EFFECTS OF SERVICE RELIABILITY ON GUESTS' SATISFACTION WITH HOMESTAY FACILITIES IN NYERI AND LAIKIPIA COUNTIES, KENYA

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Abstract: To enhance more integration with the local culture and cuisines, tourists increasingly prefer to stay in accommodation facilities owned by local people. Consequently, the national and the county governments, as well as, other stakeholders in the tourism industry have continued to emphasize the importance of homestays in tourism development. In its Vision 2030, the Kenyan government targets to certify 1000 homestay sites to promote cultural tourism among other forms of tourism. However, the reliability of services offered in the homestays and their effect on guest satisfaction is not well documented. Therefore, this study used the case of Nyeri and Laikipia Counties to establish the effects of service reliability on guests' satisfaction with homestay facilities. The study was guided by expectancy-disconfirmation theory and adopted both descriptive cross-sectional survey and explanatory designs. The study targeted 56 homestay hosts and 171 guests. Probability Proportion to Size (PPS) sampling was used to sample 85 and 54 guests from Nyeri and Laikipia Counties respectively. Census was used to select 56 homestay hosts. Primary data from guests and hosts was collected using questionnaires while document analysis provided secondary information. Pre-test of research instruments was done on fourteen guests and six hosts in Murang'a County to ascertain the validity and reliability of the questionnaire. The Cronbach alpha coefficient for the guest questionnaire was 0.8 while that of the host questionnaire was 0.9. Linear regression analysis was used to establish the effects of service reliability on guests' satisfaction. The research findings showed that service reliability (β= 0.216, p= 0.013) positively affects guests satisfaction in homestay facilities. The study findings indicated reliability is an important factor that accounts for part of guests' satisfaction in homestays. The research recommends the homestay hosts should have the ability to perform the promised service dependently and accurately. Tourism Regulatory Authority should also implement policy that guards the guests from manipulation of services by homestays in order to attain reliability.

Introduction

The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) define tourists as people "travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes" (UNWTO, 2010, p.14). Tourism on the other hand is travel for recreational, leisure or business purposes. Over the years, tourism has increasingly become a popular global leisure activity. UNWTO (2015) forecasts that tourism movement to Africa will increase to 100 million arrivals by 2020. This represents an average annual growth rate of 5.5% in contrast to the global forecast rate of 4.1%. Africa's market share of global international tourism is projected to be at 5% by 2020. The projection infers that tourism in Africa has been on a sustained growth path for the past years and the resiliency of the sector regarding external factors to flourish has also increased largely on the global international tourism (Achten & Mazijn, 2014). The Economic Road Map and Visions of the East African Community member states (Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda, South

Sudan and Burundi) view tourism development not only as a key pillar for national development, but most importantly as a mechanism to alleviate poverty, generate foreign revenue for the government, and contribute to wildlife conservation. However, tourists satisfaction is one of the key factors that influence the number of tourists visiting a country.

Guests are deemed satisfied with the quality of services offered to them if the services are provided in a satisfactory manner which may encourage their longer stays and return visits. Customer satisfaction is an important concept in the field of tourism. According to Kotler and Allen (2007), customer satisfaction is attained when the products and services provided satisfy the expectations of customers. Kotler and Allen (2007) observe that the most significant elements in the definition of customer satisfaction is the notion that satisfaction is a relative concept that entails the expectation of customers and the performance of products and services. Consequently, Babikas, Bienstocks and Van Scotter (2004) defined satisfaction to include the judgement of customers with respect to whether the features of products and services meets, goes above, or falls short of fulfilling the needs of a customer.

Sung *et al.* (1997) noted that the increased significance of the services sector to the economy has led to a heightened concern by the practitioners and consumers regarding the reliability of services being offered. Reliability involves the ability of the organization to perform the promised service dependably and accurately. In service provision, the reliability of service refers to how the company are performing and completing their promised service, quality and accuracy within the given set requirements between the company and the customer. The reliability differentiates the quality of a service or product offered. High level of service consistency is decisive for reliability. Quality service that is reliable is rendered reliably and accurately, in accordance with promises made to the clients. However, reliability is provided through employees' courtesy and knowledge, conveying their confidence and self-confidence to client

A study conducted by Maina and Kodongo (2011) in Labuan regarding the influence of service reliability for homestay ventures established that tourist satisfaction was significantly affected by reliability. Also, Loizos (2005) studied service reliability in homestay tourism using the case of Malaysia and found out that reliability affected positively customer satisfaction. In addition, Omar and Seman (2015) showed a very strong relationship between quality of service (Reliability) and customer satisfaction. Further, Khan, Mdyusoff and Kakar (2017) test on reliability of service an*d* customer satisfaction suggest that a positive correlation do exist between the reliability of service, service quality, performance (i.e. financial and nonfinancial) and customer's satisfaction. Also, Aunalal (2017) found that service reliability had a positive and significant effect on customer satisfaction.

