magnitude of the discrepancy between expected and perceived performance. As with assimilation theory, the consumers will tend to assimilate or adjust differences in perceptions about product performance to bring it in line with prior expectations but only if the discrepancy is relatively small (Sherif & Hovland's, 2012).

Assimilation-contrast theory illustrates that both the assimilation and the contrast theory paradigms have applicability in the study of user satisfaction (Anderson, 2013). Particularly for this study, assimilation-Contrast theory suggests that if the performance of the hotel is within the users' range of acceptance, even though it may fall short of expectation the discrepancy will be disregarded. However, if the performance of the hotel falls within the latitude of rejection no matter how close to expectation, contrast will prevail and the difference will be exaggerated, the services will be deemed unacceptable by the users. This theory is useful to the study in assessing the expectations of the customers in relation to physical appearance, advertisement tools, physical facilities as well as hotel personnel of the hotel which in turn affects their level of satisfaction.

Resource Dependence Theory (RDT)

Resource Dependence Theory (RDT) is based upon how the external resource of organizations affects the behaviour of the organization (Rust & Zahorik, 2013). The theory is based upon the following tenets: Organizations are dependent on resources, these resources ultimately originate from the environment of organizations, the environment to a considerable extent contains other organizations, the resources one

organization needs are thus often in the hand of other organizations, resources are a basis of power, legally independent organizations can therefore be dependent on each other (Rubinstein, 2015).

In as much as organizations are inter-dependent, the theory of Resource Dependence needs a closer examination. Its very weakness lies in its very assertions of dependence. With changing trends of financial uncertainties, there is need to lean towards other theories of uncertainties (Robinot & Giannelloni, 2014). According to this theory, organization depends on resources for their survival; therefore, for any organization to achieve sustainability, resources are

indispensable (Reid & Bojanic, 2016). For community, based projects to achieve sustainability, resources are important. These resources will come in the form of human resource – therefore the need to involve all the stakeholders in the project for sustainability, other resources of land and finances.

This theory is relevant to the study since it covers the dependent variable hotel personnel who are the main resources in the hotel industry to ensure organisational performance as well as customer satisfaction. This theory assess the role of personnel on customer satisfaction among five star hotels at South Coast Kenya.

