

**INFLUENCE OF TOUR GUIDES COMPETENCIES ON INTERNATIONAL
TOURISTS SATISFACTION, NAIROBI CIRCUIT, KENYA**

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**A Thesis Submitted to the School of Hospitality and Tourism in partial
fulfillment of the Requirements for the Conferment of the Degree of
Master of Science in Hospitality and Tourism Management of
Kenya Methodist University**

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DECLARATION AND RECOMMEDATION

I declare that this thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree or any other award in any other university.

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DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to my dear children; Deon Angelo and Cecilia Kimberly. My brothers and sisters for the spiritual encouragement and support.

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ABSTRACT

Tour guide competencies and customer satisfaction are critical to the success of any tourist destination. However, in Kenya, few studies have been conducted to determine the relationship between the competencies of tour guides and the level of international tourist satisfaction. Therefore, this study sought to investigate the influence of tour guides' competencies on international tourists' satisfaction at the Nairobi tourist circuit, Kenya. Specifically, the study sought to assess the influence of tour guide's knowledge levels, tour guide attributes, and tour guides communication skills on international tourists' satisfaction with the Nairobi circuit, Kenya. Job characteristics theory, the service quality model, and the anchor theory were adopted. A cross-sectional research design was employed with a target population of 2851 international tourists. The study used purposive sampling, and a further stratified sampling technique was adopted. The Cochran formula was adopted to obtain a sample size of 278 respondents. The study relied on primary data collected using a structured questionnaire. The study adopted a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test to assess the suitability and fattiness of the obtained data. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. Study findings showed that tour guide knowledge levels ($r=0.345$; $p<0.05$) were statistically significantly related to international tourist satisfaction, tour guide attributes ($r=0.616$; $p<0.05$) found a statistically significant relation with international tourist satisfaction, and lastly, tour guide communication skills ($r=0.764$; $p<0.05$) indicated strong statistical significant relation with international tourist satisfaction at Nairobi tourist circuit, Kenya. Generally, tour guides knowledge levels, attributes, and communication skills influenced tourist satisfaction by 0.615 ($R^2=61.5$). Overall, the study recommended that tour firms improve tour guide competencies. The study findings will benefit tourist professionals who contribute to the body of knowledge, the Ministry of Tourism, and policymakers. The research suggests another study should be conducted in different tourist sites not used in the current study. Further, another research study can be conducted in the same geographical scope and use different variables and methodologies.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ANOVA	Analysis of variance
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GOK	Government of Kenya
JCT	Job characteristics theory
KMO	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin
NACOSTI	National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation
NTB	National Tourism Blueprint
NTS	National Tourism Strategy
SEM	Structural equation modeling
SERVQUAL	Service Quality
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
TRA	Tourism Regulatory Authority

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

International tourists	This refers to a person(s) who travels to a foreign country for time-bound not exceeding one year and whose main objective is to visit for leisure and is not being paid by the visiting country (Abidakunet al., 2022). According to this study, a person crosses national borders for tourism activities within 1 - 365 days.
Tourist satisfaction	According to Ahmed (2021), it is a measure that determines how the tourism services offered by a tour firm surpass or meet tourists' expectations. This study refers to how the tourist assessment of the tour guide competencies exceeds the tourist's expectations for those competencies.
Tour guide	Aryasa, et al. (2017) assert that a tour guide is a person providing historical information and cultural and heritage information and assists in organizing sightseeing for customers at tourist destinations. This research will refer to a person working in the travel industry and mandated to guide visitors and offer the visitors enlightening information about tourist destinations.
Tour guides attributes	These are characteristics possessed by the tour guide to

make the tourist's experience memorable. The characteristics include; a good sense of humour, charisma and honesty, passion, and punctuality (Syakier & Hanafiah, 2021). To this study is a person with characteristics that will enhance his professionalism when guiding the visitors—such as being punctual, honest, and having a good personality.

Tour guides communication skills It is how the tour guide provides information, share facts and direction to the tourist by speaking coherently and fluently (Sinare, 2019). This is where a tour guide needs to speak clearly and articulate important and interesting issues to tourists for better understanding from the visitors.

Tour guides' competencies Nguya, et al. (2021) are abilities that enhance the tour guide in offering the best services to the visitors to have positive unforgettable memories. This will make them revisit and do referrals to friends. The ability of a guide to have needed skills and training and favorable characteristics are essential for professionalism in the industry. It is the ability of the tour guide to possess knowledge, good communication skills, and professional attributes to help deliver quality services to the tourists.

Tour guides knowledge levels	This is the ability of the tour guide to have detailed information on the different geographical areas and tourist destinations (Abidakun & Tunde-Ajayi, 2022). The study will adopt this to mean tour guides having relevant information about flora and fauna, language, and geographical knowledge, which they will pass to the tourists.
Tourist destination	It is a place that the tourists visit because of the significance of the site, its cultural value, or offers amusement and leisure (Togoch & Koki (2018). as per this study, it is a place or activity that generates revenue and is considered to attract visitors or tourists and give them a new experience.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Tourist satisfaction refers to a general cognitive response that is psychological and is acquired through the consumption of tourism products. According to Pan, et al. (2021), tourist satisfaction is the degree to which a tourist indicates or exhibits the fulfillment and contentment experience after visiting tourist destinations. Tourists are categorized into domestic tourists and international tourists. Both domestic and international tourists have specific expectations, which can be gauged by their level of satisfaction (Pathak & Paudel, 2019). Skavronskaya, et al. (2017) indicated that satisfaction is a psychological and dimension process that differs due to the complexity of an individual's consumption experience.

Past studies have indicated inconsistent results regarding satisfaction, which results from desired expectations and real experience after the consumption of the service. In tourism, satisfaction is the function between pre-visit expectations and post-visit experience (Asmelash & Kumar, 2019). Tourists are satisfied if the apparent exhibition is more than they desire and tend to feel disappointed if their earlier expectations exceed perceived performance (Banda, 2018). In order to determine the level of international tourist satisfaction, one will assess whether the tourist will revisit, make referrals, and highly rate the service received from the tour guide (Lhendup & Panda, 2020).

Tourists can depict different reactions or satisfaction in their experience as tourists after visiting a destination site. The reaction can be triggered by the competency of

the tour guide, who can make the trip more exciting or the attractiveness of the tour site. Measuring the level of tourist attraction always involves reviews, monitoring through mass media, feedback forms, and surveys. The destination can use the feedback to improve and enhance the tourists' experience, which will ultimately create a memorable as well as fulfilling experience for the tourist (Torabi et al., 2022)

According to Berhanu, et al. (2020), tourists can enjoy both unique tourist destination attributes and quality services that can lead to satisfaction and memorable experiences. However, the delivery of poor services and unattractive tourist attraction sites can contribute to tourists' disappointment. The analogous accompanying this is that if the domestic or international tourists are satisfied with the tour guide's competencies or destination site or both, they will tend to revisit, share experiences, or recommend others.

The tour guiding service is one of the critical services provided by tour operators and destination management companies. It is considered essential for tourist satisfaction and experience in package tours (Cetinkaya & Öter, 2016). Tour firms must provide very high-quality travel products and innovative services so that they can attract tourists from the international market. These firms should also cultivate their tour guides' professional competencies to improve customer satisfaction (Chiang & Chen, 2014; Lin, et al., 2014).

Global perspective

Globally, the tourism sector has faced significant challenges in relation to human resources, especially the front-line staff, which tour guides fall under. In Turkey, for instance, World Travel and Tourism Council (2020) noted, a tourism industry recorded steady growth. However, the sector faced challenges from both external

(global financial crisis and the pandemic) and internal factors coming from a lack of exciting destinations, weak tourism administration, a lack or poor provision of services, and weak human resources competencies such as tour guides (Lin et al., (2017).

Lin, et al. (2017) affirm that tour guide competencies are one of the travel products because they play a key role in influencing tourists' perceptions of service delivery, thus improving tourist satisfaction. For travel firms, tour guides serve as important human capital that enhances profit-making in the competitive tourism industry. Further, it is illustrated that for tour firms to acquire a market niche, they must provide modern tourism by equipping tour guides with professional competencies. This will enhance tourist's satisfaction. Abidakun and Tunde-Ajayi (2022) supported this notion by arguing that tour guides must possess professional competencies because they bridge between tour destinations and tourists. Therefore, tour guides possessing professional competencies can provide proper, immediate, inseparable, intangible positive services.

There have also been frequent challenges between tour guides and China's tourism sector's performance (Chen et al., 2016). Tour guides have been recognized for positively influencing tourists' experience, thus making the tourism business and tourism sector successful. A study conducted by Ninpradith, et al. (2018) found that tour guide competences had a beneficial impact on tourists' satisfaction in China.

Regional perspective

In African, several countries, including Botswana, Zimbabwe, and South Africa, have experienced issues such as variability in the tour guides quality, with some lacking the necessary training and language proficiency to communicate with and assist tourists

effectively. This can lead to misunderstandings, misinformation about local attractions, and a diminished overall experience. In addition, a lack of professionalism and customer service skills can result in poor interaction and dissatisfaction among tourists (Togoch & Koki, 2018). Kabera and Tushabe (2021) found that countries such as Rwanda, Uganda, and Burundi have been cited as having low-quality service delivery from tour guides. This could be due to a lack of sufficient formal training and certification among tour guides, resulting in varying levels of knowledge and professionalism, which ultimately affect the quality of the information provided about local cultures, history, and wildlife

Magdy (2016) argued that tour guide competency in Egypt significantly influences tourist satisfaction; however, the government and some tourism firms have not considered this thoughtfully. It was observed that the tourists' knowledge, needs, and ability to meet their tourist's expectations have played a critical role in ensuring their satisfaction. Despite this, little has been done to improve the tour guide's competencies. In support of this, Tsegaw and Teressa (2017) found that tour guides who offer effective quality services must communicate in a language the tourists must understand. However, this was found to be lacking in the tourism industry in Egypt.

Philemon (2018) stated that tour guide services in Tanzania were relatively poor, mainly due to a lack of competence among tour guides, particularly in communication skills. Many tour guides could not effectively communicate in most foreign languages, such as French, Chinese, Spanish, Italian, and English. Additionally, the tour guides were found to lack the necessary skills for building close interactions with tourists, which negatively impacted the clients' experience.

Local perspective

Research conducted in Kenya has determined that in order for tourists to be content with the services of a tour guide, the guide must exhibit diverse skills, possess extensive knowledge of tour destinations, and deliver services of exceptional quality (Nguya, et al., 2021). According to Kemboi and Jairus (2018), the Kenyan government has implemented tourism regulations to enhance professionalism in the Kenyan tourism industry. The Tourism and Regulatory Authority has established regulations and policies for tour guides in Kenya. These rules and guidelines are designed to make sure tour guides provide quality, efficient and effective services, ultimately leading to the satisfaction of both domestic and international tourists (Kemboi & Jairus, 2018).

Kabii, et al. (2017) contend that it is crucial for tour guides in Kenya to fulfill the needs of tourists, attend to their concerns, and improve their overall satisfaction. The National Tourism Strategy (NTS) (Government of Kenya [GOK], 2013) identifies the difficulties in expanding Kenya's tourism industry as a service sector. In contrast, the National Tourism Blueprint (NTB) (GOK, 2018) highlights the importance of both enhancing and preserving the levels of satisfaction among tourists.

Kabii, et al. (2017) conducted a study in Kenya which revealed tour guides encounter numerous difficulties. These issues encompass a deficiency in formal instruction and certification, which leads to disparities in expertise and professionalism among tour guides, ultimately resulting in insufficient information being imparted to tourists. Language barriers and the characteristics of tour guides are also significant issues. Not all guides are proficient in languages spoken by a tourist, which often leads to communication difficulties and misunderstandings. Furthermore, inconsistent levels

of training and certification among tour guides result in varying degrees of professionalism and knowledge, which can affect the accuracy and depth of information shared about wildlife, local culture, and historical sites. This study aimed to examine how the competencies of tour guides impact the satisfaction of international tourists at the Nairobi tourism circuit in Kenya, taking into account the background information provided.

1.1.1 Tourist Satisfaction

The satisfaction of international tourists pertains to the degree to which foreign visitors in a host country find pleasure in their encounter and experience a sense of contentment. This is an essential determinant for the prosperity of a nation's tourism industry. Content visitors are more inclined to endorse the destination to others or revisit themselves, so exerting a favorable influence on the host country's economy (Ahmed, 2021). International tourism is widely acknowledged as a significant generator of income for numerous countries. In 2019, the tourism sector made up approximately 10% of the worldwide Gross Domestic Product and provided employment for around 10% of the global workforce, as stated in a report by the World Travel and Tourism Council (2020). Tsegaw and Teressa (2017) discovered a substantial correlation between tour guide competence and tourist satisfaction. However, the study did not determine the specific degree to which different sets of competencies influenced tourist satisfaction.

Tourist satisfaction refers to the overall experience acquired by individuals after visiting tourist destinations, and it is the ultimate outcome of the appeal of these destinations. The dedication of tour guides to delivering exceptional services and captivating tourist attractions is the key factor that motivates tourists to return (Ijeomah, et al.,2019). Liat, et al. (2020) propose that satisfaction might be defined as

a customer's favorable response to a service or product. However, attaining customer pleasure is more intricate because of its subjective character. Sinare (2019) asserts that satisfaction may be evaluated through two distinct approaches: it can either be deemed positive or negative in relation to client expectations.

Kuo, et al. (2018) emphasized the significance of tour guide competence in delivering high-quality services to tourists. Tour guides are required to possess a comprehensive knowledge of tour places, proficient communication abilities, and notable qualities. The presence of these attributes allows guides to provide effective and top-notch services, resulting in international tourists recommending and returning for future visits. The research conducted by Ninpradith, et al. (2018) in China provides evidence that the abilities of tour guides have a substantial impact on the satisfaction of international tourists.

Abidakun and Tunde-Ajayi (2022) found that visitor satisfaction can be measured by the quantity of recommendations, revisits to the destination, and good word-of-mouth acknowledgments. In a study conducted in Egypt by Ahmed (2021), it was discovered that tour guides played a vital role in promoting repeat visits from international tourists. Tourists expressed satisfaction with their trip when tour guides delivered exceptional services that matched their competencies.