In Kenya, the Department of Tourism in collaboration with Kenya Community Based Tourism Network (KECOBAT) came up criterion for identifying a homestay for the purpose of accreditation, approval and licensing based on categorization of homestays into; community homestays, farm stay and modern urban private homes graded into classes. According to Kanyi (2015) unprecedented demand for homestays rose steadily in Nyeri and its environs when the world celebrated the beatification of Sister Irene Stefani Nyaatha in May, 2015 an event that attracted more than 100,000 pilgrims from around the world. The beatification of Sister Stefani was a great opportunity through which Nyeri County planned to showcase the County's tourism products and put the homestays on a firm path for growth. In addition, they marketed the County's old and new routes to Mt. Kenya and the Aberdares. Located between Mt. Kenya and the Aberdares are two of the biggest national water towers, which are rich in indigenous forests, nature trails, pristine rock formations and waterfalls such as Zaina and Karuru in the Aberdares (Kenya Community Based Tourism Network-KECOBAT, 2017)

Statement of the Problem

According Watiki (2014) for homestays to achieve its objective of delivering of reliable service for its guests, it is imperative to study how services/products offered conceivably meet and even exceed customers' service delivery expectations. Homestay owners seeks to know the level at which the guests are satisfied with their services and the kind of service quality levels their guests would like in order to offer exactly what would be taken positively. Parasuraman *et al.* (1988) provided reliability as one of the five attributes of service quality as a result of their focus group studies with service providers and customers.

A study on the influence of tangible and intangible factors of service quality to tourist satisfaction in Taita Taveta concluded that tourists are usually satisfied with the quality of services offered to them. If the services are provided in a satisfactory manner, which may encourage their longer stays and return visits (Kimaiga, Kihima & Pepela, 2015). The findings indicated that most tourists were not satisfied with the homestays in Taita Taveta County which was largely attributed to deficient tangible factors of service quality of which the study also revealed were a better predictor of tourist satisfaction in homestays than intangible factors. Ogwai (2012) established that dissatisfaction among homestay tourists is largely due to service quality rendered.

According to KECOBAT (2015), Kenya has seen increased tourists' numbers especially in areas where traditional tourists' numbers were always low. This has led to the development of homestay facilities in those areas to cater for tourists who are interested in other aspects of accommodation other than hotels and lodges. However, the kind of services offered is not documented, therefore, the reliability of service offered and how it influences customer satisfaction is not known. The Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) on the economic report on Nyeri County in 2015 noted that homestay tourism was not captured despite the availability of homestay facilities in the county. Furthermore, the Tourism Regulatory Authority undertakes hotel classification leaving the homestay sector largely unregulated with no standards in place. This scenario puts into question whether homestay tourism is given the recognition it deserves bearing in mind the need for the country to achieve vision 2030 and increase the revenue base of the county government. Furthermore, there is no adequate oversight to monitor the operations of the homestays. Therefore, the reliability of services offered in these homestay facilities is currently not well known. Hence, this study sought to assess the effects of service reliability on guest satisfaction in Nyeri and Laikipia Counties.

The following is the null hypothesis that was tested in this study:

$H_{01:}$ Service reliability does not affect guest satisfaction with homestay facilities in Nyeri and Laikipia Counties.

Literature Review

Customer Satisfaction

Consumer satisfaction has been extensively studied in marketing over the last few decades. However, scholars have not yet agreed upon a generally accepted definition of satisfaction. Giese and Cote (2000), after conducting a review of literature and consumer interviews, defined satisfaction as a summary affective response of varying intensity with a specific time point of determination and limited duration directed toward focal aspects of product acquisition and/or consumption. Consumers' satisfaction has been considered one of the most important constructs (Morgan et al., 1996; McQuitty et al., 2000), and one of the main goals in marketing (Erevelles and Leavitt, 1992).

Satisfaction plays a vital role in marketing because it is a good predictor of purchase behaviour (repurchase, purchase intentions, brand choice and switching behaviour) (McQuitty et al., 2000).

