Determinants of International Tourists' Destination Loyalty: Empirical Evidence from Serengeti National Park in Tanzania

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Abstract
This study was conducted to assess the determinants of tourists' loyalty to Serengeti National Park (SENAPA) in Tanzania. The study involved 1,148 respondents who were international tourists visiting the park from March to December 2018. Data were collected using a structured survey questionnaire. Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) technique was used in the analysis. Findings revealed that service quality was a positive predictor of tourists' loyalty. Accordingly, destination image and perceived value had positive effects on tourists destination loyalty. Also, satisfaction was found to have positive effect on destination loyalty. Furthermore, the findings revealed that satisfaction had a partial mediation effect on the relationship between service quality, destination image and perceived value on the one hand and destination loyalty on the other. It was concluded that provision of high-quality services increased tourists' loyalty to the park. Similarly, tourists' satisfaction and realization of value during their trips increased loyalty. The study calls for SENAPA management to strive to maintain high quality of services provided to tourists by introducing service provision charter that would guide the operations of different stakeholders inside the park. Also, the park's management should make efforts that would enhance perceived value among the tourists by reviewing costs of items charged on tourists like park entry fees in view of making them competitive compared to similar parks found in Africa.

Keywords: Determinants, tourists, loyalty, Serengeti, Tanzania

Introduction
International tourism is one of the major sources of economic growth in the world. According to the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), tourism accounted for 10.3% of the global Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and 10.4% of total employment in 2019 (WTTC, 2020). In Africa, the sector contributes to 24.3 million African jobs, or 6.7% of total employment while in Tanzania it accounts for 11.7% of GDP (WTTC, 2020). Most of the international tourists to Tanzania visit Serengeti National Park (SENAPA). Evidence from the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism (MNRT) show that SENAPA received 36.3% of all international tourists who visited Tanzania in 2019 compared to 24.9% and 19.2% who went to Tarangire and Manyara parks respectively (MNRT, 2019). SENAPA is, therefore, one of the key attractions for international tourists compared to other destinations in Tanzania. However,

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evidences show that performance of SENAPA, as a tourists' destination, is poor compared to other parks with a similar ecosystem in the East African region. For instance, the park received fewer visitors per square kilometre compared to Maasai Mara which is in Kenya (TANAPA, 2017; KBS, 2017). Another evidence shows that while Tanzania received 1,527,230 international tourists in 2019 (MNRT, 2019), Kenya received 2,025,206 tourists in the same year (GOK, 2019). Given these evidence, it is plausible to investigate the likelihood of tourists to continue visiting SENAPA in the near future by focusing on their loyalty to the park.

In general terms, loyalty to a product or service refers to customers' behavior for repeated purchases or willingness to recommend the same to friends or family members (Iordanova, 2016). In the tourism context, loyalty may be expressed in terms of revisit intention, willingness to recommend a friend or relative, or having positive word-of-mouth (Almeida-Santana & Moreno-Gil, 2018). Maintaining tourists' destination loyalty is crucial given that it is less costly to retain an existing customer than to attract new ones (Chiu, Zeng & Cheng, 2016). Thus, performance of a tourism sector depends primarily on the volume of international arrivals and associated receipts. Impliedly, performance of this sector largely depends on tourists' loyalty to a specific destination. It is important, therefore, to understand the key determinants of tourists' loyalty so as to introduce measures that can make certain destinations perform better than their competitors.