In Kenya, like in any other tourist location, tourist satisfaction refers to the total level of contentment and assessment of travel experiences, whether they are local or international. This encompasses a range of characteristics that contribute to a favorable view of tourist locations and the skills of tour guides, leading to elevated expectations. Consequently, ensuring tourist satisfaction has emerged as a crucial element in the tourism industry. The reason for this is that contented tourists are

motivated to return back and make recommendations of the site others, hence enhancing the destination's reputation (Kabii, et al., 2017).

.Nguya, et al. (2021) indicate that several indicators can be used to measure international tourists' satisfaction, such as tourists' referrals, revisits, service quality, surveys, and sentiments on social media. Analyzing these indicators can provide valuable insights for the tourism sector to identify areas for improvement and leverage its strengths to enhance the overall international tourist experience.

1.1.2 Tour Guides' Competencies

In recent years, the global tourism sector has become more aware of the significant contribution that tour guides make to the distribution system of tourism. The demeanor of a tour guide has a substantial influence on the perception of tourists regarding their experience at a tourist destination and the travel agency they have chosen (Çetinkaya & Öter, 2016). Tour guides play a vital role in influencing the contentment and achievement of both individual tourists and group package tours organized by travel organizations. The level of expertise and skills possessed by individuals can have a substantial influence on the satisfaction and lasting memories of tourists regarding the trip destination (Al Jahwari, et al., 2016).

Tour guides play a significant role in shaping tourists' experiences and perceptions of a destination. Their knowledge, skills, and abilities can significantly impact the overall satisfaction of international tourists. To be considered competent, guides must possess in-depth knowledge of the destination's history, culture, attractions, and local customs. This will assist the guides in providing accurate and engaging information to international tourists (Platon, 2023).

The use of language proficiency with effective communication is crucial for international tourists. Tour guides proficient in the languages tourists speak can ensure clear and meaningful interactions, reducing misunderstandings and frustration. This helps the guide save time and make the visiting tourists' holiday as memorable as possible. On many occasions, guides with high levels of interpersonal skills always win the hearts of the visiting tourists when the guide shows empathy, patience, and active listening. They need to understand the diverse needs and preferences of international tourists and be responsive to their questions and concerns promptly and honestly (Olszewski-Strzyżowski, 2022).

According to Mo (2021), a good guide with a culture of timekeeping and punctuality is always termed a reliable guide. Tour guides should be punctual and ensure that tours run according to schedule, preventing unnecessary delays or disappointments that may lead the tourists to lose financial and non-financial resources, like missing their flights or an event that cannot be repeated as it is all about nature and the wild. Feedback and continuous improvement Competent tour guides actively seek feedback from tourists to learn from their experiences. They use this feedback to continuously improve their services and adapt to changing tourist expectations.

Syakier and Hanafiah (2022) found that tour guide competences have a beneficial impact on service quality. Tour guide competencies are seen as a psychological characteristic that impacts the outward behaviours and efficiency of tour guides. From now on, the level of satisfaction among tourists is greatly impacted by the skills and abilities of tour guides.

A tour guide's main duty is to serve as the intermediary between the passengers and the tour business. They are responsible for providing tourists with all the necessary information regarding the destination or service at a particular time. Other key roles of a

tour guide include briefing guests upon arrival or before the tour, guiding guests through emergency procedures, explaining points of interest during the trip, and keeping track of time. Additionally, they should respond to tourists' questions during the trip and engage them in conversation (Abidakun & Tunde-Ajayi, 2022). Consequently, the guide should always be alert and administer first aid if there are emergencies. Tour guides are also ambassadors of the circuit and destination. They ensure the group stays together and is safe until the end of the tour.

According to Jahwari et al. (2016), tour guides have the responsibility of providing tourists with an exceptional travel experience. This is due to the fact that tour guides are seen as frontline professionals who make a substantial contribution to the tourists' experience and enhance their perception. In addition to their role as frontline workers, they are also regarded as tour guides, narrators, mentors, and guides for the tourists who visit. Thus, tour guides play a crucial role in guaranteeing the ongoing functioning of their travel firms.

According to Ahmed (2021), tour guides play a crucial role in ensuring that tourists receive a worthwhile experience, leading to their satisfaction and increasing the likelihood of them returning to the locations or sites. Abidakun and Tunde-Ajayi (2022) argue that tour guides must possess the necessary qualifications, including a deep understanding of the destination and exceptional interpersonal skills. This would guarantee that the tourists receive the pledged high-quality services and have a comprehensive understanding of the visited sites. Additionally, Nguya, et al. (2021) suggest that tour guides have the duty to exhibit and present their trustworthy character. The tour businesses' overall success and the tourist's experiences and behavioral intentions are indirectly influenced by the credibility of the tour guides.

Prior scholarly study has indicated that the expertise and abilities of tour guides are considered a crucial element of the overall tourism experience. The proficiency in these abilities greatly influences the opinions of both foreign and local tourists regarding the excellence of the guiding service, ultimately resulting in increased levels of tourist contentment (Chiang & Chen, 2014). Essential proficiencies for a tour guide encompass a comprehensive understanding of the tourism product, a high level of professionalism, adept communication skills, and mastery of tourism techniques. Ninpradith et al. (2018) state that tour guides must possess professional abilities, suitable technical skills, and special qualities such as honesty, sincerity, adaptability, and punctuality.

In their study, Ninpradith, et al. (2018) examined the influence of tour guide competences on both the service quality provided by tour guides and the satisfaction levels of tourists. The study findings indicate that the skills and abilities of tour guides have a substantial impact on the provision of excellent services to tourists, ultimately affecting their level of satisfaction. This highlights the need of cultivating professional tour guide skills to assist travel firms in improving service quality and satisfying tourists.

Tsegaw and Teressa (2017) found that the primary source of discontent among tourists is the tour guide's lack of capacity to offer essential information about the circuit and their inability to adhere to the scheduled time. According to Abidakun and Tunde-Ajayi (2022), it is advisable for tour guides to possess comprehensive knowledge of the trip destination, fluency in communication, punctuality, and exceptional interpersonal and professional abilities. Lin, et al. (2017) suggest that tour guides should demonstrate their professional competence by acting as leaders and effectively organizing tour-related activities, in order to enhance service quality and attract tourists. Furthermore, the study posits that as tourists remain under the guidance of the tour leader for the duration of their visit, it is imperative that the tour leader exhibit qualities such as honesty, punctuality, patience, organization, and attentiveness to the needs of the group. The tour guides should

be well trained and equipped with first aid skills and kits to handle any potential medical situations.

In a study conducted by Al Jahwari et al. (2016), the communication competency of tour guides in Turkey was assessed using a modified importance-performance analysis. The study found that communication skills were a major factor in determining tourist satisfaction. A tour guide should be able to interpret the natural and cultural heritage of the tourist site to the tourist in a clear manner. Tour guides help tourists' comprehension through tour guide knowledge level of understanding the circuits' attraction sites, culture, and quality communication skills, which transforms tourist's visit from a mere tour visit to an experience (Aryasa et al., 2017).

A study by Abidakun and Tunde-Ajayi (2022) on the tourists' choices in selecting tour guides in fostering site experience in Lagos State, Nigeria, established that good communication skills played an important role in tourists' satisfaction. The manner in which the tour guide passes information to the tourist is important because it affects the tourist destination image in their minds as tourists. The guides should be creative in how they communicate and introduce theatrical elements in communication. The tour guides should be able to provide enough information to the tourists by correctly answering any questions that may arise during the expedition.

Togoch and Koki (2018) assert that there are several issues of concern regarding tour guides' professionalism in East Africa, and tourists have raised complaints about their poor service delivery. Uganda, Burundi, and Rwanda have been pointed out as countries with poor services from tour guides. According to Tsegaw and Teressa (2017), Ethiopia has seen growth in tourism development, and there is still an increasing demand despite the sector having a high number of unqualified professionals. A study on tour guides' quality assurance practices on tourist

satisfaction in South Ethiopia confirmed that the lack of practical training and education for tour guides hinders tourist satisfaction.

The Kenyan government has identified challenges facing the tourism industry that hinder the sector from delivering high-quality services to maintain and increase tourist' satisfaction (GOK, 2019). A study by Nguya et al. (2021) sought to assess the quality of tour guide services on tourists' satisfaction in Masai Mara National Reserve, Kenya, established that tour guide competencies plays an imperative role in promoting tourists' satisfaction.

The presence of tourists traveling to different destinations has always relied on guides to ensure their satisfaction. However, the professional skills of these guides have not received much attention in tourism research, leading to a lack of literature in this area. There is also little effort to understand how the competence of tour guides impacts international tourist satisfaction. This study aimed to assess the theoretical and practical consequences of tour guides' competences in enhancing international tourist satisfaction at sites in Kenya..

1.1.3 Nairobi Tourist Circuit

Kenya is a significant tourism destination in Africa. The country has categorized tourism destinations into smaller groups called Kenya tourism circuits. According to Deka (2018), a tourist circuit is a system where more than three tourist destinations are located in different towns or villages with clear entry and exit points. The objective of implementing tourism circuits in Kenya is to augment the quantity of tourist locations inside the circuits and offer tourists a diverse range of activities and attractions at these places (Nguthi et al., 2021).

Kenya provides multiple safari circuits for tourists to discover, positioning it as a premier destination in Africa. Kenya's tourism industry is the country's second most significant contributor of foreign revenue, following agriculture. The country has eight tourism circuits: Nairobi Circuit, South Rift Circuit, Central Kenya Circuit, North Rift Circuit, Coastline Circuit, Western Circuit, Eastern Circuit, and Northern Circuit.

The Nairobi circuit is a popular tourist destination for both international and local tourists. Its proximity to Nairobi city makes it easily accessible. The circuit offers a variety of attractions, including infrastructure, wildlife, culture, landscapes, and climate. Visitors can also enjoy activities such as hot-air balloon safaris, special interest holidays, and golfing. Some must-see destinations within the Nairobi circuit are the Karen Blixen Museum, Nairobi National Museum, Bomas of Kenya, Nairobi National Park, Giraffe Center. Nairobi National Park is located within the city and offers tourists the opportunity to see the Big Five animals in one destination. The park is well-known for its proximity to urban life and provides sightings of various animals such as rhinoceros, African elephant, Cape buffalo, leopard, and lions.

To gain insights into the rich past and culture of the Kenyan people, tourists should make a point of visiting the Nairobi National Museum. It's a treasure trove of natural and cultural heritage, showcasing ethnography, paleontology, art exhibits, and more. The Karen Blixen Museum was the home of Karen Blixen, who was a Danish farmer. Here, visitors can explore Karen Blixen's life through movies, stories, and books that provide a glimpse into the past. Additionally, tourists can purchase Karen Blixen posters, postcards, and handicrafts.

Located within the Nairobi circuit is the David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust, a refuge dedicated to caring for rhinos and elephants that have been orphaned. It offers

travelers the chance to get knowledge about conservation initiatives and even take on the responsibility of adopting the animals. The Giraffe Centre is another conservation center specifically for the endangered Rothschild giraffe. Here, tourists can feed and interact with the giraffes. The Bomas of Kenya is a cultural center that offers traditional Kenyan music, dances, and art performances, providing a taste of Kenya's diverse cultures. The Nairobi Railway Museum houses a collection of vintage steam carriages and locomotives, offering a glimpse into the history of Kenya's railway.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Tourist satisfaction refers to the favorable reaction towards the quality of service offered by tour guides and the appeal of a tourist site. However, achieving tourist satisfaction is a complex task because it is a subjective experience that differs from one person to another. As tourist satisfaction is a growing concern in many countries, it is crucial to understand the factors that influence international tourist satisfaction. The Kenyan government has made several efforts to improve the sector's competitiveness by developing various policies and strengthening the regulatory framework. This includes the National Tourism Strategy 2013-2018, which identifies the challenges faced by the tourism sector in providing a superior experience to tourists; the Kenya National Tourism Blueprint 2030, which emphasizes the importance of improving tourist satisfaction levels; the Tourism Fund, which was established to enhance the quality of tour guiding operations by mobilizing financial resources to develop the country's tourism industry and finally, the Tourism Regulatory Authority (TRA) which has created a framework for regulating tour guide services in the country. However, despite the efforts put in by the government and tour firms to promote and market tourist destinations, tour guides have been associated with low international tourist satisfaction. It is unclear to what extent tour

guides' competencies can explain these phenomena. Prior research has yielded diverse findings about the correlation between the proficiency of tour guides and the level of satisfaction experienced by international tourists. Several studies have identified a positive correlation between these parameters, whereas others have discovered a negative correlation or no correlation at all. For example, Kassawneh et al. (2019) and Ninpradith et al. (2018) discovered that the skills and abilities of tour guides had a significant impact on the level of pleasure experienced by international tourists in Jordan and China, respectively. Furthermore, the studies conducted by Melubo and Kisasembe (2022) and Nguya, et al. (2021) have found that the presence of a language barrier has a substantial impact on the level of satisfaction experienced by tourists in Tanzania and Kenya. However, Agyeman and Antwi-Bosiako (2022) discovered that there is a negative correlation between the skills of tour guides and the contentment of international tourists. Furthermore, the majority of studies were carried out in industrialized nations, resulting in a scarcity of data regarding the factors that impact visitor satisfaction in the sub-Saharan region, namely in Kenya. This has resulted in a disparity in knowledge. Moreover, there has been a limited number of researches undertaken on the competencies of tour guides, with a primary emphasis on their degree of knowledge, qualities, and communication skills. Thus, in order to address this lack of knowledge, this study investigated the impact of tour guides' skills on the level of satisfaction experienced by international tourists in the Nairobi circuit, located in Kenya.

1.3 General Objective of the Study

The general objective of the study was to investigate the influence of tour guides' competencies on the satisfaction of international tourists at the Nairobi tourist circuit Kenya.