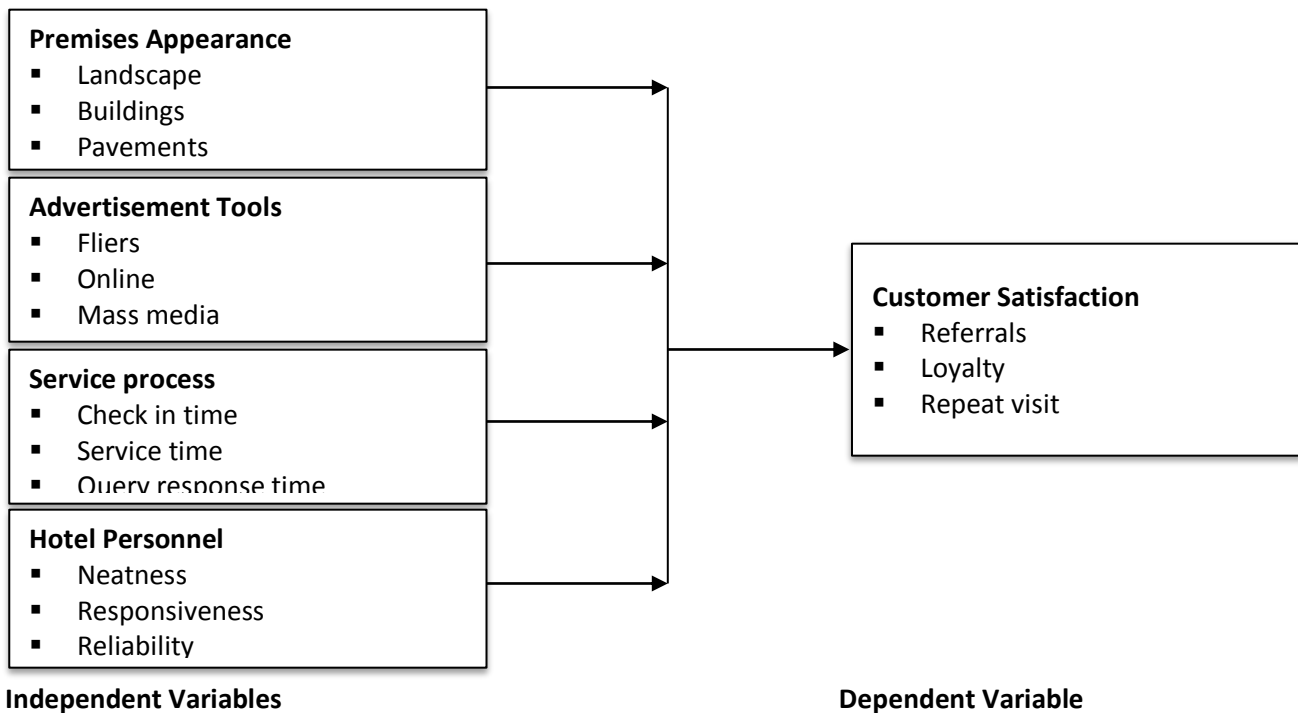


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Empirical Review

Caro and Garsia (2017) undertook a study on impact of satisfaction and process innovation on customer care of manufacturing firms in Georgia, United States of America. Survey research design was used and the questionnaires were used to collect the primary data.

The total population studied consisted 653 firms out of which a sample of 110 firms was selected. The findings of the study was that product innovation matters most for the most manufacturing establishments while process innovation was more

widespread among firms with more modest levels of profitability.

Corsino (2013) undertook a study on the effect of product innovation on customer satisfaction in London. The study used a descriptive research design and secondary data obtained from the said organizations covering a period of 7 years. The population consisted of 524 firms out of which a sample of 45 firms were obtained. The study found that incremental innovation in service delivery of firms affects the firm's ability to sustain its market position.

Hanen *et al.*, (2014) did a study on the impact of the innovation activities on the performance of the Tunisian service firms. The sample was drawn from 71 Tunisian service firms, having significant value-added services for the period 2007 to 2009. Data were collected through a questionnaire. They used the Heckman's two-stage econometric model in order to identify the contribution of service innovation to enhance the firms' performance in customer satisfaction and it was found that innovation had a positive and significant effect on the productivity and organization growth. However, the sample may have been too small given that there were numerous service firms in the country.

Oberoi and Hales in their study published in 1990 also highlight the importance of tangibility for hotel business. Joes and Lockwood (2011) propose that hotels should devote particular attention to tangible elements in their own operation so as to achieve higher client satisfaction. They also proposed that SERVQUAL scale should be applied carefully, and the determinants and attributes of the instruments should always be reassessed in any situation before the instrument is used.

Drazem (2016) did a study is to identify the significance of individual quality components in hospitality industry. The questionnaire used for gathering data comprised 19 tangible and 14

intangible attributes of service quality, which the respondents rated on a five-degree scale. The analysis also identified the factorial structure of the tangible and intangible elements of hotel service tangibility as a dimension includes physical objects, equipment, equipment, the staff's appearance and users' presence. The results of the study concluded that, in hospitality and hotel industry, consumers generally tend to attach more importance to intangible attributes. Precision, accuracy, security, speed of service, staff's courtesy and personal attention are service quality elements important to hotel guests. As regards tangible attributes, the guests find it the most important for the hotel to have clean and comfortable rooms.

Muchogu (2016) did a study on service quality, customer satisfaction and customer loyalty in three to five star hotels in Nairobi. The period under study was 2014 to 2016, with the objective being to identify the challenges clients get when procuring services in three to five star hotels. This study used a descriptive survey with a population of 15Hotels in Nairobi Kenya. Data for this study was both quantitative and qualitative hence both descriptive and content analysis techniques were employed. The study concluded that the hotels had employed various technological innovations, further it concluded that some level of service tangibility needed to be incorporated in service provision to create a lasting impression that will lead to satisfaction resulting to repeat business.