Customer satisfaction is a measure of how the products and services provided by a company meet or exceed customer expectations (Fornell, 1992). As such customer satisfaction metrics indicate how successful an organization is at providing products and/or services to the marketplace (Fornell, 1992). Customer satisfaction is formally measured by several publicly available customer satisfaction databases including the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) in the USA (Anderson, Fornell and Lehmann, 1994; Fornell, 1992; Fornell et al., 1996). Data from these sources are frequently employed in empirical research studies (e.g. Anderson and Sullivan, 1993; Fornell et al., 2010). Improving levels of customer satisfaction is important for firms due to the influence customer satisfaction has on economic performance (Fornell et al., 2006). At the microeconomic level, customer satisfaction is associated with increases in market share and profitability (Anderson, Fornell and Lehmann, 1994; Reichheld and Sasser, 1990).

Research shows that firms with higher levels of customer satisfaction generate higher return on investment (Anderson, Fornell and Lehmann, 1994), productivity (Anderson et al., 1997) and market value added (Fornell, 2001). Furthermore, increasing and maintaining high levels of customer satisfaction enhances customer loyalty and serves as a safeguard against increasing price competition (Anderson, Fornell and Lehmann, 1994; Anderson and Sullivan, 1993).

That aggregated customer satisfaction indices such as ACSI is strong predictors of gross domestic product and services growth and even stronger predictors of personal consumption expenditure (Fornell et al., 2010). With ACSI model, the expectations are that customers have anticipations on the degree of quality that businesses afford them. The expectations are taken as directly and positively impacting the satisfaction of customers with given businesses owing to their continued relationships with the businesses (Ojo, 2012).

Effect of Service Reliability on guests' satisfaction with homestay facilities

The process in which service provider remains faithful in rendering services to its customers can be considered as the reliability dimension of service quality. Reliability assures the customer of a service provider's ability to consistently provide a perceived quality of service. Reliability has an impact on trust and the overall impression left in the mind of a customer after service consumption. The reliability dimension of service quality is vital and perceived through the people aspect of service quality.

Omar and Seman (2015) examined the influence of influence of the reliability of service quality on customer satisfaction among Libyan e-commerce customers. Required data was collected through customers' survey. The results showed a very strong relationship between quality of service (Reliability) and customer satisfaction. Reliability in E-commerce business was representing the ability of the web site to fulfil orders correctly, deliver promptly, and keep personal information secure. In addition, e-commerce customers in Libya argued that "reliability dimension" has a direct positive effect on perceived service quality and their satisfaction on E-commerce business within the country.

Khan, Mdyusoff and Kakar (2017) test on reliability of service and customer satisfaction suggest that a positive correlation do exist between the reliability of service, service quality, performance (i.e. financial and nonfinancial) and customer's satisfaction. This is made possible through the interactional activities between employees and customers. This dimension is facilitated through the people aspect of service quality.

Aunalal (2017) studied the influence of service reliability, destination image and satisfaction to tourist loyalty in Maluku Province. The research method used in this research was quantitative method. Survey method using questionnaire instrument was used to obtain the primary data. The results

indicated that service reliability had a positive and significant effect on customer satisfaction. In addition, the destination Image gave a strong significant and positive effect on loyalty destination.

Theoretical Framework

This study focused on the effects of service reliability on guests' satisfaction. The study was based on a consumer behaviour model, which postulates that consumer satisfaction is a function of both expectations related to certain attributes and judgements of performance regarding these attributes (Bolton & James, 1991). Consumer behaviour model uses Expectancy-Disconfirmation Theory to examine the satisfaction of consumers. Expectancy-Disconfirmation Theory currently dominates the study of consumer satisfaction and provides a fundamental framework for this study.

Disconfirmation of expectations paradigm is conceptualized by Oliver (1980, 1997). It came from a subject of study for antecedents of satisfaction (Anderson and Sullivan, 1993). The standard approach to study the satisfaction involves comparison of prior expectations with observed performance. Thus in this theory, the customer's perception of overall satisfaction results from a comparison between expectation and outcome performance. Therefore, expectation and outcome performance are two important variables which can influence the judgment of satisfaction measure.

Based on expectation disconfirmation theory, firm can increase satisfaction by increasing perceived product performance or decreasing expectation. In the process of satisfaction judgments, first buyers may experience from expectations of the specific product or service prior to purchase. Second, consumption reveals a perceive performance level of product which is influence by expectations if difference between actual performance and expectations is perceived as being small. Hence, perceived performance may increase or decrease directly with expectations as indicated by the arrow drawn from expectations to perceived performance. Third, perceived performance may either confirm or disconfirm pre-purchase expectation (Anderson and Sullivan, 1993). Fourth, satisfaction is positively affected by expectations and the perceived level of disconfirmation. When the outcome performance is object, it is difficult to increase the perceived performance. Thus, to decrease expectations is a viable alternative for the firm (Kopalle and Lehmann, 2001). To sum up expectation disconfirmation theory, expectations provide a baseline or anchor level of satisfaction. It also be considered as belief probabilities of what the consequence of an event will be (Oliver, 1980).