1.4 Specific Objectives of the Study

- i. To determine the influence of tour guides knowledge levels on international tourists' satisfaction at the Nairobi tourist circuit, Kenya
- ii. To establish the influence of tour guides attributes on international tourists' satisfaction at the Nairobi tourist circuit, Kenya
- iii. To determine the influence of tour guides' communication skills on international tourists' satisfaction at the Nairobi tourist circuit, Kenya.

1.5 Research Hypothesis

The following hypotheses were tested;

- H0₁** Tour guides knowledge levels have no statistically significant influence on international tourists' satisfaction at the Nairobi tourist circuit, Kenya.
- H0₂** Tour guide's attributes have no statistically significant influence on international tourists' satisfaction at the Nairobi tourist circuit, Kenya.
- H0₃** Tour guides communication skills have no statistically significant influence on international tourists' satisfaction at the Nairobi tourist circuit, Kenya.

1.6 Significance of the study

The results of this investigation will enhance the existing knowledge base.. They will establish the extent to which tour guides' competencies contribute to guests' satisfaction, revealing a new knowledge perspective and possible trends in guiding literature.

The findings of this study will benefit tourist professionals, especially tour operators, as it will give a clear understanding of Key competencies necessary for effective satisfaction of guests by tour guides. The study's findings will also offer baseline

knowledge to destination managers on how to enhance visitor satisfaction at destinations by filling the gaps from the findings on driver guide competencies. This study will be significant to Key tourist players in the hospitality industry in Kenya by providing ideas on how to improve guides' competencies and an understanding of key attributes echoed by guests as critical to a successful destination experience.

Consequently, the Ministry of Tourism will benefit from this study because it will be a source of statistics that will help policymakers develop minimum requirements for tour guide professionals that are in line not only with tourism sector objectives but are also aware of the prevailing circumstances in the guiding profession and travel sector.

1.7 Scope of the Study

The main focus of the study was to assess the influence of tour guides' competencies on the satisfaction of international tourists in the Nairobi tourist circuit, Kenya. Specifically, the study sought to establish the influence of tour guides' knowledge levels, attributes, and communication skills on tourists' satisfaction. The study was conducted in Nairobi County, Kenya, and targeted all the international tourists visiting the Nairobi circuit between July 2022 and September 2023. The research study took four months.

1.8 Limitations and delimitations of the Study

A significant constraint of this project was the hesitancy, resistance, and noncompliance of certain participants in completing the questionnaire, stemming from their doubts regarding the purpose and relevance of the data. In order to overcome this constraint, the participants were provided with an explanation of the importance of the research, and the researcher reassured them that all the data gathered would be used exclusively for academic reasons. In order to provide further certainty, the researcher

appended a duplicate of the National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI) permit and the University authorization for data collection letter to the questionnaire. Furthermore, the participants were guaranteed the privacy and security of their data.

The other limitation was the language barrier between the respondent and the researcher, which posed a challenge during the study. Some tourists were not well-versed in the English language, which is an official language in Kenya. To address this barrier, the researcher obtained software to translate the questionnaire into the respondents' preferred language. Additionally, the researcher hired assistants who were proficient in various foreign languages.

1.9 Assumptions of study

In carrying out this study, it was assumed that all international tourists arriving in the country during the study period were guided by tour guides registered by the Tourism Regulatory Authority. Additionally, the study was carried out under the assumption that international tourists visited all the sites in the Nairobi circuit, as indicated by the study, during the same period. This allowed the researcher to collect sufficient data for the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This section highlights the literature reviewed that is related to the research study. The section entails various empirical and theoretical literatures, and the conceptual framework.

2.2. Theoretical Review

The job characteristics theory, service quality (SERVQUAL) model, and anchor theory were used to support the study.

2.2.1 Job characteristics theory (JCT)

Hackman and Oldham developed job characteristics theory in 1980 as an advancement of the work of Tuner and Lawrence and Heckman and Lawler. Tuner and Lawrence focused on objective job characteristics in work design, while Hackman and Lawler demonstrated the direct impact of job characteristics on workers' tasks, behaviors, and attitudes. Hackman and Oldham modified the theory by adding two additional moderators: skill, knowledge, and individual satisfaction.

JCT affirms that employees who possess knowledge and skills related to their duties will be satisfied with their performance. Employees need to develop internal motivation for their growth, which leads to quality service delivery and, hence, customer satisfaction. The theory further suggests that various skills and knowledge

are major characteristics that enhance an employee's psychological state, thus creating personal motivation and increasing performance (Waaland, 2020).

The job characteristics theory affirms that tour guides assume critical responsibilities in providing good, immediate, inseparable, and intangible services to tourists. Tour guides need to recognize their importance in the tourism industry by applying knowledge and skills effectively to satisfy tourists. A tour guide who lacks effective job characteristics such as adequate communication skills, knowledge competency, and attributes will diminish tourist satisfaction (Lin, et al., 2017).

According to Weiler and Black (2021), the job characteristics theory asserts that some characteristics may contribute to meaningful, satisfying, and engaging job experiences. In applying JCT to tour guides, key relevant factors for competencies are identified. The tour guide more often requires very diverse sets of skills in order to carry out their roles effectively. Some of the skills include historical knowledge, communication problem solving, and cultural awareness. The task identity factor is the process of completing meaningful and whole tasks by the tour guide. When the tour guide leads a tourist from the start to the end by providing very comprehensive experiences and evaluating the influence of this effort on the visitors' enjoyment and understanding, it enhances task identity and thus leads to tourist satisfaction.

Regarding job characteristic theory, Sarr et al. (2021) argue that task significance is a vital factor because the tour guide helps shape the tourists' perceptions and experiences. When the tour guide perceives that their job has a positive effect on the tourist's satisfaction, the guide gets motivated and experiences job satisfaction. Autonomy factors also help the tour guide in making decisions without wasting time. This helps the guide adjust their presentation based on the tourist dynamics, thus choosing the methods of conveying information. Therefore, providing the guide with

autonomy may help increase their sense of responsibility and control, resulting in high engagement.

Applying job characteristics theory to tour guide's competency underscores the benefits of continuous training and development. Creating some room for knowledge enrichment, skills enhancement, and learning new historical and cultural insights will most likely contribute to motivation and job satisfaction (Park & Jones, 2021). Moura et al. (2023) job characteristics theory emphasizes intrinsic motivation, where an individual finds satisfaction and enjoyment in the job. In the case of a tour guide, intrinsic motivation may come from the happiness of sharing some knowledge, connecting with the tourists, and creating a positive experience in them.

The criticism of this theory is that some theoretical linkages in the model may not be fully supported, and the other criticism is that this theory was found in the early 1980s. The job design was aligned with some specific roles within the institution; unlike now, the roles are flexible and dynamic. However, there are strengths to this theory. If well adopted, the theory will create a stronger bond between workers (tour guides) and customers (tourists). It also helps combine and assign tasks to specific groups and teams quickly. This theory was anchored on knowledge level, communication skills, and tour guide attribute variables.

2.2.2 Service Quality (SERVQUAL) Model for Tour Guiding

This model was developed by Parasuraman, et al. (1985), based on the work. It is used to assess a company's service quality output in comparison to a customer's service quality expectations. An effective and efficient system is essential in the tourism industry, and managing tourism destinations is crucial for increasing customer satisfaction. The tour guide plays an important role to ensure overall

travel satisfaction. Service quality commonly determined by the following factors among others, such as the tour guides' competence, reliability, courtesy, friendliness, and efficiency (Chen et al., 2016).

The SERVQUAL model has been applied in various fields, including the tourism sector. In tourism, the model comprises five main dimensions that are used to assess the quality of tour guide services and the overall tourist experience. These dimensions include tangibles, which are specific to the physical aspects that tourists can touch, experience, or see, such as the tour guide behavior and appearance. A well-groomed and professional tour guide contributes to positive tangibles. The second dimension is the reliability of the tour guide. This indicates the tour guide's ability to provide more consistent and accurate information. Tourists have high expectations that tour guides are very well prepared, knowledgeable, and able to handle unexpected situations that can arise during the tourist's visits (Thi et al., 2020).

The third dimension is the tour guides' responsiveness. This is the ability and willingness of the tour guide to assist the tourists and address their concerns. The fourth is the tour guide's assurance, conveying confidence, competencies, and trust to the visitors. The tour guide must have advanced knowledge of the tourists' destinations, culture, history of the destination, and any other significant facts. The tour guide's adeptness in managing obstacles and their proficiency in communication augment their assurance dimensions. The final aspect is the tour guide's capacity for empathy. This concerns the tour guide's capacity to accommodate and comprehend the requirements and sentiments of the tourists. This necessitates a tour guide who is affable, thoughtful, and perceptive, and who tailors the tour to the preferences and interests of the tourists (Liu et al., 2019).

Tour guides are essential for boosting tourists' overall experience by enriching their understanding of local customs and sites. Tour guides may ensure high satisfaction by delivering exceptional service, resulting in tourists departing with cherished recollections. An effective method for evaluating the caliber of tour guide services involves juxtaposing the visitors' preconceived notions with their real-life encounters subsequent to the tour (Chen, 2019). Abdulla et al. (2019) asserted that in the field of tourism, a superior level of service quality directly results in the contentment of tourists. This satisfaction can be evaluated through the frequency of revisits and recommendations.

According to Afthanorhan et al. (2019), service quality refers to the difference between the customer's perceived service level and their expectations. The study found that tour guide service quality encompasses factors such as service efficiency, attitude, and creating positive memories for tourists. This is strongly linked to tourist satisfaction, and the theory was based on this.

2.2.3 Anchor Theory

The theory was first developed by Everett Rogers in 1962. This theory provided a framework that aids in understanding how tour guide competencies serve as anchors of international tourists' satisfaction. According to Deka (2018), the theory is primarily employed in sociological and psychological contexts. This informs that people have some aspects of personality that serve as anchors in their lives, influencing their attitudes, preferences, and behaviors. The anchor can be personal, social, or cultural, providing continuity and stability amidst changes in circumstances. The tour guide who knows culture can guide the tourist to various destinations visited, which will cater to the international tourist's needs and preferences. Tour guides can

also adopt approaches based on international tourist preferences. Some international tourists may be interested in historical sites, while others may be interested in adventure activities or culinary experiences. Understanding international tourist preferences enhances their satisfaction.

The study by Long (2017) indicated that in some scenarios where international tourists are unfamiliar with the environment, they may tend to seek some stability and comfort from the tour guide. At a point where the tour guide asserts competence, confidence, and familiarity with the destination, the guide serves as an anchor for international tourists by providing guidance and reassurance throughout. Due to this, there is some sense of satisfaction and security amongst international tourists.

Moreover, the anchor theory posits that the tour guide's good communication plays a crucial role in guaranteeing a favorable and lively visitor experience (Engeset & Elvekrok, 2015). The tour guide acts as a cultural reference point that deepens the foreign tourist's comprehension of the destination's culture. However, ultimately, the primary objective of the tour guide is to curate a remarkable and unforgettable experience for the foreign tourist. Based on the principles of anchor theory, both local and international tourists are attracted to destinations that offer a unique and memorable experience. The tour guide has the ability to create an experience that is individually significant or deeply evocative. As a consequence, there is an increase in expectations, satisfaction, and a favorable word-of-mouth recommendation.

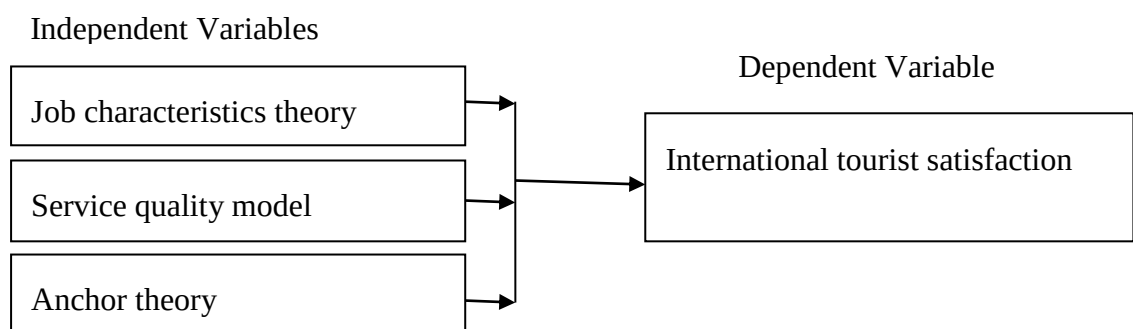
The anchor theory states that certain tour leaders exhibit certain features that contribute to their effectiveness and efficiency. Understanding the relationship between the skills of tour guides and the level of satisfaction among both foreign and local tourists is a valuable asset. Nevertheless, the theory is not without its faults and limitations. The emphasis is placed on the individual qualities of a tour guide,

including their level of knowledge, attributes as a tour guide, and communication skills. This fails to acknowledge the significance of additional aspects such as logistical capabilities, tour planning, and itinerary design, all of which also have a pivotal impact on tourist satisfaction. The anchor hypothesis encompasses and provides support for both independent as well as dependent variables of this study.

2.2.4 Theoretical Framework

Figure 2.1

Theoretical framework



Source: Adopted and modified by from Setiawan, et al., (2020)

2.3 Empirical Review

The empirical literature primarily examines reviewed literature from other researchers. This section focuses on the literature regarding tour guides' knowledge level, communication skills, attributes, and international tourists' satisfaction.

2.3.1 Tour guide knowledge level and international tourists' satisfaction

A competent guide will know the touristic product well, be disciplined as they go on with their daily duties, communicate well with tourists, have high professional skills in the field of tours as a driver-guide, and master all the touristic circuits. Comprehensive knowledge of current affairs from different parts of the country and the world, weather patterns of other regions, and different tourist cultures are key (Abidakun & Tunde-Ajayi, 2022).

The knowledge level of tour guides is essential because it helps them disseminate information about geographical knowledge, fauna and flora, and destination culture and communicate efficiently in different languages to the tourists. Hence, the expertise of the tour guides directly impacts the total standard of service provided to the tourists. An adept guide exhibits a range of qualities, including as familiarity with the destination, proficiency in many languages, understanding of cultural and historical settings, and awareness of current affairs. According to Weiler and Black (2021), overseas tourists are inclined to adopt a favorable mindset and subsequently recommend other tourists.