Ngigi (2014) did a study on financial innovation and its effect on financial performance of commercial banks in Kenya and the result of the study was that financial innovation in payment system led to improved financial performance of commercial banks. Juma (2013) did a study on the relationship between financial innovations and financial performance of insurance companies in Kenya and the study concluded that there are other factors that affected

financial performance of insurance companies to a great extent other than financial innovation.

Kangogo *et al.*, (2013) studied effect of customer satisfaction on performance of the hotel industry in the western tourism circuit of Kenya. The customers reported to be satisfied with reservation, reception, food quality and beverage quality. Costs, security and hotel amenities on the other hand registered fair ratings while provision of personalized services registered dissatisfaction. The researcher also noted that customer satisfaction has positive impacts on market share, service quality, hotel image, sales turnover, and that lack of customer satisfaction results in customer and employee turnover.

METHODOLOGY

A descriptive survey design was used in this study. The target population of this study included 400 hotel clients drawn from all the four five star hotels at the South Coast of Kenya namely Leopard Beach Resort,

Swahili Beach Resort, Diani Reef Beach Resort as well as The Sands at Nomads. The sampling frame of the study comprised of 100 clients from each hotel who had spent at least a day in hotel before the actual data collection. Structured questionnaire was used to collect primary data for this study. The study also collected secondary data to support primary data. The sources of secondary data included published and unpublished journals, periodicals, thesis as well as magazines in the hotel and tourism industries. This study used descriptive and inferential statistics. Once data was collected, it was crosschecked for errors and completeness. Data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS v.25).

FINDINGS

Premise Appearance

The study sought to identify the aspects of premise appearance as reported by the study respondents. The findings were presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Premise appearance

	Mean	Std. Deviation
The general landscape of the hotel is appealing to the eyes	5.00	.986
General appearance of the hotel premises and compound is excellent	4.67	1.273
It feels good to stay in a hotel that has a well-manicured lawn	4.65	.749
Clients are very satisfied by services offered in a well illuminated room and eating place	4.25	1.087
It is more fulfilling to patronize a hotel that has walls with well-maintained paints	4.91	.676
I feel secure leaving my car in the parking and belongings in the room	4.40	.596

The results of the study showed that all the respondents agreed that the general landscape of the hotels was appealing to the eyes as indicated by a mean of 5.00 and a standard deviation of 0.986. In addition majority of respondents agreed that the general appearance of the hotel premises and compound was excellent as shown by a mean of 4.67 and a standard deviation of 1.273. This agreed with Mitra (2010) who stated that unmanaged physical surroundings can hurt a business. Respondents further agreed that they felt good to stay in hotels that had well-manicured lawn (mean of 4.65 and a standard deviation of 0.749). Furthermore, majority

of the respondents agreed that clients were very satisfied by services offered in a well illuminated room and eating place as indicated by a mean of 4.25 and a standard deviation of 1.087. Respondents also agreed that it was more fulfilling to patronize a hotel that has walls with well-maintained paints (mean of 4.91 and a standard deviation of 0.676) and that they felt secure leaving their cars in the parking area and belongings in their rooms (mean of 4.40 and a standard deviation of 0.596). The findings of the study were consistent with Moradkhani (2014) who stated that physical surroundings should be designed

to reinforce the product's position in the customer's mind.

It also plays important role in guests' satisfaction and loyalty. Guests like to stay in clean and attractive hotels with clean, reasonably sized and furnished rooms.