In the context of homestay, Expectancy-Disconfirmation Theory was used to understand the relationship between the guests' desires and the genuine encounter which therefore shows that service quality attributes have different impact in influencing guests' satisfaction. The homestays operators would understand the gaps in the services/goods provided to the guests. In instances where homestay hosts over promise, this can help to evaluate and manage guest expectations; promise less and offer more. At last, the guest is content with the experience.
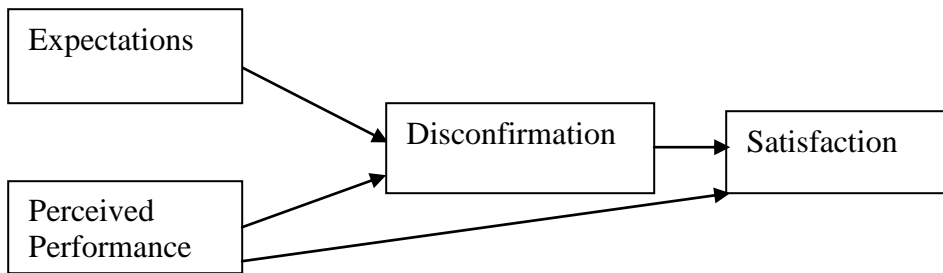
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Expectations ─────────┐
                       ├──→ Disconfirmation ──→ Satisfaction
Perceived     ─────────┘
Performance
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Figure 1: Oliver's expectancy- disconfirmation theory

Conceptual Framework

The study assessed the effect of service reliability on guest satisfaction in homestay facilities. Herein, satisfaction is considered as the entire result of the evaluation of various experiences given to a guest visiting a homestay. Figure 2 presents the conceptual framework that guided the study.

Independent Variables   **Dependent Variable**

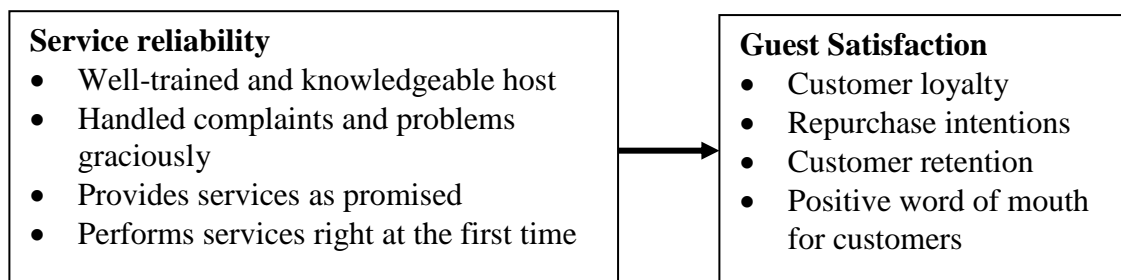| Service reliability		Guest Satisfaction
• Well-trained and knowledgeable host • Handled complaints and problems graciously • Provides services as promised • Performs services right at the first time	──→	• Customer loyalty • Repurchase intentions • Customer retention • Positive word of mouth for customers

Figure 2: Conceptual Framework

Research Methodology

The study adopted both descriptive cross-sectional survey and explanatory designs. Descriptive cross-sectional survey has the advantage of using questionnaires to collect primary data from a large sample size within a very short duration. The explanatory design was used because of causal relationship under investigation, that is, the effects of service quality attributes on guests' satisfaction. The target population for the study comprised of all the guests who stayed in the homestays in Nyeri and Laikipia counties in the months of April 2017 to May 2017. There are 36 and 20 homestay facilities registered by the Department of Tourism of Nyeri and Laikipia Counties' respectively. The total number of guests was 323 and 188 for Nyeri and Laikipia Counties respectively for the three years (2014-2016) and was used to estimate 2017 guest arrivals by doing an average for the 3 years. An average of 108 and 63 homestay guests were obtained in Nyeri and Laikipia Counties respectively. In total, the number of homestay guests was 171 from both counties.