In a research conducted by Shirmohammadi et al. (2020), the impact of tour guides' literacy on tourist satisfaction in Tehran, Iran was investigated. The study employed a quantitative research design. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin test was employed to assess the adequacy of the sample size. A descriptive survey was implemented, utilizing a

questionnaire to gather main data. The data were subjected to inferential analysis, and the relations between the variables of the research study were determined using structural equation modeling. The findings demonstrated a favorable impact of the tour guide's expertise on the level of satisfaction experienced by tourists.

The studies suggested recommendation is that it is imperative to provide comprehensive training to tour guides in order to enable them to effectively communicate and engage with all relevant components. The study examined the level of literacy among tour guides and its impact on tourists' satisfaction in Tehran, Iran. Conversely, the present study specifically examined the skills and abilities of tour guides and how they impact the level of satisfaction among tourists in the Nairobi circuit.

Binti et al. (2022) conducted a study in Malaysia to evaluate how the knowledge of tour guide impacted on the satisfaction of tourist. The study revealed that tour guides are crucial in the tourism business since they serve as mediators between travelers and agents. The tour guide is required to elucidate the cultural aspects of the tourist site. The data collected from an online survey of 58 international travelers showed that there was a positive and significant relationship between the tour guides' understanding of the destination's culture and the satisfaction levels of the international tourists.

Tsegaw and Teressa (2017) examined the quality assurance techniques of tour guides in South Ethiopia and their impact on tourist satisfaction. The study design employed was survey, where data was gathered from travelers, tourism specialists, tourism agencies, and tour guides as the target audience. The study utilized a purposive sample strategy to create five tourist guides, incidental sampling to gather 85

travelers, and a complete sampling technique to get 58 local guides. The study included a combination of primary and secondary data collection methodologies. The primary data was obtained through informant interviews, questionnaires, and observation, while secondary data was gathered from journals, publications, and records. The collected data were examined using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The study revealed that insufficient practical training and instruction for tour guides has a negative impact on tourist satisfaction. The report suggested that tour guides undergo regular training sessions.

Hill et al. (2022) carried a study in South Africa to investigate the primary characteristics that contribute to the success of tour guides and their impact on tourist satisfaction. The study employed a cross-sectional methodology, wherein the respondents were given structured questionnaire to fill and this provided primary data. The 51 respondents were given the questionnaires. The analyzed data revealed that the expertise of tour guides played a crucial role in determining the level of satisfaction among tourists. The study suggested that the tour guides should receive additional training on the cultural aspects of the destination destinations, as well as the local fauna and flora.

In a study conducted by Francis, et al. (2019), the objective was to ascertain the impact of tour guides' educational attainment and professional experience on the sustainability of tourism in Kenya. The study utilized a mixed research design, incorporating both quantitative as well as qualitative designs. The researcher employed the random sampling technique to ascertain a target population. In addition, the technique developed by Yemen was utilized to determine a sample size of 78 respondents. The main study utilized a primary data collecting approach, employing a structured questionnaire to gather quantitative data and conducting interviews to gain

additional quantitative data. The structured questionnaire's quantitative data was examined using SPSS, while thematic analysis was used to study the qualitative data gained from interviews. The study findings revealed that there was no significant correlation between the amount of expertise a tour guide had and the sustainability of tourism. The study also discovered a notable correlation between the experience of tour guides and their educational background with the concept of tourism sustainability. Regular training is necessary for tour guides, as established by the study.

In their study, Kabii et al. (2017) investigated the effects of tour guide training on performance in Kenya. The study employed both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. The study encompassed a sample of 350 participants that were utilized to gather data. The primary data was collected through interviews, questionnaires, and focus groups. Data analysis involved the utilization of multiple linear regressions and correlation analysis. The tour guide's inadequate understanding of fauna and flora, customer services, and cultural history had a detrimental impact on client satisfaction, as was disclosed. Thus, it was determined that tour guides must undergo supplementary training in the wildlife, flora, and culture of East Africa in order to properly meet the expectations of consumers. The study utilized fauna, flora, and legacy as metrics to assess levels of knowledge. Conversely, the present study utilized flora and fauna, language, and surroundings as markers to assess the level of knowledge.

2.3.2 Tour guide attributes and international tourists' satisfaction

The skills and qualities of a tour guide can significantly affect tourists' satisfaction. Researchers in the tourism industry have studied the behavioral characteristics of tour

guides at different tourist destinations. Previous studies have demonstrated that a tour guide's attributes directly influence tourist satisfaction (Syakier & Hanafiah, 2021).

Fajriyati et al. (2022) conducted a study to examine the impact of tourist guides on tourists' satisfaction in Saudi Arabia. The survey demonstrated that the majority of guides must prioritize their primary consumer demographic. Data from the online survey was collected by administering it to 231 respondents. The participants were chosen from the cities of Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Mecca, Antalya, Artvin, Cairo, Dammam City, Doha, Penang Island, Edirne, Istanbul, Kuala Lumpur, Jakarta, Johor Bahru, Marrakech, and Riyadh. The data was acquired and examined using SEM (Scanning Electron Microscopy). The results indicated that characteristics associated with Islam, such as the personality of the tour guide, as well as general qualities like kindness and honesty had a beneficial impact on the level of satisfaction experienced by tourists.

Ninpradith et al. (2018) conducted a study on the skills and abilities of tour guides and the level of service provided to tourists in China. The study employed a quantitative research design and utilized a simple random sampling procedure to procure a sample of 10 organizations. The study additionally utilized purposive sampling to select 40 participants from each firm. Primary data was obtained via a structured questionnaire. The acquired data were examined using both descriptive and inferential methods. The study results demonstrated that the characteristics of tour guides had a favorable and significant impact on the level of satisfaction experienced by tourists. The study suggested that tour companies establish rules that adhere to industry standards in terms of qualities, knowledge, and abilities in order to improve the competencies of tour guides.

Almasoodi and Rahman (2023) conducted a study to assess the impact of tour guides' service quality on the satisfaction of international tourists visiting the Archabylon site

in Babylon. Cross-sectional design was utilized in this study, with a sample size of 536 respondents exclusively selected from overseas travelers. Data was gathered from the participants through the use of semi-structured questionnaires. The data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics, and the correlation between the independent and dependent variables was determined using multiple linear regression analysis. The study findings confirmed a substantial correlation between the features of tour guides and the satisfaction of international tourists. It has been suggested that establishing an agency for tour guides, who possess the necessary traits and have undergone seminars and other training, will enhance the quality of service and ultimately raise the happiness of international tourists.

Agyeman and Antwi-Bosiako (2022) did a study investigating the impact of tour guides on visitors' perspective in Ghana. The research was carried out in Kakum National Park utilizing a cross-sectional study approach. The study employed a straightforward sampling procedure to acquire a sample size of 200 respondents. Information was acquired from the participants by the administration of a questionnaire. In addition, the obtained data underwent grid, gap, and descriptive analysis. The study results revealed a lack of significant impact between the qualities of tour guides and visitor pleasure. The study was done exclusively in Kakum National Park, thereby limiting the generalizability of the findings to other tourist locations. Hence, the present study was conducted at multiple tourist spots within the Nairobi circuit, and the outcomes can be extrapolated to represent the findings of those locations.

In their study, Berhanu et al. (2020) aimed to evaluate the impact of tour guide perception on the satisfaction of international tourists visiting Ethiopia. The study utilized a cross-sectional methodology, sampling 310 respondents from the entire

population of international visitors visiting Ethiopia. Primary data was collected from the respondents using research questionnaires and interview schedules. The collected data was subjected to content analysis and analyzed using SPSS v 23.0 software to calculate the standard deviation and mean. To establish the relationship between the independent and dependent variables, the study employed simple linear regressions and Pearson correlation. The findings indicated a moderate correlation between the perception of tour guides and the satisfaction of international tourists in Ethiopia. The study also revealed that tourists' subsequent actions after their trip were favorable, suggesting that international tourists expressed a desire to return to Ethiopia. The study was conducted in Ethiopia, whereas the current study was undertaken in Kenya.

Kemboi and Jairus (2018) aimed to determine the importance of the characteristics of tour guides on the influence they have on tourists in the North Rift region of Kenya. The study utilized a cross-sectional research approach and included both international and domestic tourists as the target group. The study employed a primary data gathering methodology, utilizing a semi-structured questionnaire as the research instrument. Data analysis involved the utilization of Pearson correlation and descriptive statistics. The data was collected from the tourism regions of Lake Nakuru, Bogoria, Kitale, and Baringo. The Pearson correlation study revealed that tour guides exhibited low levels of personality traits and demonstrated limited problem-solving abilities. Overall, the study revealed that tour guide qualities had a favorable and substantial impact on tourists' level of contentment. The study suggested that tour guides strengthen their personality qualities and acquire the abilities of humor to engage visitors and employ problem-solving techniques to increase tourists' pleasure. The study specifically examined both foreign and local tourists, with a particular emphasis on international tourists inside the Nairobi circuit.

Nguya, et al. (2021) conducted a study to examine how the quality of tour guide services impacts the satisfaction of tourists visiting Masai Mara National Reserve in Kenya. The study employed a cross-sectional research approach, with a target population of 9031 individuals. The method of choice for selecting responders from the target population was simple random sampling. Slovin formula (1960) was utilized to get a sample size of 384 research participants. The collection of primary data was conducted by the administration of a semi-structured questionnaire and interview schedule. The collected data were examined using descriptive statistics and multiple regression analysis. The results indicated that being prompt has a large and favorable impact on the satisfaction of tourists. The study suggests that tour guides should get additional training in time management to improve their punctuality, ultimately leading to increased tourist satisfaction.

2.3.3 Tour guide communication skills and international tourists' satisfaction

Effective communication skills are highly valued in the tour guide profession. Tour guides must demonstrate fluency in numerous foreign languages as well as their native language, in addition to possessing exceptional communication skills. This is essential as it enhances the overall worth of the visitor experience when exploring galleries, cultural heritage sites, and museums (Topler et al., 2017).

In their study, Nudin, et al.(2021) analyze the impact of tour guide politeness communication on tourist engagement in Japan. A quantitative methodology was employed, and a sample of 200 participants was purposefully selected. The questionnaire was utilized to gather primary data. The acquired data were examined utilizing descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings revealed that the level of civility exhibited by tour guides had a little impact on the overall satisfaction of tourists.

Jamaludin, et al. (2023) conducted a study to ascertain the impact of tour guides' core principles on Muslim tourism. The study utilized a qualitative research design. The researcher collected secondary data by referring to scholarly journals, books, and articles in the specific subject of study. The study found that the interpersonal skills and good communication of tour guides had a favorable and significant impact on Muslim tourism. This was a result of the tour guides catering to the requirements of Muslim tourists, ensuring that they had an all-encompassing and favorable experience. The study utilized secondary data collection methods, whereas the current study employed primary data collection procedures.

Kapa, et al. (2022) conducted a study on the skills and abilities related to the visitor experience in South Africa. The study employed both qualitative and quantitative methodologies, and a sample of 320 international tourists was selected using non-random sampling techniques. The researchers obtained primary data by conducting an online survey with the participants. The data was encoded in Microsoft Excel using numerical values to facilitate subsequent interpretation and analysis. Analyzed utilizing descriptive statistics and confirmatory factor analysis, the coded data was examined. The data analysis results indicated that communication skills, customer care abilities, and ethical skills, among other characteristics, had a good and significant impact on enhancing the visitor experience in South Africa. This study distinguishes itself from the present study by specifically examining the tourist experience, whereas the current study focuses on measuring the satisfaction of international tourists in Kenya.

Abidakun and Tunde-Ajayi (2022) aimed to investigate the factors influencing tourists' selection of tour guides to enhance their site experience in Lagos State, Nigeria. The study utilized a descriptive research methodology and applied a

purposive sample technique to pick 100 respondents from the Lekki Conservation Centre. A semi-structured questionnaire was utilized to gather primary data, which was subsequently processed and examined using descriptive and inferential statistics. The study included charts and tables to convey descriptive findings, and utilized inferential statistics such as ANOVA, T-test, and Chi-square. The findings demonstrated a strong correlation between exceptional communication abilities and the overall contentment of travelers. The study proposed that the tourism industry should boost the communication abilities of tour guides in order to increase tourists' satisfaction. The study was carried out at the Conservation Centre in Nigeria, while a comparable study was undertaken in the Nairobi circuit, Kenya.

Sinare (2019) did a study in Tanzania to examine the correlation between guide interpretation services and the level of satisfaction among tourists regarding marine resources on Mafia Island. The study utilized a cross-sectional research methodology, with a purposive sample consisting of 30 tour guides and 20 tour operators. However, a total of 200 tourists, both international and local, were chosen through the use of a simple random sampling method. Primary data was collected via a self-administered questionnaire. The data were subjected to descriptive and regression statistical analysis. The findings demonstrated a noteworthy correlation between the communication proficiency of tour guides and the level of satisfaction experienced by guests. The study suggested providing the tour guide with proficient interpretation skills and extensive local knowledge in order to augment tourists' contentment. The study was restricted to a tiny marine resource site located at Mafia Island. The present study expanded the geographical coverage by concentrating on a complete circle.

Francis and Wandakab (2021) investigated how the communication skills of tour guides in Kenya contribute to improving tourists' satisfaction. The study utilized an

exploratory research approach, focusing on individuals who work as naturalists, tour guides, and freelancers with either temporary or permanent contracts. Data was collected using both quantitative and qualitative methods. The data analysis process was facilitated by using SPSS version 21.0, which involved the application of both quantitative and inferential statistics to examine the data. The study findings revealed that the level of expressiveness and composure exhibited by tour guides had a beneficial impact on tourist satisfaction in Kenya. The study suggested promoting the integration of smart guide technology to enhance the tour guide's interaction with visitors and complement other guiding strategies.