Advertising Tools

The study sought to establish the role of given advertisement tools aspects on customer satisfaction among five star hotels at South Coast Kenya. The results were presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Advertising tools

	Mean	Std. Deviation
The prices of the hotel services are properly indicated on the marketing materials and they are up to date	4.14	.887
The designs and color of fliers are excellent	4.45	.818
All advertisement materials are neat and well designed	4.31	.639
It is possible to access information about the hotel on the website and social media platforms	4.30	.717
Marketing communication for the hotel is very clear	4.25	.620
The images used in marketing materials are very clear	4.15	.739

The findings of the study showed that majority of the respondents agreed that the prices of the hotel services were properly indicated on the marketing materials as shown by a mean of 4.14 and a standard deviation of 0.887 and they were up to date, the designs and color of fliers were excellent as indicated by a mean of 4.45 and a standard deviation of 0.81. Respondents agreed that all advertisement materials were neat and well designed and that it was possible to access information about the hotel on the website and social media platforms as indicated by a mean of 4.31 and 4.30 respectively. In addition, majority of the respondents agreed that marketing communication for the hotels was very clear as shown by a mean of 4.25 and a standard deviation of 0.620 and that the images used in marketing

materials were very clear as shown by a mean of 4.15 and a standard deviation of 0.739. The findings of the study were in agreement with the findings of Liap *et al.*, (2013) that stated that successful advertising as a promotional tool has to reach to the niche audience that the product is targeted at. The marketing communicator has to start with a clear audience in mind and the target audience could be current customers, past customers, prospective individual customer, groups or general public.

Service Process

The study sought to determine the role of service process on customer satisfaction among five star hotels at South Coast Kenya. The results of the study were presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Service process

	Mean	Std. Deviation
The time taken to be served after placing an order is shorter	4.80	.409
The time taken for customer check-in is short	4.73	.948
The customers check-out time in the hotel is short	4.12	.837
The hotel management response to the customer query is excellent	4.87	.905
The hotel attendants are very swift in delivering service to customers	4.45	.816

The study results revealed that majority of the respondents agreed to the statement that the time

taken to be served after placing an order is shorter as indicated by a mean of 4.80 and a standard deviation

of 0.409. Respondents also agreed to the statement that the time taken for customer check-in is short and the customers' check-out time in the hotel is short as well as shown by a mean of 4.73 and 4.12 respectively. Respondents agreed to the statement that the hotel management response to the customer query is excellent (mean=4.87, standard deviation=0.905). Respondents also agreed to the statement that the hotel attendants are very swift in delivering service to customers (mean=4.45, standard deviation=0.816). The findings of the study are in agreement with the findings of Kandampully & Suhartanto (2010) that the service process can aid the

accomplishment of both internal organizational goals and external marketing goals. The organization is the place where the service is produced and cannot be hidden and may in fact have a strong impact on customers' perceptions of the service experience. It is a crucial for organization to look after the needs and wants of their customers.

Hotel Personnel

The study sought to investigate the role of hotel personnel on customer satisfaction among five star hotels at South Coast Kenya. The findings of the study were as presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Hotel personnel

	Mean	Std. Deviation
The staff of the hotel are very responsive to the needs, suggestions and complaints of the customer	4.97	.399
Employees provide relevant information to customers	4.10	.616
Employees effectively communicate with customers	4.01	.593
Employees take genuine interest in customers' expectations	4.26	.605
Care and curtsey offered by Employees make people feel good	4.76	.918
Employees are very enthusiastic to serve and take interest in understanding customer preferences	4.09	.776

The findings revealed that majority of the respondents agreed that the staff of the hotels under study were very responsive to the needs, suggestions and complaints of the customers (mean=4.97, standard deviation=0.399). The findings agree with Drazem (2016) who found that customer interaction had the greatest direct impact on trust, followed by service quality, and finally, customer loyalty. This study clearly brought out the importance of employee and customer interaction in hotel industry. Respondents agreed that hotel employees provide relevant information to customers as indicated by a mean of 4.10 and a standard deviation of 0.616 and communicate effectively with customers as shown by a mean of 4.801 and a standard deviation of 0.593. In addition, the hotels had staff who took genuine interest in customers' expectations (mean=4.26, standard deviation=0.605) and the care and courtesy offered by employees made clients to feel good as

shown by a mean of 4.76 and a standard deviation of 0.918. Employees were very enthusiastic to serve and take interest in understanding customer preferences (mean=4.60, standard deviation=0.49) and that employees offered personalized services (mean=4.09, standard deviation=0.776). The findings were consistent with Harmon (2015) who stated that employees are one of the most important elements in service creation and delivery in all types of service industries. Hotel services are a part of hospitality sector and are considered as high involvement services. Customer services delivered by hotel employees play a key role in customer satisfaction and their repeat visits.