Sample Size and Sampling Procedure

The study used Yamane (1967) formula;

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where '**n**' is the desired sample size, '**N**' is the population size, and '**e**' is the margin of error (0.05) to determine the sample size of homestay guests. In this study, N = Average tourist arrival in the homestays for the three years. The sample size for guests in both counties were computed as follows.

a) Sample size of homestay guests in Nyeri County

$$n = \frac{108}{1 + 108(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = 85 \; guests$$

b) Sample size of homestay guests in Laikipia County

$$n = \frac{63}{1 + 63(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = 54 \; guests$$

All the 36 and 20 homestay facilities in Nyeri and Laikipia Counties were used in the study. Probability Proportion to Size (PPS) sampling technique was used to select the sample of guests visiting homestays. The technique was chosen since the bed capacity in the homestay varies which leads to different number of guests in each homestay. This sampling technique ensured that larger homestays had more respondents sampled as compared to the smaller ones.

The research used both primary and secondary data. The secondary data was obtained from textbooks related to the study, magazines, journals, presented conferences and previous reports as well as the internet. Primary data was collected through administering of structured questionnaires to homestay host and guests. The questionnaire used in this study was pre- tested through a pilot study before actual data collection to assess the validity and reliability of the research instrument. After data collection, the questionnaires were evaluated for errors before analysis. After sorting the questionnaires, data was coded and entered, into Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software version 24. Data was analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics such as frequency distribution and measures of central tendency were used to analyse the demographic data. The study also used cross tabulation to understand the relationship between two categorical variables. Inferential statistics included regression analysis. Specifically, a regression model was used to determine any existing effect of independent variable, reliability and the dependent variable, guest satisfaction. The analysed data were presented using charts and tables.

The regression analysis fitness model was set as:

$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \beta_5 X_5 + \varepsilon$

Where: Y= Guest satisfaction; B_0 Constant term; β_1 - Regression coefficient that represent the condition of the independent variable to the dependent variables; X_1 - Service reliability; ε- This is a provision for error, which may be caused by extraneous factor

Research Findings and Discussions

A total of 139 questionnaires were administered to the guests out of which 123 were returned and found valid for analysis. Likewise, 56 questionnaires were administered to the homestay hosts where 48 questionnaires were returned and found valid for data analysis. The response rate for guests and homestay owners/hosts were 88.48% and 85.71% respectively. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2009) 50% response rate is adequate, 60% good while above 70% is rated very well. Based on this assertion, the response rate for this study was above 70%.

Guests General Information

General information explored included gender, age, region of origin, source of information of the homestay, average expenditure, nature of visit and number of visits to the homestay. General information of the guests in the two counties was 56% males and 44% females. Based on the age 10.7% were aged between 20-29 years, 58.7% aged 30-39 and lastly 20% were aged 50 years and above. The third demographic information illustrates the origin of the guests visiting the homestays, 45.3% were Americans which composed the majority of the guests in homestays. According to the source of information 34.7% indicated that they got information through a friend, 32% mentioned internet, 17.3% identified TV and Radio advertisement while 16% mentioned brochures as the source of information. The results further revealed that majority of the guests, that is, 36% had expenditure which includes accommodation, transport, meals, excursion, and entertainment among other was between $585-$682 while 33.3% had expenditure of between $683-$799. The results on the nature of visit of the respondents showed that 48% of the respondents visited for educational purposes, followed by cultural visits (29.3%) and leisure visits (22.7%).

Table 1: Guests General Information

		Frequency (N=123)	Percentage
Gender	Male	69	56
	Female	54	44
Age	20-29	13	10.7
	30-39	72	58.7
	40-49	13	10.7
	50 and above	25	20
Origin	Asia	15	12
	America	55	45.3
	Europe	25	20
	Africa	28	22.7
Source of information	Through Friend	42	34.7
	Through Internet	40	32.0
	Through TV and Radio advertisement	21	17.3
	Brochures	20	16.0
Expenditure	Up to $584	21	17.3
	$585-$682	44	36.0
	$683-$799	41	33.3
	Above $799	17	13.3
Nature of visit	Educational	59	48.0
	Leisure	36	29.3
	Cultural	28	22.7
Number of visits	Once	28	22.7
	Twice	58	46.7
	Thrice	26	21.3
	Four times and above	11	9.3

The study sought to document the tourism activities undertaken within the purview of the homestay. This was necessary in order to have a better understanding of the products available. Evidently (see table 4.3), a wide variety of activities were undertaken at the homestays, which included picking tea

(29.3%), milking of cows (44%) and cultivation of horticulture crops such as fruits and vegetables (26.7%).