In a study conducted by Adundo (2023), the objective was to examine the factors that influence the satisfaction of visitors with the services provided by travel agencies and tour operators in Nairobi, Kenya. A descriptive research design was utilized, focusing on a target audience consisting of visitors who utilized services provided by high-end tours and travel companies. The study utilized judgmental sampling to select a sample size from the African Horizon Travel Safaris, Abercrombie and Kent Limited, Pollmans Tour Safaris Limited-Mombasa, and Bush & Beyond Limited. The researchers utilized a well-organized questionnaire to gather primary data from the participants. The data underwent descriptive and inferential statistical analysis and was then provided in the form of figures and tables. The study's findings indicated that the level of coordination and attentiveness had a considerable and beneficial impact on visitors' pleasure. The survey determined that tour guides and travel businesses should increase their communication abilities in order to boost consumer satisfaction. Additionally, the study advised that the management of travel firms should arrange for training, seminars, and conferences for their tour guides and other workers to enhance their communication abilities..

2.3.4 International Tourist Satisfaction

Tourists can be classified as either domestic or international. They travel to various tourist places for recreational purposes. Nevertheless, the contentment of tourists can influence their expectations. Travelers' expectations and preferences vary in terms of their travel style, brand loyalty, service quality, and overall satisfaction. The proficiency of a tour guide is crucial in ensuring the contentment of tourists (Tsegaw & Teressa, 2017).

Tourist satisfaction has emerged as a significant topic of study for many scholars in the field of tourism, and it has been examined from multiple perspectives. Satisfaction can be described as a comprehensive and cognitive reaction to using a product, where the consumer evaluates if the product delivers a satisfactory level of enjoyment and fulfillment (Pan et al., 2021). Skavronskaya et al. (2017) found that the psychological and dimensional aspects of satisfaction vary because of the intricate nature of an individual's consumption experience.

According to Suhartanto, et al. (2020), visiting a tourism site, particularly for overseas tourists seeking satisfaction, is a very intricate experience. The satisfaction of international tourists at the transactional level is conceptually distinct from the satisfaction at the destination level, and this distinction arises from the whole experience of the tourist. The experience involves engaging with various cultural and natural features of different destinations. This is determined by how locations see the perception of tour guide competence among international tourists. Hence, the contentment of international tourists can be attributed to their overall satisfaction with the complete consumption of their experience and the quality of service provided by the tour guide.

Tourists express satisfaction with the service provided to them only when those services are delivered in a satisfactory manner, so motivating them to either return or extend their stay. Tourist satisfaction is a crucial and essential notion within the tourism industry (Luvandwa et al., 2020). According to Martín, et al. (2019), tourist satisfaction is attained when the services and products meet the expectations of tourists. Ahmed (2021) noted that the primary factor in determining tourist satisfaction is its relative nature, which includes the client's expectations and the performance of the product or service. Liat, et al. (2020) stated that satisfaction refers to a customer's evaluation of how well a product or service meets their expectations in terms of its attributes. To ensure tourist happiness, the tourism sector must improve the skills and abilities of tour guides.

Jahwari, et al. (2016) assert that tour guides have a pivotal function in the realm of tourism. They guarantee tourist contentment by returning to the destination. Kuo,et al. (2018) argue that tour guides must possess both knowledge and interpersonal skills related to the destinations they are guiding. This measure will aid in guaranteeing that tourists are provided with high-quality services and possess a comprehensive understanding of their chosen destinations. If tourists obtain high-quality services from tour guides, they are likely to consider revisiting and recommending them to others.

Abidakun and Tunde-Ajayi (2022) have done multiple research on the satisfaction of overseas tourists. The studies sought to comprehend many facets of tourists' preferences, experiences, and degrees of pleasure when visiting different sites. The majority of studies have mostly examined issues such as service quality, which pertains to the level of service provided by tour guides, as well as the convenience and cleanliness encountered by foreign tourists. These factors will be crucial in

determining the level of foreign tourist satisfaction. Research has also concentrated on the loyalty and return visits of international tourists. Studies have investigated whether a significant level of international tourist satisfaction contributes to an increased likelihood of returning to certain areas. Subsequent research has examined variables such as recommendations from foreign tourists who are visiting a certain location for the first time. They acquired information about the tour destinations through recommendations from travelers who had previously visited the destinations and were content with the acquired experience.

A study conducted in China by Ninpradith, et al. (2018) examined the relationship between tour guide skills and tourist satisfaction. The findings of the study revealed that tour guide competences had a significant impact on tourists' level of satisfaction. This was because of data demonstrating that the majority of tourists who visited the places were a result of referrals. The majority of travelers revisited the places multiple times as a result of the exceptional quality of the tour guides.

A study conducted by Jordan, Kassawneh, et al. (2019) concludes that tour guides establish a favorable rapport with both local and foreign tourists. The satisfaction of tourists is contingent solely upon the performance of tour guides throughout the course of their visit. The tour guides exercise complete control over the duration of their interactions with the tourists, which consequently leads the tourists to rely heavily on the guide. Tour guides have the responsibility of giving visitors with pertinent information about various tourist places, which in turn leads to the satisfaction of tourists. To optimize tourists' happiness, tour guides must possess all the essential abilities required for the role. In addition, tour guides are accountable for possessing proficient communication abilities, extensive knowledge of the local wildlife and plant life, as well as a comprehensive understanding of the cultural

aspects of tourist sites. Finally, the traits of a tour guide, such as their charisma, adaptability, integrity, and timeliness, are also crucial. This will augment the desires of international tourists and incentivize them to return, provide recommendations, and cultivate a favorable perception of service excellence.

In his study, Ahmed (2021) investigated the impact of tour guides on encouraging tourists to revisit Egypt and how this influences the overall perception of the destination. The study revealed that tour guides play a direct role in fostering an intention among tourists to revisit. This pertains to the caliber of services provided by tour guides. Improving the level of service provided will increase tourists' contentment. Furthermore, Abidakun and Tunde-Ajayi (2022) have said that tour guides play a crucial role in enhancing tourist satisfaction. Consequently, the tour guide must possess the necessary skills and abilities to promote high-quality service provision.

In their study, Melubo and Kisasembe (2022) investigated the necessity of Chinese visitors in Tanzania and assessed the country's preparedness to accommodate them. In 2018, the investigation uncovered that the country received over 32,000 Chinese tourists. The numbers were anticipated to rise due to Tanzania's distinctive and unparalleled tourist attractions, as well as the implementation of improved marketing and promotional campaigns. Nevertheless, the study revealed that Chinese visitors expressed dissatisfaction with their visits due to a shortage of Chinese-speaking tour guides and a deficiency in necessary expertise. The study determined that while Chinese travelers shared many similarities with other tourists, they also had distinct expectations that were unique to their culture. This expectation encompassed the conduct of tour guides, the quality of accommodation, and the planned activities.

Hence, it is imperative for the Tanzanian tourist industry to improve its approach towards the growing market.

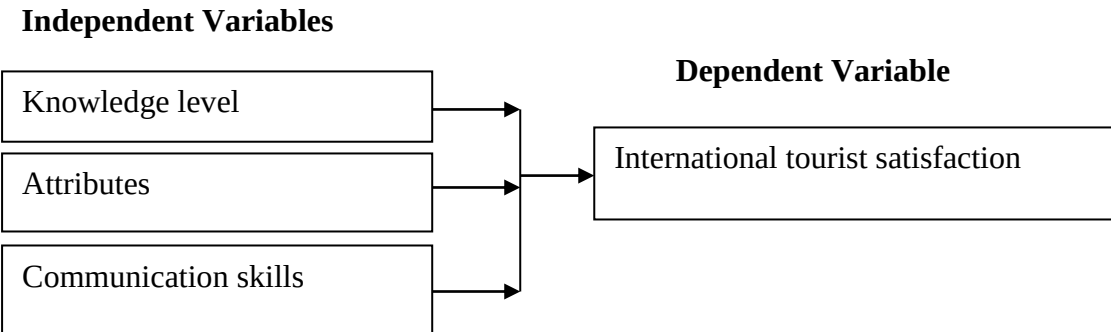
A study conducted by Nguya, et al. (2021) revealed a strong positive link between the skills of tour guides and the level of satisfaction experienced by tourists. According to the study, the competitiveness of a place is determined by the level of service provided by tour guides. Quality tour guide services play a crucial role in meeting tourists' expectations and eventually contribute to their pleasure. International tourist satisfaction is determined using numerous dimensions, as indicated by the number of studies referenced. The most frequently used dimensions include tourist revisits, tourist recommendations, positive feedback, and service quality, among others.

2.4 Conceptual Framework

This diagram illustrates the relationship between study variables (Gibson, 2017). The diagram below indicates the relationship that is between independent and dependent variables with their supportive indicators. This has been illustrated in the figure 2.2 of the conceptual framework below.

Figure 2.2

Conceptual framework



Source: Author, 2024

2.4.1 Tour guide knowledge level

Several factors contribute to a tour guide's knowledge level. These factors may include personal experience, training, and specialization in a specific area. A good tour guide should have a strong understanding of the geography, landmarks, culture, and history of the site visited (Ababneh, 2018). This knowledge is essential for providing efficient and effective services to tourists.

2.4.2 Tour guide attributes

A tour guide must possess a diverse set of attributes to excel in providing service. These attributes include personality, punctuality, honesty, flexibility, and passion. Together, these qualities contribute to creating a lasting, memorable, and enriching experience for the tourists, ultimately leading to their satisfaction (Liao & Chuang, 2020).

2.4.3 Tour guide communication skills

Tour guides must have effective communication skills (Hwang & Lee, 2019). This means that they should be able to communicate clearly, engage with their guests, and respond to questions accurately and effectively. Their communication skills should include public speaking and active listening to ensure that tourists feel heard. Effective communication requires attentiveness, composure, coordination, and the ability to express themselves effectively to all guests.

2.4.4 International tourist satisfaction

Satisfaction is the evaluation of inherent acquired from consuming a product and having consumption experience. Satisfaction, on the other hand, refers to the psychological state of one's mind that results when emotions surrounding one's

expectations are associated with the individual's prior feelings on consumption experience (Biswas et al., 2020).

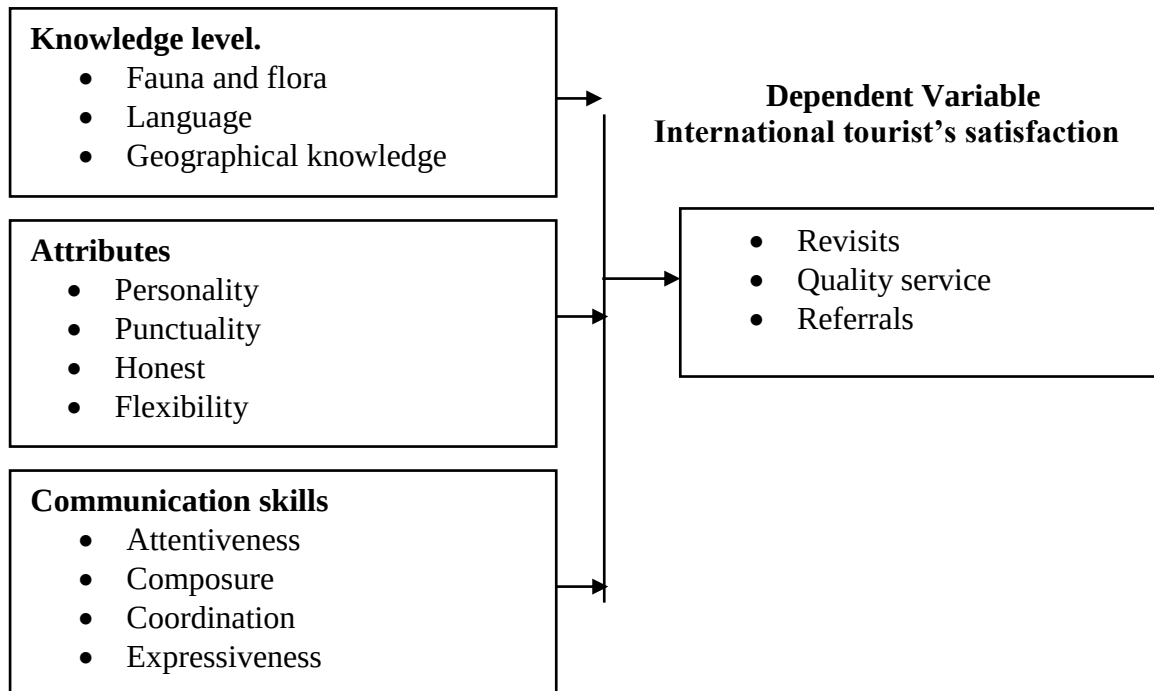
Tourist satisfaction is a psychological preference and pleasure acquired from consuming tourism products (Pathak & Paudel, 2019). International tourist satisfaction indicates the fulfillment or contentment experienced by international tourists after visiting a tour site. In order to determine the level of international tourists' satisfaction, one will use whether the tourist will revisit, will do referrals, and will rate the high quality of the service received from the tour guide (Lhendup & Panda, 2020).

Figure 2.3

Operational framework.

Independent Variables.

Tour guide's competencies



Source: - Modified from Mainah 's Conceptualization, (2021).

Figure 2.1 of a conceptual framework summarizes a relationship between the tour guide competencies (independent variables) and international tourist satisfaction (dependent variable). The independent variable includes the tour guide's knowledge level, measured using flora and fauna knowledge, language, and geographical knowledge as the key indicators. The second independent variable was the tour guide's attributes, which were anchored on four indicators: personality, punctuality, honest, and flexibility of the tour guides. The last independent variable was the tour guide's communication skills, where the leading indicators adopted were attentiveness, composure, coordination, and expressiveness. The dependent variable

(international tourist satisfaction) was further measured using three indicators: tourists' revisit quality service and referrals.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

This chapter describes the research design used in the study; this includes the study area, target population, sampling techniques, research instruments, pre-testing, validity and reliability of the research, data collection techniques, data analysis, and logistical and ethical considerations for the study.