Customer Satisfaction

The study sought to find out the respondents' views on variables related to customer satisfaction. The

variable used mean and standard deviation to compute. The results were presented in Table 5:

Table 5: Customer satisfaction

	Mean	Std. Deviation
I am pleased with the amenities offered by the hotel in general	4.85	.517
I am pleased with the timeliness accorded to me by the hotel staff	4.14	.296
I am likely to come back in this hotel next time	4.86	.375
I am pleased with the location of the hotel to other businesses or attractions	4.10	.712

The results of the study showed that majority of the respondents were pleased with the amenities offered by the hotels in general as shown by a mean of 4.85 and a standard deviation of 0.517. The respondents agreed that they were pleased with the timeliness accorded to me by the hotel staff and that they were likely to come back in these hotels next time as indicated by a mean of 4.14 and 4.86 respectively. Respondents also agreed that they were also pleased with the location of the hotels to other businesses or attractions as shown by a mean of 4.10 and a standard deviation of 0.712. The findings were

consistent with Harr (2016) who studied service dimensions that leads to higher levels of customer satisfaction in restaurants in Singapore and found out that assurance, empathy and tangibles are the most important to customers' evaluation of service quality, and thus, may have a positive influence on customer satisfaction.

Inferential Statistics

Correlation Analysis

A simple bivariate correlation of the variables is exhibited in Table 6. This table provided the Pearson's correlation coefficient for the selected variables.

Table 6: Pearson correlation analysis

		PA	AT	SP	HP	CS
Premise appearance	Pearson Correlation	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)					
	N	140				
Advertising tools	Pearson Correlation	.460**	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000				
	N	140	140			
Service process	Pearson Correlation	.239**	.345**	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	.000			
	N	140	140	140		
Hotel personnel	Pearson Correlation	.308**	.362**	.610**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		
	N	140	140	140	140	
Customer satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	.249**	.211**	.428**	.184*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.008	.000	.002	
	N	140	140	140	140	140

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

(PA- Premise Appearance, AT- Advertising Tools, SP- Service Process, HP- Hotel Personnel, CS- Customer Satisfaction)

The correlation results showed that there was a positive and significant correlation between premise appearance and customer satisfaction ($r=0.249$, $P=0.000$). The findings agreed with Moradkhani (2014) that physical surroundings should be designed to reinforce the product's position in the customer's mind. Correlation results showed that advertising tools and customer satisfaction had a positive and significant correlation ($r=0.211$, $P=0.008$). The

correlation results also showed that correlation between service process and customer satisfaction was moderately positive and significant as indicated by $r=0.428$, $P=0.000$. The correlation between hotel personnel and customer satisfaction was positive and significant ($r=0.184$, $P=0.002$). The findings agreed with Harmon (2015) assertion that employees are one of the most important elements in service creation and delivery in all types of service industries.

Regression Analysis

Table 7: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.655 ^a	.429	.418	1.78639

a. Predictors: (Constant), Hotel personnel, Service process, Advertising tools, Premise appearance

The results of the study showed that coefficient of correlation (R) was 0.655 which represented a positive correlation between service tangibility and customer satisfaction among clients of five star hotels in the Kenyan South Coast. The coefficient of

determination (R-squared) of the study was found to be 0.429 which showed that 42.9% of customer satisfaction among clients of five star hotels in the Kenyan South Coast was influenced by service tangibility.