Table 2: Activities Guests Participated in

	Frequency	Percentage
Picking tea	36	29.3
Milking of cows	54	44.0
Cultivation of horticulture crops	33	26.7
Total	**123**	**100.0**

Homestay Hosts General Information

The first demographic information was the gender of the guests where 64% were male and 36% were female. 16.7% aged 20-29 years, 22.9% represent age 30-39 years while 27.1% were aged 40-49 years and 33.3% of the guests were aged 50 years and above. The other factor was the levels of education where majority (50%) had attained diploma and degree. The other demographic factor, illustrates the professional training of the hosts where 18.8% were from the field of tourism and 52.1% represent engineers and 16.1% were trained as agricultural officers. The study further established that the hosts were mainly motivated by economic and social needs (80.4%) while the rest was due to cultural needs.

Table 3: Homestay Hosts Characteristics

		Frequency (N=48)	Percentage
Gender	Male	31	64.0
	Female	17	36.0
Age	20-29	8	16.7
	30-39	11	22.9
	40-49	13	27.1
	50 and above	16	33.3
Highest education levels	Diploma	24	50.0
	Degree	24	50.0
Professional training	Tourism	9	18.8
	Engineering	25	52.1
	Agriculture	8	16.6
	Teaching	6	12.5

Homestays Profile

With respect to homestay profile, the study collected the following information; number of rooms, charges, nature of package and meals offered. From table 4.5 above, the hosts (62.5%) indicated that they have 6-10 guest rooms while 16.7% had a capacity of 11-15 guest rooms and 12.5% had 15 guest rooms and above. The second factor was the amount charged to the guests per day where 60.4% charged below Ksh 2999, 22.9% of the hosts charged between Ksh.3000 and 5999 while 16.7% charged between Ksh 6000 and 8999. Frequently attracted tourists were for educational purposes (39.6%) followed by cultural (31.3%) and the others were milking of cows and farming to be specific.Table 4.5 shows that the best package was all inclusive' at 27 % followed by guiding services (22.9%) then full board and bed & breakfast at 18.8%. Homestays provided varieties of meal packages where 64.6% gave breakfast and dinner while 20.8% provided breakfast, lunch, dinner and refreshment to their guests. The study also sought to determine the menu where 20.8% of the homestay served non indigenous (non-traditional) cuisines, 25% traditional cuisines while 37.5% served both traditional and

non-traditional cuisines. Most of the homestays (60.4%) provided guiding services and 39.6% did not provide guiding services.

Table 4: Homestays Profile

		Frequency (N=48)	**Percentage**
Homestay Visitors' Room Capacity	1-5 rooms	4	8.3
	6-10 rooms	30	62.5
	11-15 rooms	8	16.7
	15 rooms and above	6	12.5
Nature of the Visit by the guests	Educational	19	39.6
	Cultural	15	31.3
	Relaxation	3	6.3
	Medical	11	22.9
Charges per day in the homestay	Kshs 2,999 and below	29	60.4
	Kshs 3,000 – 5999	11	22.9
	Kshs 6,000 - 8,999	8	16.7
Package	Bed only	3	6.3
	Bed and breakfast	9	18.8
	Half board	3	6.3
	Full board	9	18.8
	All inclusive (Accommodation meals and guiding services)	13	27.1
	Guiding services	11	22.9
Meals	Breakfast only	7	14.6
	Breakfast and dinner only	31	64.6
	Breakfast, lunch, dinner and refreshment	10	20.8
Menu	Traditional cuisines	12	25
	Non indigenous	10	20.8
	Both traditional and Non-traditional cuisines	18	37.5
Provision of guides	Yes	29	60.4
	No	19	39.6

Tourism potential of the Homestays

With respect to tourism potential of the homestays, the study collected the following information; tourism activities within the homestays, ways of marketing, outstanding features in the homestays, safety measures and type of clientele. As shown in table 4.9, hosts that provided nature walks accounted for 33.3%, coffee and tea picking accounted for 20.8%, while in tea/coffee factory visit accounted for 12.5%. The hosts mentioned friends or relatives (66.7 %) as their major marketing avenue followed by internet (20.8 %). The most outstanding features that attracted the guests was serene environment (43.8%).The study found that mostly of the homestays are located less than 30 minutes' drive from the nearby urban centre (62.5%). Homestays that used both security personnel and CCTV cameras accounted for 66.7%.