3.2 Research Design

A research design encompasses the plan, method, and structure utilized in a study to address research questions or test the study's hypothesis (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). The study establishes a systematic connection between the research philosophy and the subsequent selection of data collection procedures. Creswell and Creswell (2017) argue that the selection of a research design is influenced by factors such as the study's characteristics, data collection methods, and analytic procedures. This ultimately helps in addressing a particular research topic. This study utilized a cross-sectional research design to examine the impact of tour guides' competences on the satisfaction of international tourists in the Nairobi tourism circuit in Kenya. Bloomfield and Fisher (2019) define a cross-sectional research design as an observational study that enables the collecting of data on a particular region of interest at a certain point in time. The chosen research design is appropriate for this study as it allows the researcher to gather data from tourist locations throughout a particular timeframe. Creswell and Creswell (2017) recommended employing a cross-sectional research design due to its capacity to gather valuable data on the occurrence and

distribution of a certain phenomenon, as well as the link between variables being studied.

3.3 Target Population

The target population refers to a whole group or set of individuals, events, or things that possess common features (Kabii, 2021). Sekaran and Bougie (2016) define the target population as the comprehensive collection of all instances that satisfy particular criteria and to which the findings can be generalized. The target demographic for this research study comprised 2,851 international tourists that visited the Nairobi Circuit from July 2022 to September 2022, as reported by the Kenya Tourism Board in 2021. The study examined international tourists who visited the Nairobi circuit, which is the primary choice for international tourists in Kenya. Despite a 40% rise in tourist arrivals to the Nairobi circuit in 2021, the number of international tourists that visited was still higher in 2020. Despite the increase, the overall number of visits remained 37.5% lower than the levels before the COVID-19 pandemic (Kenya Tourism Board, 2022). The selection of the study area was predicated upon these findings.

Table 3.1

Target Population

Tourism Site	Population
Kitengela Glass	53
Giraffe Center	298
Karen Blixen Museum	205
Ocean Soul	28
David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust	289

Nairobi Safari Walk	456
Love Birds Kenya	200
Railway Museum	289
National Museums of Kenya	485
Bomas of Kenya	30
Nairobi National Park	518
Total	2851

Source: Kenya Tourism Board (2021)

Table 3.1 indicates the average number of tourists visiting different tourist sites and parks in the Nairobi circuit in the year 2021.

3.4 Sampling Procedure and Sample Size

A sampling strategy refers to the specific approach used by a researcher to select a sample from a population (Stratton, 2021). Sampling involves the identification and selection of individuals from the target group for inclusion in the study (Kothari, 2017). Kenya is home to six circuits that attract a majority of international tourists, who are accompanied by knowledgeable tour guides. The Nairobi circuit was purposefully chosen for the study out of the six circuits due to its biggest influx of international tourists.

The study employed the Cochran formula in order to compute the necessary sample size. Creswell and Creswell (2017) suggested employing the Cochran formula in cases where the population size is substantial or when the researcher lacks knowledge of the total number of individuals in the target population. Hairn. et al. (2019) stated that by applying the Cochran method for sample determination, researchers can determine the optimal sample size based on the desired level of confidence, precision, and proportion of features in the population. The formula is given as

$$n_0 = \frac{Z^2 pq}{e^2}$$

Where

n = sample size

e = level of precision (margin of error)

p = estimated proportion of the population under study which has the characteristic in question

q= 1-p

Therefore;

$$n_0 = \frac{(1.96)^2 (0.5)(0.5)}{(0.05)^2} = 385$$

The Cochran formula was further modified to obtain a smaller sample size using the following formula

$$n = \frac{n_0}{1 + \frac{n_0 - 1}{N}}$$

Here n_0 = Cochran's sample size

N = size of the population

N = adjusted sample size

$$385 / (1 + (385 / 2851)) = 278.$$

Table 3.2***Sample Size***

Tourist Destination	Target population	Sample Size
Kitengela Glass	53	5
Giraffe Center	298	30
Karen Blixen Museum	205	19
Ocean Soul	28	3
David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust	289	28
Nairobi Safari Walk	456	44
Love Birds Kenya	200	20
Railway Museum	289	29
National Museums of Kenya	485	47
Bomas of Kenya	30	3
Nairobi National Park	518	50
Total	2, 851	278

Source: Researcher (2022)

The study distributed the respondents proportionally to the destinations under study and then used random sampling to select respondents within each destination.

3.5 Data Collection Instruments

Data collecting instruments refer to the tools employed by researchers to collect information for a study (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The study utilized both quantitative and qualitative methodologies and depended on primary data gathered through the use of semi-structured questionnaires. According to Kothari (2017), a questionnaire is a collection of questions that are delivered in written form and expected to be answered by the respondent. A questionnaire was deemed to be an

optimal method for gathering primary data due to its simplicity in collecting data from numerous respondents across a wide geographical area. Bloomfield and Fisher (2019) advocate the utilization of questionnaires due to their ability to efficiently gather data from a large number of individuals in a short period of time and at a little expense. In addition, they enhance the autonomy and accuracy of responses collected from correspondents (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016).

The research assistants facilitated the administration of structured questionnaires to specifically international tourists in this study. The questionnaire was bifurcated into two sections; the first section attempted to gather demographic data pertaining to overseas tourists. The second part of the questionnaire consisted of four questions and gathered data pertaining to the precise research objectives, including details on foreign tourist satisfaction. The researchers employed a five-scaled Likert to assess the participants' attitudes towards the items presented in the survey. The implementation of the five-point Likert scale effectively mitigated the respondents' irritation, resulting in a notable enhancement in the response rate.

3.6. Pre- Testing of the research instruments

Creswell and Creswell (2017) recommend conducting a pre-test of the research instrument with a minimum of 10% of the sample. Piloting is conducted in order to evaluate and identify any flaws in the chosen research methodology and data gathering tools. In addition, it offers proxy data that might assist in the selection of a probability sample (Bloomfield & Fisher, 2019). Zikmund, et al. (2013) define a pilot study as a small-scale research conducted to gather data from participants who are similar to those involved in the complete study. The purpose of pre-testing the questionnaire is to assess its comprehensibility to the respondent and its efficacy in gathering the intended data (Zikmund et al, 2013). This study employed a sample of

28 participants from the central Kenya circuit to conduct a pilot test in order to assess the reliability and validity. This represents 10% of 278, which is a fraction of the overall sample size. The Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient was determined to be 0.8111, beyond the threshold of 0.7, indicating its reliability.

The Central Kenya circuit was chosen for piloting due to the fact that both populations fulfilled the inclusion criteria. A pilot study was done in a circuit in Central Kenya to enhance the study's applicability to the research. Another venue was chosen due to the researcher's inability to recognize the participants who were included in the preliminary testing phase for the final study.

3.6.1. Validity of the Research Instrument.

Validity refers to the extent to which a research instrument accurately measures what it is designed to measure and the reliability of the results obtained from it (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). The validity of the study instrument was assessed in terms of its construct, face, and content. Construct validity assesses the extent to which the questions in the research instrument accurately measure the intended constructs. Content validity ensures that the items in the research instrument adequately cover the relevant subject matter of the research area. Face validity evaluates whether the items in the instrument are presented in the appropriate sequence. Both the content construct and face validity were assured through a comprehensive literature research and the involvement of topic specialists from the Department of Tourism at Kenya Methodist University.

3.6.2 Reliability of the Research Instrument

Reliability pertains to the research instrument's capacity to consistently generate precise outcomes over a period of time and to accurately reflect the complete

population being studied (Bell, 2022). A tool is deemed dependable when the research results can be regularly replicated using a similar approach at several points in time. The Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient was computed from the collected data in order to evaluate its internal consistency. The calculated Alpha Coefficient was 0.8111. Kothari (2008) states that a research questionnaire is considered reliable and adequate for the study if its alpha coefficient is 0.7 or above.

Table 3.3

Reliability Analysis

Variables	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Tour guide knowledge level	5	0.8189
Tour guide attributes	5	0.8247
Tour guide communication skills	5	0.7721
International tourist satisfaction	5	0.8288
Total		0.8111

Source; Research Data, 2022

3.7 Data Collection Procedure

Data collection commenced subsequent to getting approval from the Kenya Methodist University Board of Graduate Studies and the National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation. After obtaining the necessary permits, the researcher conducted a pre-test of the study instruments in order to evaluate their reliability and validity. Afterwards, the researcher requested authorization to visit other tourist attractions frequented by overseas tourists in order to collect their feedback. Two research assistants were recruited for the study and received training to assist in data

collection from the respondents. The participants were provided with comprehensive information regarding the precise goals of the research, the tools used for data collection, and the ethical concerns that needed to be taken into account during the study. The researcher and research assistants acquired authorization from the management of the tourist locations to conduct the study. The study included structured questionnaires and a drop-and-pick technique at various locations. This approach was optimal as the tourists did not stay in one location for an extended period, facilitating the collection of questionnaires. The surveys were distributed to the tourists upon their departure from the destination or at the conclusion of their visit. The tourists were provided with information regarding the objective of the study, and their consent was acquired.

3.8 Data Analysis

Prior to performing data analysis, the researcher meticulously examined and purified the questionnaires, scrutinizing for any anomalous data points, and thereafter encoded the data into SPSS. At this stage, data classification, editing, and tabulation were also finalized. A Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test was conducted to assess the appropriateness and dependability of the gathered data. The researcher conducted a descriptive analysis of the data collected from the participants. This analysis involved using measures such as means, percentages, frequencies, and standard deviations to provide a detailed description of the variables studied. Also inferential statistics was determined by multiple regression and correlation analysis to ascertain the direction and magnitude of the relationship between tour guide competence and international satisfaction. The adjusted R-squared was employed to evaluate the extent of variance in visitor satisfaction, which serves as the dependent variable, by considering tour guide competencies as the predictor factors. The researcher conducted inferential

statistics tests at a significance level of 0.05, ensuring the ability to make dependable judgments. If the significance level was less than 0.05, the null hypothesis was rejected. Conversely, if the significance level was greater than or equal to 0.05, the null hypothesis was accepted.

The study adopted the following regression model:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \varepsilon$$

Where

Y = Tourist Satisfaction (Dependent Variable)

β_0 = constant

X_1 = Tour guide knowledge level

X_2 = Tour Guide Communication Skills

X_3 = Tour Guide Attributes

ε = Error term

$\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3$ = Regression Coefficients

3.9 Ethical Considerations

This study took into account all ethical considerations, including the voluntary participation of participants, obtaining informed consent, ensuring confidentiality and anonymity, and assessing only the relevant components of the study. Prior to initiating fieldwork, the researcher acquired a research permit from the University's Board of Graduate Studies, an authorization letter from NACOSTI, a clearance letter from the tourist destinations, and the Ministry of Education. This was employed to reassure the participants of the purpose of the study. The participants were approached and invited

to voluntarily participate, with the option to withdraw from the exercise at any time. In addition, the participants were assured that their name would remain confidential both before and after the study. They were also advised that the data provided would be utilized exclusively for research purposes and would be safeguarded.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This section presents the study findings and provides a discussion of the findings objective-wise. The results are derived from demographic data, descriptive statistics, and inferential statistics, including correlation, regression, and analysis of variance.

4.2. Response Rate

In this study, there were 278 respondents selected using the Cochran formula and given a structured questionnaire. However, only 259 questionnaires were completed and collected, resulting in a 93% of the response rate. As supported by Kothari (2008), 80% and above of the response is considered adequate for quantitative studies.

4.3 Demographic Data

The study sought information regarding the respondents' gender and age, as well as the number of times they had visited the country. The findings are presented in Tables 4.1 to 4.3.

4.3.1: Gender of the Respondent

This research study collected information on the gender of the respondents, and the results are summarized in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1:

Gender of the Respondent

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Male	139	53.7

Female	120	46.3
Total	259	100.0

Source: - Research Data (2022)

The data in Table 4.1 shows that during the study period, 139 (53.7%) of the visitors to the country were male, while 120 (46.3%) represented female. It clearly illustrates that the study included all tourists of both genders. It suggests that the Nairobi tourist circuit is appealing to and visited by both male and female tourists.

4.3.2. Age of Respondent.

The research study collected information on age of all the 259 respondents, and the results of this has been summarized below in the Table 4.2.

Table 4.2.

Age of the Respondents

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Below 20 years	10	3.9
	Between 21-30 years	60	23.2
	Between 31-40 years	74	28.6
	Between 41-50 years	90	34.7
	Above 51 years	25	9.7
	Total	259	100.0

Source: - Research Data (2022)

The data in Table 4.2 reveals that the majority of tourists, 90 (34.7%), were aged between 41 and 50. This was followed by 74 (28.6%) respondents aged 31 to 40. Additionally, 60 (23.2%) were between 21 and 30 years old, while 25 (9.7%) were over 51, and 10 (3.9%) were under 20.

Based on the research, it can be inferred that people aged 41-50 are generally energetic and at the peak of their middle age. Typically, they are seeking new experiences, particularly in foreign countries. Odiara (2015) confirmed that

individuals under 40 often face financial challenges, view tourism as expensive, and sometimes fail to plan leisure vacations in advance.

This is followed by those who are between 21-30 years. At this age, they are teenagers and prefer vocational tours and trips to another country to have a new venture. Those above 51 years were quite a few because most of them may want to spend more time with their families and may have limited financial resources because they may be putting much of the resources into developing projects. At the same time, those below 20 years were very few. This can be attributed to limited time because, in most cases, they might be in their learning institutions. Therefore, it can be concluded that the Nairobi circuit needs to do more promotional activities to encourage more tourists between 41-50 to visit the circuit.

4.3.3 Number of Visits to the Nairobi circuit tourist destinations

The research study sought to determine how frequently the respondents had visited the Nairobi circuit tourist destinations. The study results are summarized and presented in Table 4.4.

Table 4.3:

Number of Visits to the Country

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Once	169	65.3
	Twice	70	27.0
	Thrice	15	5.8
	Four times	5	1.9
	Total	259	100.0

Source: - Research Data (2022)

The data in Table 4.3 shows that most tourists (65.3%) visited Nairobi circuit tourist destinations once, while 27% visited twice, 5.8% visited three times, and 1.9% visited four times.

Based on the findings, the majority of tourists reported that they were visiting the circuit for the first time. This suggests that the circuit is attracting a high number of first-time visitors due to its positive image and reputation. Additionally, tourists may have been aware of the tour guide's capabilities, leading to their satisfaction. It could also be argued that most tourists visited the circuit for the first time because of the unique flora and fauna in the area.