Table 8: ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	323.791	4	80.948	25.367	.000 ^b
	Residual	430.809	135	3.191		
	Total	754.600	139			

a. Dependent Variable: Customer satisfaction

b. Predictors: (Constant), Hotel personnel, service process, Advertising tools, Premise appearance

From ANOVA analysis, the significant value for the regression model was found to be 0.000 at 4 degrees of freedom which was less than 0.05. Thus, the findings of the study showed that the regression

model under study was significant in predicting the influence of service tangibility on customer satisfaction among clients of five star hotels in the Kenyan South Coast.

Table 9: Regression Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1 (Constant)	15.012	3.550		4.229	.000
Premise appearance	.216	.101	.175	2.128	.003

Advertising tools	.132	.064	.127	2.063	.000
Service process	.509	.097	.483	5.247	.000
Hotel personnel	.213	.106	.175	2.009	.001

a. Dependent Variable: Customer satisfaction

The derived regression coefficients of the model were:

$$Y = 15.012 + .216X_1 + .132X_2 + .509X_3 + .213X_4$$

The regression results showed that premises appearance, service process, advertising tools and hotel personnel were very significant variables with regards to the study since their significant value was found to be below 0.05. Further, results showed that all the independent variables had a positive coefficient indicating a positive role on customer satisfaction. From the results, it showed that holding all factors (hotel personnel, advertising tools, premises appearance and service process) constant at zero, the change in customer satisfaction would be 15.012.

Further, the regression results showed that a unit change in premises appearance would lead to 0.216 unit change in customer satisfaction. Also a unit change in advertising tools would lead to 0.132 unit change in customer satisfaction. A unit change in service quality would lead to 0.509 unit change in customer satisfaction and finally, a unit change in hotel personnel would lead to 0.213 unit change in customer satisfaction.

Discussion and Hypothesis Testing

The first null hypothesis (H₀₁) was that premises appearance has no significant influence on customer satisfaction among five star hotels in South Coast Kenya. From the regression results, premises appearance had a regression coefficient of 0.216 and a t-value of 2.128. The p-value for premises appearance was found to be 0.004 which is less than the significant level of 0.05, (p<0.05). Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected while the alternative hypothesis was accepted. The study concluded that premises appearance have significant influence on customer satisfaction among five star hotels at South

Coast Kenya. The findings confirmed prior findings by Moradkhani (2014) who stated that physical surroundings should be designed to reinforce the product's position in the customer's mind. It also plays important role in guests' satisfaction and loyalty.

The second null hypothesis (H₀₂) was that there is no significant influence of advertising tools on customer satisfaction among five star hotels at South Coast Kenya. Regression results indicated that advertising tools had a regression coefficient of 0.132 and a t-value of 2.063. The p-value for advertising tools was found to be 0.002 which is less than the significant level of 0.05, (p>0.05). Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected while the alternative hypothesis was accepted. The study concluded that advertising tools has a significant influence on customer satisfaction among five star hotels at South Coast Kenya. The study findings were supported by Liap *et al.*, (2013) who stated that successful advertising as a promotional tool has to reach to the niche audience that the product is targeted at. The marketing communicator has to start with a clear audience in mind and the target audience could be current customers, past customers, prospective individual customer, groups or general public.

Third null hypothesis (H₀₃) stated that service process have no significant influence on customer satisfaction among five star hotels at South Coast Kenya. Regression results showed service process having a regression coefficient of 0.509 and a t-value of 5.247. The p-value for service process was found to be less than the significant level of 0.05, (p<0.05). Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected thus concluding that

physical facilities has significant influence on customer satisfaction among five star hotels at South Coast Kenya. The findings agreed with Kandampully & Suhartanto (2010) who established that service process can aid the accomplishment of both internal organizational goals and external marketing goals. The organization is the place where the service is produced and cannot be hidden and may in fact have a strong impact on customers' perceptions of the service experience.