Table 5: Tourism potential of the Homestays

		Frequency	Percentage
Tourism activities	Tour to community farms,	8	16.7
	Tea/coffee factory visit	6	12.5
	Local cuisine cooking lessons	4	8.3
	Coffee and tea picking	10	20.8
	Nature walks	16	33.3
	Bird watching	4	8.3
	Total	**48**	**100**
Marketing	Friends/relatives	32	66.7
	Internet	10	20.8
	Brochure	6	12.5
	Total	**48**	**100**
Outstanding feature	Accessibility from the urban Centre	6	12.5
	Serene environment	21	43.8
	Surrounding landscapes	8	16.7
	Birds and animals	7	14.6
	Privacy	8	16.7
	Total	**48**	**100**
Distance to the nearest urban centre	Less than 30 minute drive	30	62.5
	30 minute drive	18	37.5
	Total	**48**	**100**
Safety	Employing security personnel	16	33.3
	Both security personnel and CCTV	32	66.7
	Total	**48**	**100**
Clients Profile	Repeat clients	10	20.8
	New clients	6	12.5
	Referral clients	32	66.7
	Total	**48**	**100**

Descriptive analysis of independent variables

The broad objective of this study was to establish the effect of service reliability on guest satisfaction in homestay facilities in Central Kenya Tourism Circuit. In this regard the study found it prudent to explore the effect of service reliability on guest satisfaction in homestay facilities in Central Kenya Tourism Circuit. Likert data collection instrument was used to collect primary data regarding the effects of service quality attributes on guest satisfaction on homestay services. A five (5) point Likert scale (1=Strongly Disagree; 2= Disagree; 3= Neutral; 4= Agree; 5=Strongly Agree) was used to solicit views from the respondents. The upper and lower limits were set based on mean analysis of Likert scale data. A mean score of 1.0 - 1.80 depicted not satisfied, 1.81 - 2.60 indicates slightly satisfied while mean score of 2.61 - 3.40 indicates satisfied, 3.41 - 4.20 indicates very satisfied and 4.21 - 5.0 indicates extremely satisfied. In other words, a mean score of 2.61 and above indicates that the guests were satisfied with the quality of service offered in the homestay facilities and mean score equal to or below 1.81 signifies dissatisfied guests.

Effect of Service Reliability on guests' satisfaction with homestay facilities

The objective was to determine the effect of service reliability on guest satisfaction with homestay facilities in Nyeri and Laikipia counties. Results on table 4.10 show that the highest mean value was on knowledgeable homestay hosts with a mean of 3.4146, followed by 'services are performed right at the

first time' with a mean of 3.2520, 'services are provided as promised' with a mean of 2.9756 and finally' homestay provides guided excursions and tours' with a mean of 2.8455, signifying satisfied. The percentage for the means was between 68.29 and 56.51. The study also recorded a standard error between 0.1004 and 0.1122. The standard error depicted the least variability between the variables.

Table 6: Effect of service reliability on guests' satisfaction with homestay facilities

	N	Mean	Percentage	Std. Error
The homestay hosts are knowledgeable on services required	123	3.4146	68.29	0.1113
Services are performed right at the first time	123	3.2520	65.04	0.1004
The services are provided as promised	123	2.9756	59.51	0.1122
The homestay provides guided excursions and tours	123	2.8455	56.51	0.1089

Guests satisfaction

The study also sought to illustrate the overall guests' satisfaction with homestay facilities in Nyeri and Laikipia Counties. As shown in Table 4.16, Next time, I shall need homestay services, I will purchase from this homestay (M=3.4797) showing satisfaction in the likert five scale, The homestay meets all the requirements that I see reasonable (M=3.3740) while value for money spent in the homestay for products/services (M=3.3577). Extra effort to visit the homestay again (M=3.1789) which indicated a moderate extent and the homestay is worth recommending to friends and relatives (M=2.9593). The difference was a result of the scores given by the respondents. The respondents depicted they are willing to purchase even if there was no much recommendation since the guests can receive the best services within the homestay. The standard errors were from 0.1311 and 0.1087 while the percentage mean range was between 89.59 and 59.00.

Table 7: Guests satisfaction

	N	Mean	Percentage	Std. Error
Next time, I shall need homestay services, I will purchase from this homestay	123	3.4797	89.59	0.1223
The homestay meets all the requirements that I see reasonable	123	3.3740	67.48	0.1127
There is value for money spent in the homestay for products/services	123	3.3577	67.15	0.1178
I intend to continue to be customer of this homestay	123	3.3333	66.66	0.1087
Overall, I am very satisfied with the homestay	123	3.3252	66.50	0.1240
Questions and concerns raised by guests are responded satisfactorily	123	3.2764	65.53	0.1271
The homestay satisfies my needs	123	3.2683	65.37	0.1095
I am ready to make an extra effort to visit the homestay again	123	3.1789	63.58	0.1311
Service and products offered in the homestay are of quality standards	123	3.1626	63.25	0.1150
Was your expectations met	123	3.0407	60.81	0.1234
The homestay is worth recommending to friends and relatives	123	2.9593	59.19	0.1229