Those visiting for the second time were the second highest group after first-timers. The satisfaction from the first visit prompted them to revisit the circuit. The competencies of the tour guide must have significantly contributed to their decision to visit again. However, a few had visited the circuit for the third and fourth times. The decline in the number of repeat visitors may be attributed to age; the older one gets, the less likely they are to seek adventure, and the more their finances may be committed to other activities.

4.4 Descriptive Statistics

The research sought to determine how tour guide competencies' influences international tourists satisfaction in the Nairobi tourist circuit. In specific, the study determined to assess influence of tour guides' knowledge levels, tour guides' attributes, and tour guides communication skills on tourists' satisfaction. The study adopted a Likert scale, which ranged from 5-1, in order to examine how strongly the respondents agreed with the given statements, where 5 indicated strongly agree, 4

indicated agree, 3 indicated not sure, while 2 disagree, and 1 indicated strongly disagree.

4.4.1 Tour Guides Knowledge Levels and Tourist Satisfaction

The research sought to examine the influence of the tour guides knowledge levels on the satisfaction of international tourists at the Nairobi tourist circuit, Kenya. The research study results are summarized in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5:

Tour Guides Knowledge Levels

Statement	N	Mean	Std. Dev
A tour guide has enough of knowledge regarding animals and plant species	259	4.31	0.90
Tour guide possess the ability to communicate in many languages	259	3.47	0.84
The tour guide is conversant with all the geographical areas visited	259	4.54	0.49
The tour guides displayed professional and technical skill in carrying out their duties.	259	4.46	0.49
The tour guide's knowledge level enhanced your satisfaction.	259	4.39	0.48
Valid N (listwise)	259		

Source: - Research Data (2022).

Findings presented in the above Table 4.5 established that tour guides had enough knowledge regarding animal and plant species. This was supported with a mean of

4.31 and a std dev of 0.9. Most respondents agreed on whether the tour guides could communicate in many languages, with a mean of 3.47 and an SD of 0.84. The tour guide was also conversant with all the geographical areas visited (Mean =4.54, SD=0.49). Additionally, the results revealed tour guides displayed professional and technical skills in carrying out their duties (Mean = 4.46, SD=0.49). Finally, a high number of the study respondents agreed strongly that tour guide knowledge level enhanced customer satisfaction (Mean=4.39, SD=0.48).

When asked what other technical skills needed by the tour guides in order to improve on the level of tourist satisfaction, high number of the respondents indicated that there was a need for the tour guides to possess skills that could build rapport.

These findings were supported by the findings of Kabii, et al. (2017), where their study showed tour guide's poor knowledge level of fauna and flora, low quality of customer service delivery, and lack of enough historical cultural heritage negatively affected the customers' satisfaction.

4.4.2. Tour Guides Attributes and Tourist Satisfaction.

This study determined how tour guide attributes influenced international tourists' satisfaction at the Nairobi tourist circuit. The analyzed data outcome is presented in the below Table 4.6.

Table 4.6:*Tour Guides Attributes*

Statement	N	Mean	Std. Dev
You were satisfied with the service quality rendered by the tour guide because of his charismatic personality.	259	4.31	0.61
The tour guide possessed time management knowledge, which contributed to punctuality and thus visited many sites.	259	3.92	0.73
The politeness and honesty of the tour guide contributed to my satisfaction.	259	4.45	0.49
My satisfaction was enhanced by the tour guide, who handled me with a lot of care which was beyond my expectation.	259	4.31	0.61
My visit satisfaction was enhanced by completing the task of the tour promptly and on time.	259	4.22	0.80
Valid N (listwise)	259		

Source: - Research Data, (2022).

The findings in Table 4.6 show that a significant number of respondents strongly agreed that they were satisfied with the service quality provided by the tour guide due to his charismatic personality (Mean = 4.31, SD = 0.61). The respondents affirmed

tour guide had good time management skills, which led to punctuality and the ability to visit many sites (Mean = 3.92, SD = 0.73). In addition, the respondents also strongly agreed that the politeness and honesty of the tour guide contributed to their satisfaction (Mean=4.45; SD=0.49). Further, the respondents also strongly agreed that their satisfaction was enhanced by the tour guide, who handled them with much care beyond their expectations (Mean=4.31; SD=0.61). Finally, the respondents strongly agreed that their visit satisfaction was enhanced by completing the tour task promptly and on time (Mean = 4.22; SD=0.80). Therefore, it can be concluded that tour guide attributes influenced the international tourist satisfaction.

The findings on other attributes a tour guide should possess to improve international tourist satisfaction showed that most respondents indicated a need for enthusiastic and decisive tour guides.

These findings concur with Nguya, et al. (2021) findings, which indicated that the tour guides' attributes positively influence the tourist's satisfaction. However, the findings of this study contradict those of Agyeman and Antwi-Bosiako (2022), who found that tour guide attributes hurt tourist satisfaction.

4.4.3 Tour Guides Communication Skills and Tourist Satisfaction

The study sought to examine how tour guide communication skills influenced international tourist's satisfaction in the Nairobi tourist circuit. Findings are presented in the Table 4.7.

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Table 4.7:*Guides Communication Skills*

Statement	N	Mean	Std. Dev
The attentiveness accorded to the tourist by the tour guide led to my visit satisfaction.	259	4.31	0.46
Most of the time, the tour guide's composure created a good feeling.	259	4.38	0.49
The tour guides systematic coordination of events and activities contributed to the high quality of service.	259	4.46	0.75
The tour guide has expressive skills that enhance a better understanding of activities.	259	4.31	0.72
The tour guide had a great sense of humor making to tour experience interesting	259	4.07	0.92
Valid N (listwise)	259		

Source: - Research Data (2022)

In the table above (Table 4.7), the research findings illustrates clearly that respondents had strongly agreed tour guide's attentiveness enhanced their satisfaction (Mean = 4.31; SD=0.46). Additionally, the respondents agreed that the tour guide's composure often created a good feeling (Mean = 4.38; SD=0.49).

In addition, the majority of the survey participants strongly agreed that the systematic coordination of events and activities by tour guides contributed to the high quality of service (Mean = 4.46; SD = 0.75). They also expressed that the tour guides' communication skills enhanced their understanding of the activities (Mean = 4.31; SD

= 0.72). The study also found that most respondents agreed strongly that sense of humor of tour guide made the tourist's experience enjoyable (Mean = 4.07, SD = 0.92).

Furthermore, the study aimed to identify additional communication skills that tour guides should possess to enhance international tourist satisfaction. Most participants indicated that tour guides should improve their interpretation skills.

These findings concur with those of Sinare (2019), who indicated that tour guides' communication skills positively influence the tourist's satisfaction. However, the study by Nudin, et al. (2021), indicated that tour guide politeness has an insignificant effect on customer satisfaction.

4.4.4 International Tourists Satisfaction at Nairobi Tourist Circuit, Kenya.

Table 4.8

Satisfaction of International Tourists

Statement	N	Mean	Std. Dev
Because of tour guide competency you will revisit the destination again	259	4.15	0.77
The tour guide competency is related to the quality service offered	259	4.15	0.53
I will refer relatives and friends to the same tour guide.	259	4.45	0.63
The tour guide contributed to my excellent experience.	259	4.31	0.61
The services of the tour guide superseded my expectation.	259	4.15	0.66
Valid N (listwise)	259		

Source: - Research Data (2022)

The research findings, as shown in Table 4.8, revealed that most of the survey participants strongly agreed that the competency of tour guides would influence them to revisit the destination (Mean = 4.15, SD = 0.77). Also the respondents agreed strongly that service quality reflected the tour guides' competency (Mean = 4.15; SD = 0.53). Additionally, the respondents strongly agreed that they would recommend the same tour guide to their relatives and friends (Mean = 4.45; SD = 0.63). Moreover, the study participants strongly agreed that the guides significantly contributed to their overall experience and satisfaction (Mean = 4.31; SD = 0.61) and that the tour guide's

services exceeded their expectations (Mean = 4.15; SD = 0.66). These findings align with Ninpradith, et al. (2018) research, which concluded that tour guide competencies positively affected tourist satisfaction. Similarly, the current study's results are consistent with the findings of Nguya, et al. (2021), who identified a strong correlation between tour guides' competencies and tourist satisfaction.

4.5. Inferential Statistics.

The study conducted a regression analysis and correlation in order to assess the direction and strength of study variables relationship.

4.5.1 Correlation Analysis.

The study carried correlation analysis in order to ascertain the relationship and strength between tour guides' competencies and international tourists' satisfaction.

Table 4.9:

Correlation Analysis

		Tour guide knowledge levels	Tour guide attributes	Tour guides' communica tion skills	Satisfactio n of internatio nal tourists
Tour guide knowledge levels	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	1 259			
Tour guide attributes	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	0.256** 0.000 259	1 259		
Tour guides' communicat ion skills	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	0.439** 0.000 259	0.628** 0.000 259	1 259	
Satisfaction of international tourists	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	0.345** 0.000 259	0.616** 0.000 259	0.764** 0.000 259	1 259

Source: - Research Data (2022)

The results above in Table 4.9 show that tour guides' knowledge level had a weak significant relationship with the international tourists' satisfaction at the Nairobi tourists circuit ($r=0.345$; $p<0.05$). The study results were supported by those of Shirmohammadi, et al. (2020), who asserted that tour guide knowledge level had a positive effect on tourist satisfaction. The study was conducted in Tehran, Iran, where quantitative research was used, while the current study was conducted in the Nairobi tourist circuit and employed a cross-sectional research design.

The tour guide attributes reveal a positive relationship with the international tourists' satisfaction at the Nairobi tourist circuit ($r=0.616$; $p<0.05$). The results differed from the study findings of Agyeman and Antwi-Bosiako (2022), which showed a negative relationship between the tour guide's attribute and satisfaction of international tourists at the Nairobi tourist circuit. The study was conducted in Kakum National Park, Ghana, and adopted a convenient sampling technique to determine the study sample size. The current study was conducted in Nairobi tourist circuit, and the Cochran formula was adopted to determine the sample size.

Tour guide communication skills indicate a strong and positive relationship with the international tourists' satisfaction at the Nairobi tourists circuit ($r=0.764$; $p<0.05$). This was contrary to the case of Nudin, et al. (2021), which indicated that tour guides' communication skills had an insignificant relationship with tourist satisfaction. The study adopted a quantitative approach and employed a purposive sampling technique, whereas this study used stratified sampling and purposive sampling techniques. and on the other hand, it also relied on cross-sectional research design.

4.5.2 Regression Model Summary

The regression model summary indicates the influence of tour guide knowledge level, attributes, and communication skills (independent variables) on the international tourists' satisfaction (dependent variable) using the coefficient of determination. (R^2).

Table 4.10:

Regression Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.784 ^a	0.615	0.610	0.26077

a. Predictors: (Constant), Tour Guide Knowledge level, Tour Guides Attribute, Tour Guides communication skills

Source: - Research Data, (2022).

The research outcome, as indicated in the table above (Table 4.10) reveal a strong relationship between tour guides' competencies and international tourists' satisfaction at the Nairobi tourist circuit, Kenya. This is associated with tour guide knowledge levels, tour guides' attributes, and tour guide communication skills, contributing to approximately 61.5% ($R^2 = 0.615$) of the variations in satisfaction of international tourists at the Nairobi tourists circuit, Kenya. On the other hand, the remaining 38.5% is contributed by factors not considered by this study. These findings have been supported by Nguya, et al. (2021), who indicated a strong and positive relationship between tour guides' competencies and tourist satisfaction.

4.5.3 Analysis of Variance

Table 4.11:

Analysis of Variance

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	27.682	3	9.227	135.697	0.000 ^b
	Residual	17.340	255	0.068		
	Total	45.022	258			

a: Dependent Variables: International Tourists Satisfaction

b: Predictor (Constant), Tour Guides Knowledge levels, Tour Guides Attribute, Tour Guides communication skills

Source: - Research Data, (2022).

The study outcome in the table above (Table 4.11) show there exists a significant relationship between predictors of tour guides knowledge level, attribute, and communication skills, which is within the satisfaction of international tourists at the Nairobi tourist circuit, Kenya ($F(3,255) = 135.697, P < 0.05$). Thus, it can be concluded that tour guides' competencies affect the satisfaction of international tourists at the Nairobi tourist circuit Kenya.

4.5.4 Regression Analysis

Table 4.12:-

Regression Analysis

Model		Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficient	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	0.698	0.207		3.371	0.001
	Tour Guide Knowledge level	0.018	0.045	0.017	0.400	0.689

Tour Guide Knowledge level	0.199	0.044	0.225	4.510	0.000
Tour Guide communication skills	0.610	0.053	0.615	11.447	0.000

a. Dependent Variable: Tour Guide Knowledge level, Tour Guide's Attribute, Tour Guide's communication skills

According to Regression Model in table 4.12 above;

$$0.698Y = 0.018X_1 + 0.199X_2 + 0.610X_3 + e$$

The results indicate that a unit increase in tour guide knowledge level had a 1.8% significant increase in international tourists' satisfaction ($B=0.018$, $p>0.05$). Tour guide attributes unit increase indicated a 19.9% significant increase in international tourists' satisfaction ($B=0.199$, $p<0.05$). And lastly, the tour guide communication skills unit increase leads to a 61.0% significant increase in satisfaction of international tourists ($B=0.610$, $p<0.05$).

From these findings, it is found that among all tour guide competencies predictors, tour guide communication skills are the most important variable that enhances the satisfaction of international tourists; tour guide's attributes follow this, and then lastly, tour guide knowledge levels. In conclusion, the communication skills of the tour guide and the attributes of the tour guides indicated significant and positive effects on the satisfaction of international tourists, while tour guide knowledge levels had an insignificant effect on the satisfaction of international tourists.

4.6 Testing of the Research Hypothesis

The following hypotheses were tested

The first hypothesis was that tour guide knowledge levels have no statistically significant influence on international tourists' satisfaction at the Nairobi tourist circuit, Kenya. The study established that tour guide knowledge levels had a statistically

insignificant influence on international tourists' satisfaction at the Nairobi tourist circuit, Kenya ($\beta = 0.018$, $p = 0.689 > 0.05$). In this case, the study did not reject null hypotheses.