Finally, the fourth null hypothesis (H_{04}) stated that hotel personnel has no significant influence on customer satisfaction among five star hotels at South Coast Kenya. Based on results, hotel personnel had a regression coefficient of 0.213 and a t-value of 2.009. The p-value for hotel personnel was found to be 0.000 which is less than the significant level of 0.05, ($p < 0.05$). Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected while the alternative hypothesis was accepted. The study concluded that hotel personnel has a key influence on customer satisfaction among five star hotels at South Coast Kenya. The findings were consistent with Harmon (2015) who observed that employees are one of the most important elements in service creation and delivery in all types of service industries. Hotel services are a part of hospitality sector and are considered as high involvement services. Customer services delivered by hotel employees play a key role in customer satisfaction and their repeat visits.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concluded that premises appearance plays a significant role on customer satisfaction among five star hotels at South Coast Kenya. The study concluded that the general landscape of the hotels was appealing to the eyes, the general appearance of the hotel premises and compound was excellent. The study concluded that the visitors felt good to stay in hotels that had well-manicured lawn. Furthermore, the study concluded that clients were very satisfied by services offered in a well illuminated room and

eating place and they were always comfortable using hotel premises with a flashy front office as well as they felt secure leaving their cars in the parking area and belongings in their rooms. On advertising tools, the study concluded that advertisement tools have significant influence on customer satisfaction among five star hotels at South Coast Kenya. The study concludes that the prices of the hotel services were properly indicated on the marketing materials and they were up to date, the designs and color of fliers were excellent, all advertisement materials were neat and well designed and it was possible to access information about the hotel on the website and social media platforms. In addition, the study concludes that marketing communication for the hotels was very clear, and the images used in marketing materials were very clear.

On service process, the study concluded that the customer visiting the hotel are served within shortest time possible upon order placement. Also the customer check-in time in the hotel is short as well as customer check-out time and hotel management responds and attends to hotel customers' queries within shortest time possible. The study concludes that the hotel attendants are very swift in delivering service to customers. On hotel personnel, the study concluded that hotel personnel have significant influence on customer satisfaction among five star hotels at South Coast Kenya. The study concluded that the staff of the hotels under study was very responsive to the needs, suggestions and complaints of the customers and that they provided relevant information to customers and communicated effectively with customers. In addition, the study concluded that the hotels had reliable staff who took genuine interest in customers' expectations and the care and courtesy offered by employees made clients to feel good. Employees were very enthusiastic to serve and take interest in understanding customer preferences and they offered personalized services.

The study recommended that the management of hotels should invest on improving the premises aesthetic appearance of their hotels since it was established that it plays a key role on customer satisfaction. The study also recommended that the hotel management should ensure the hotel compounds have well-manicured lawn and illuminating rooms so as to enhance customer satisfaction. Also the hotel front office should be kept flashy and appealing so as to attract customers and ensure their maximum satisfaction. The hotels should enhance security round the clock to assure visitors safety and their belongings. The study recommended that the hotels management should have properly designed and up to date advertisement tools both in social and mass media to market their hotels since advertisement tools had a significant effect on customer satisfaction. The service prices should also be included in the marketing channels so as to enable the potential visitor to make prudent decisions.

The study recommended that the management of the hotels should focus on improving service delivery time. This can be achieved through continuous staff training programs to enhance hotel service delivery

which leads to customer satisfaction. The customer check-in and check-out times should be closely managed as it speaks a lot about the hotel service delivery. The hotel should hire enough staff to attend to customers without delay as this was found to positively affect customer satisfaction. Finally, the study recommended that the management of hotels should train hotel employees on how to be responsive to the needs, suggestions and complaints of the customers. Further, the study recommended that the staff should strive to offer visitors personalized services.

Suggestion for Further Research

The study was limited to investigating service tangibility on customer satisfaction in selected five star hotels in Mombasa. A similar study can be concluded among other five star hotels in Mombasa or North coast region of Kenya for comparison purposes. Secondly, a similar study can also be conducted among other hotels (all-star-rated hotels) in Kenya. Thirdly, another study can be conducted on other aspects of service quality among five star hotels in Kenya like reliability.

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