Results of the Regression Analysis

Regression analysis was used in order to establish the effects of service reliability on guests' satisfaction with homestay facilities in Nyeri and Laikipia Counties. In testing the hypothesis, a regression equation model was used in the form of:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{service reliability} + \varepsilon$$

Model summary in Table 8 below shows the output for model fitness and value of adjusted R squared of 0.111. This shows that the independent variable (Reliability) tested had a variation of 11.1% on the guests' satisfaction with homestay facilities in Nyeri and Laikipia Counties at 95% confidence interval. This therefore means that other factors not accounted in this study contribute 88.9% of the guest satisfaction. Additionally, the findings show that there was a weak positive relationship between the study variables as shown by R which is the correlation coefficient of 0.385.

Table 8: Model summary

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
0.385[a]	0.148	0.111	1.13645

Table 9 presents the analysis of variance (ANOVA) of the service reliability and the guest satisfaction with homestay facilities in Nyeri and Laikipia Counties. The findings revealed F value of 4.061, which was statistically significant at 0.002. This depicts a linear relationship among the variables under study and also that the model had a less than 0.05 likelihood of giving a wrong prediction. Further, the independent variable (reliability) used were statistically significant in predicting the guest satisfaction with homestay facilities in Nyeri and Laikipia Counties at 95% confidence level.

Table 9: ANOVAa table

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Regression	26.225	1	26.225	20.9995765	0.002[b]
	Residual	151.109	121	1.24883471		
	Total	177.333	122			

a. Dependent Variable: Guest satisfaction
b. Predictors: (Constant), Reliability

Y (Guest satisfaction) = 0.695+0.216*Reliability + ε

From the regression coefficient results in Table 10, it is evident that taking other independent variables at zero, a unit increase in reliability will lead to 0.216 an increase in guest satisfaction. At 5% level of significance, the standardized coefficients show that the effect of service reliability on guest satisfaction with homestay facilities is positive and significant (β= 0.216, t=2.511, p=0.013).

Table 10: Regression model Coefficientsa

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	0.695	0.721		0.964	0.337
Reliability	0.216	0.086	0.229	2.511	0.013

a. Dependent Variable: Guest satisfaction

Testing of Hypothesis

H$_{01}$: Service reliability in homestay facilities does not significantly affect guests' satisfaction with homestay facilities in Nyeri and Laikipia Counties.

Coefficient results on Table 10 above established a positive and statistically significant effect on guests satisfaction with a Beta value = 0.216 (p-value = 0.013 which is less than 0.05). Given that the p-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted. This implies that service reliability in homestay facilities significantly affect guest satisfaction with homestay facilities in Nyeri and Laikipia Counties.

Discussion of the Findings

Reliability refers to the performance of a business and how they achieved promised services to customers. It entails provision of quality services with desired accuracy therefore critical in first time impression to customers (Delgado, 2004). The research findings revealed that a unit increase in reliability led to 0.216 increases in guest satisfaction and it was statistically significant since p value (0.013) was less than the significance level of 5%. Although the study findings revealed that service reliability had a positive effect on guests' satisfaction with homestay facilities in Nyeri and Laikipia Counties, it was not significant. These findings are similar to those of Watiki (2014), who established that reliability positively affect guest satisfaction and it was statistically insignificant.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The study concludes that service reliability affect the guest satisfaction in both counties simply because the guests put more emphasis on the homestay's ability to act according to promises and declarations which are given by the hosts. The homestay hosts are knowledgeable on services required, services are provided as promised and services are performed right at the first time. The homestay provides guided excursions and tours this means that homestay facilities in Nyeri and Laikipia Counties must have good service reliability in order to improve the guests satisfaction.

The study findings indicated reliability is an important factor that accounts for part of guests' satisfaction in homestays. The research recommends the homestay hosts should improve on homestays services required, services are provided as promised and services are performed right at the first time. Tourism Regulatory Authority should also implement policy that guards the guests from manipulation of services by homestays in order to attain reliability.

Recommendations for Further Studies

The research findings reveal that there is 88.9 percent of the variance in guest satisfaction that is not explained by service reliability. There is need to carry out a study to establish other factors that guest satisfaction. The study used SERVPERF model to determine guests' satisfaction. The study suggests further studies to use other models that measure service quality. The study was limited to two counties, which include Nyeri and Laikipia Counties. Therefore, there is a need to carry out a study in homestays in other counties in Kenya.

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