The second hypothesis was that tour guides' attributes have no statistically significant influence on international tourists' satisfaction at the Nairobi tourist circuit. The research established there was a positively and significantly relationship existed ($\beta = 0.199$, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$) between tour guides' attributes and international tourists' satisfaction at the Nairobi tourist circuit. Therefore, it is in this case that this study rejected the null hypotheses

Finally, in the third hypothesis of this study tour guides communication skills have no significant influence on international tourists' satisfaction at the Nairobi tourist circuit, Kenya. The findings revealed that tour guides' communication skills had significantly positive influence ($\beta = 0.610$, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$) on international tourists' satisfaction at the Nairobi tourist circuit. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This section presents a summary of the study findings. It is through this summary that the conclusion and recommendations can be drawn. The conclusion and recommendations are important because they will help fill the research gaps identified by the study.

5.2 Summary of Findings

This section summarizes information from the analyzed data on all the variables. The main purpose objective this study sought to examine how tour guides competencies influenced satisfaction of international tourists visiting Nairobi tourist circuit. Specifically, the study sought to determine the influence of tour guides' knowledge levels, tour guides attributes, and communication skills of the tour guides on the satisfaction of international tourists at the Nairobi tourist circuit, Kenya. The findings will be of great importance to the tourist professionals and destination managers, further it may contribute significantly to body of knowledge more importantly in the tourism sector, and will help the Ministry of Tourism in coming up with new and amended policies.

5.2.1 Tour guide knowledge levels and international tourist satisfaction

The first variable sought to examine how tour guides' knowledge levels influenced international tourists satisfaction at Nairobi tourist circuit in Kenya. The study results showed that many respondents supported the idea that the guides had sufficient knowledge about animal and plant species. Most respondents strongly agreed that tour guides were familiar with the geographical areas visited. Additionally, most respondents agreed that tour guides possessed professional and technical skills that helped them perform their duties. Moreover, the study found that the majority of the respondents had a neutral opinion regarding the tour guide's ability to communicate in multiple languages. The correlation analysis found a significantly and positively relationship between tour guide knowledge levels and international tourist satisfaction ($r=0.345$; $p<0.05$). The study results were supported by those of Shirmohammadi, et al. (2020), who asserted that tour guide knowledge level had a positive effect on tourist satisfaction. However, the study revealed no statistically significant relationship between tour guide knowledge levels and international tourist satisfaction ($\beta=0.018$, $p=0.689>0.05$).

5.2.2 Tour guide attributes and international tourist satisfaction

The second objective sought to establish how tour guides' attributes influenced international tourists' satisfaction at the Nairobi tourist circuit. The study on attributes of the tour guide and their influence on international tourists' satisfaction showed that most respondents agreed that the guides provided high-quality services due to their charismatic personalities. The results also indicated that the politeness and honesty of the tour guides played a significant role in satisfying the tourists. Additionally, most respondents felt that their satisfaction was due to the tour guides' exceptional care and timely completion of tasks. However, some noted that the guides' time management

skills were only moderate, leading to an occasional lack of punctuality. The correlation analysis found there existed a positively and significantly relationship that was between tour guides attributes and international tourist satisfaction ($r=0.616$; $p<0.05$). The regression results indicated that tour guides' attributes had a significant influence on international tourist satisfaction ($\beta =0.199$, $p=0.000<0.05$). These findings are supported those of a study carried by Fajriyati, et al. (2022). The study established that tour guides attributes such as friendliness and honesty, positively influenced tourist satisfaction.

5.2.3 Tour guide communication skills and international tourist satisfaction

The third objective examined the influence of tour guide communication skills on international tourists' satisfaction at the Nairobi tourist circuit in Kenya. The variable was measured using different indicators, which were analyzed to generate the findings. From the analyzed data, it was established that most respondents agreed that tour guides' attentiveness, which they accorded to them, led to visit satisfaction. The respondents agreed that the tour guide's composure often created a good feeling, leading to their satisfaction. The respondents further agreed that the guide's systematic coordination of events and activities contributed to the high quality of service, enhancing satisfaction. Through the results it was affirmed that most respondents were on agreement that the tour guide's expressive skills contributed to their better understanding. Lastly, some respondents agreed that the tour guide had a great sense of humor, which made the tourist venture enjoyable. The correlation analysis found a positive significant relationship existing between tour guide attribute and satisfaction of international tourist ($r=0.764$; $p<0.05$). The regression results indicated that tour guides' attributes had a significant influence on international tourist satisfaction ($\beta =0.610$, $p=0.000<0.05$). The findings concur to those of Abidakun and Tunde-Ajayi

(2022) which showed that excellent communication skills significantly contributed to tourists' satisfaction.

5.3 Conclusion

This section makes a conclusion on each objective, namely, the tour guide's knowledge levels, attributes, and communication skills.

5.3.1 Tour guide knowledge levels and international tourist satisfaction

The study employed a correlation and regression model to test if tour guide knowledge levels significantly predicted international tourist satisfaction in the Nairobi tourist circuit. The findings revealed a moderate and positive effect on international tourist satisfaction in the Nairobi tourist circuit in Kenya. However, from the regression analysis, this relationship was statistically insignificant. From the study results, the researcher concludes clearly that tour guide knowledge levels affect international tourist satisfaction and, hence, an essential element of tour guide competency in enhancing tourist satisfaction.

5.3.2 Tour guide attributes and international tourist satisfaction

The study used a regression model to determine if tour guide attributes significantly predicted international tourist satisfaction. The results showed that predictions on tour guide attributes on international tourist satisfaction in the Nairobi tourist circuit were positively and statistically significant. According to these results, the study concludes that tour guide attributes are the second most important factor that affects international tourist satisfaction in the Nairobi tourist circuit. Thus, this is a vital element in international tourist satisfaction.

5.3.3 Tour guide communication skills and international tourist satisfaction

The study adopted a regression model to test the effect of tour guide communication skills on international tourist satisfaction in the Nairobi tourist circuit in Kenya. It was found and concluded that the prediction of the effect of tour guide communication skills on international tourist satisfaction in the Nairobi tourist circuit had strongly positive and statistical significance. The results indicate that tour guide communication skills are the highest factor influencing international tourist satisfaction. Therefore, the study concludes that tour companies need to enhance their tour guides' communication skills to improve international tourist satisfaction.

5.4 Recommendation

The study makes recommendations on the bases of the research findings. The recommendations will be from the study objectives results.

5.4.1 Recommendations of research findings on tour guide knowledge level

A first recommendation is based on the first objective where the study recommends that the tour firms take their tour guides for training to equip them with the ability to communicate in many languages, enabling them to effectively handle and communicate with international tourists. The study also recommends that tour guides have enough knowledge of geographical tour sites and different species of animals and plants found in tourists' sites. This will help the tour guides to give accurate descriptions and explanations of various species of animals and plants. Finally, the study recommends that tour firms need to enhance the tour guides knowledge levels as it plays a critical role in tourists' satisfaction.

5.4.2 Recommendations of research findings on tour guide attributes

The second recommendation is deduced from second objective. This is recommended that tour guides must have a charismatic personality because it fosters rendering quality services to the tourists, encouraging them to plan for a revisit. Also, the research study recommended that the guides be trained in time management because it will help improve punctuality and time-saving. This will help the tour guide to complete planned tasks on time. This will allow the tourist to visit more sites and thus increase their visit satisfaction. According to the findings, this is the second highest factor contributing to international tourist satisfaction. Therefore, the study recommends that tour firms invest more in improving the tour guide attributes.

5.4.3 Recommendations of research findings on tour guide communication skills

The last recommendation is on tour guide communication skills on international tourist satisfaction. According to the study, this is the most influencing factor that enhances international tourist satisfaction. Therefore, this research study recommends that the guides be equipped with the skills of composure, the ability to coordinate activities and tasks systematically, the ability to express, and a sense of humor. Further, the study recommends that it is essential for the guides to be trained on how to be or become good listeners and more attentive to the tourists. This will lead to high tourist satisfaction and hence contribute to having a revisit and referrals to the country.

5.5 Recommendations for Further Study

This study calls for more studies to be carried. Therefore, it recommends there is need for conducting further studies in different tourist sites using other research techniques. By doing so, scholars can compare the new findings with this study's findings. This

will also allow the researcher to make a conclusive judgment on whether the variables generate similar results.

The study further suggests that another research study be conducted in the same geographical scope and use different variables and methodologies. This will assist in determining whether the other variables will yield similar findings.

The study recommends that policymakers use the study findings to amend the regulations and policies or formulate new ones that will help improve the tourism sector. The rules and policies will benefit the tour guides by having good and excellent tour guide competencies and thus improve tourist satisfaction.

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APPENDIX I INTRODUCTION LETTER

Francisca M. Gesimba

P.O Box: 655 – 00200

Email Address: frangeloc@gmail.com

Tel No.: +254 733 993 012

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: - DATA COLLECTION LETTER

I am a postgraduate student (Master of Science in tour and travel management) at Kenya Methodist University (KeMU). I am in my final year, and as per the program, I am required to conduct academic research in my area of specialization. My research topic is "to investigate the influence of tour guides' competencies on international tourists'tourist's satisfaction at the Nairobi tourist circuit, Kenya."

Due to the nature of the information required, the researcher has identified you as a suitable respondent who can provide relevant information suitable for this study. Kindly fill out the questionnaire with pertinent details. All the information provided will be treated as private and confidential. The data will be adopted for academic purposes only. Your input will be highly appreciated.

Thank you very much.

Yours faithful,

Francisca M. Gesimba

APPENDIX II RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

INTRODUCTION

You have been selected to be one of the main respondent and you have been requested to provide honest and accurate answers to the question posted by placing a (✓) or (X) on one of the options provided. Kindly don't write your name anywhere on the questionnaire. This study will focus on the influence of tour guides' competencies on international tourists' satisfaction in the Nairobi tourist circuit, Kenya.

Part 1: Guests Demographic Data

1. From the two options tick (✓) or cross (X) your gender

Male

Female

2. Tick (✓) or cross (X) your age bracket

Below 20 years

Between 21-30 years

Between 31-40 years

Between 41-50 years

Above 51 years

3. How many times have you visited the Nairobi circuit tourist destinations?

Once

Twice

Thrice

four times

Part 2: Tour Guide Knowledge Level

This part seeks to assess the influence of tour guide knowledge level on international tourists' satisfaction. In your honest opinion, tick (✓) or cross (X) on the correct answer that fits your personal opinion. Where Strongly Agree (SA) is represented by 5, Agree (A)= 4, Neutral (N)=3, Disagree (D)=2, and Strongly Disagree (SD)=1.

Statement	(SA)	(A)	(N)	(D)	(SD)
	5	4	3	2	1

4. The tour guide has adequate knowledge and information regarding animal and plant species
5. The tour guide has the ability and capability to communicate in many foreign languages
6. The tour guide is conversant with all the geographical areas visited
7. The tour guides displayed professional and technical skill in carrying out their duties.
8. The tour guide's knowledge level enhanced your satisfaction.

Part 3: Tour Guide Attributes

This part seeks to investigate the influence of tour guide attributes on international tourists' satisfaction. In your honest opinion, tick (✓) or cross (X) on the correct answer that fits your personal opinion. Where Strongly Agree (SA) is represented by 5, Agree (A)= 4, Neutral (N)=3, Disagree (D)=2, and Strongly Disagree (SD)=1.

Statement	(SA)	(A)	(N)	(D)	(SD)
-----------	------	-----	-----	-----	------

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

9. You were satisfied with the service quality rendered by the tour guide because of his charismatic personality.
10. The tour guide possessed time management knowledge, which contributed to punctuality and thus visited many sites.
11. The politeness and honesty of the tour guide contributed to my satisfaction.
12. My satisfaction was enhanced by the tour guide, who handled me with a lot of care which was beyond my expectation.
13. My visit satisfaction was enhanced by completing the task of the tour promptly and on time.

Part 4: Tour Guide Communication Skills

This part seeks to investigate the influence of tour guide communication skills on international tourist's satisfaction. In your honest opinion, tick (√) or cross (X) on the correct answer that fits your personal opinion. Where Strongly Agree (SA) is represented by 5, Agree (A)= 4, Neutral (N)=3, Disagree (D)=2, and Strongly Disagree (SD)=1.

Statement	(SA)	(A)	(N)	(D)	(SD)
-----------	------	------	------	-----	------

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

14. The attentiveness accorded to the tourist by the tour guide led to my visit satisfaction.
15. Most of the time, the tour guide's composure created a good feeling.
16. The tour guides systematic coordination of events and activities contributed to the high quality of service.
17. The tour guide has expressive skills that enhance a better understanding of activities.
18. The tour guide had a great sense of humor making to tour experience interesting

Part 5: The Satisfaction of International Tourists

In your honest opinion, tick (√) or cross (X) on the correct answer that fits your personal views on your satisfaction from the services received from the tour guide. Where Strongly Agree (SA) is represented by 5, Agree (A)= 4, Neutral (N)=3, Disagree (D)=2, and Strongly Disagree (SD)=1.

Statement	(SA)	(A)	(N)	(D)	(SD)
-----------	------	------	------	-----	------

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

19. Because of tour guide competency you will revisit the destination again
20. The tour guide competency is related to the quality service offered

21. I will refer relatives and friends to the same tour guide.
22. The tour guide contributed to my excellent experience.
23. The services of the tour guide superseded my expectation.

Thank you for your time

APPENDIX III. AUTHORIZATION LETTER FROM THE UNIVERSITY



APPENDIX IV. LETTER FROM NACOSTI

 REPUBLIC OF KENYA	 NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION
Ref No: 177950	Date of Issue: 31/August/2022
RESEARCH LICENSE	
	
This is to Certify that Ms.. Francisca Machoka Gesimba of Kenya Methodist University, has been licensed to conduct research in Nairobi on the topic: INFLUENCE OF TOUR GUIDES' COMPETENCIES ON THE SATISFACTION OF INTERNATIONAL TOURISTS AT NAIROBI TOURIST CIRCUIT, KENYA for the period ending : 31/August/2023.	
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