Literature shows that tourists' loyalty to a destination may be affected by several factors including, but not limited to, service quality (Jeong, Kim & Yu, 2019; Priporas, Stylos, Vedanthachari & Santiwatana, 2017), destination image (Moon & Han, 2018; Türkmen, Atay, & Türkmen, 2018) perceived value (Kim, Kim & Park, 2017; Kim & Uysal, 2015) and satisfaction (Mainolfi & Marino, 2020; De Nisco, Mainolfi, Marino & Napolitano, 2017). Destination image, which is defined as the sum of beliefs, ideas and impressions that a visitor has towards a certain destination or place (Assaker & Hallak, 2013), is crucial for marketing of tourist destination. Tourists who hold a good image of a specific destination are likely to revisit the same or recommend it to friends or relatives. In other words, tourists' destination loyalty may be influenced by destination image. The type of services experienced by tourists may play a decisive role in their future behavioral intentions. Specifically, tourists who enjoy a good quality of services tend to leave a destination with feelings of satisfaction and are likely to remain loyal to it. Similarly, perceived value, which is an outcome cost-benefit analysis regarding value worth for visiting a specific destination (Shen, 2016) is a determinant that may influence tourists' loyalty to the destination (Kim & Uysal, 2015; Kim et al., 2015; Um et al., 2006). Tourists who leave a destination with feelings that what they spent during the trip was less compared to the benefits enjoyed are likely to recommend friends and relatives to visit the same.

Studies that have been conducted in Tanzania did not adequately examine how service quality, destination image, perceived value and satisfaction affected tourists' loyalty to any destination in the country. For example, Mlozi and Pesämaa (2013) focused on tourists' destination choices but not on whether or not tourists were satisfied. Other studies focused on determinants of tourists' length of stay (Kazuzuru, 2014), tourist spending (Kazuzuru, 2018) and dimensions for positioning tourists' destinations (Mallya, 2013). Another study by Matolo and Salia (2017) focused on SENAPA but its objective was to compare tourists' expectations with actual experiences.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the antecedents of tourists' destination loyalty. More specifically, the study examined the effects of service quality, destination image, perceived value and satisfaction on destination loyalty. Furthermore, the study endeavored to assess the mediation effect of satisfaction on the relationship between service quality, destination image and perceived value on the one hand and destination loyalty on the other.

Literature review
Theoretical framework
This paper adopted a Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). The theory expounds that the intention to perform certain behavior is the proximal cause of such behavior (Shim et al., 2001). According to Ajzen (1985), the TPB is built on assumption that people are likely to perform a particular type of behavior if they believe that such behavior will lead to a particular and valuable outcome; if their important referents will value and approve the behavior; and if they have the necessary abilities, resources, and opportunities to carry out such behavior. In the context of tourism, and thus of this study, planned behavior is concerned with the propensity of tourists who have visited SENAPA to demonstrate behavior which will lead to loyalty in terms of planning revisit trips, recommending the park to friends and relatives as well as saying positive things about it. The above three assumptions of TPB are real in the context of this study because a tourist will remain loyal to SENAPA if a previous trip to the park lead to valuable outcomes, if the people (friends and relatives) approve the park as a unique destination based on positive things said about it, or if they have enough resources and opportunity to make a revisit trip.

Literature shows that this theory was commonly used to predict behavioral intention (loyalty) in the tourism sector (Kaplan, Abbasi, Kumaravelu & Dara-Singh, 2021; Jeong et al., 2019; Manca, Nielsen & Prato, 2015; Nunkoo & Ramksissoon, 2010). For example, Kaplan et al. (2015) used the theory to explore behavioral aspects behind travelers' intention to use urban-bike sharing in Denmark. Similarly, Jeong et al. (2019) borrowed the theory to examine the influence of destination image on tourists' satisfaction and on destination loyalty in South Korea. Also, Nunkoo and Ramkissoon (2010) used it to predict tourists' intention to repetitively consume genetically modified foods in Mauritius.

Literature and hypotheses development
Loyalty to a brand or service may be defined to include three aspects namely repurchase intention, willingness to recommend the product or services to others, and having positive word-of-mouth towards it (Cossío-Silva, Revilla-Camacho & Vega-Vázquez, 2018; Almeida-Santana & Moreno-Gil, 2018; Yoon, Polpanumas & Park, 2017). In the tourism sector, and thus in the context of this study, destination loyalty is defined to involves three aspects which are individual tourist's intention to revisit the same destination in the future; willingness of an individual tourist to recommend destination to a friend or family member; and holding favorable attitude towards a destination which is referred to as a positive word-of-mouth.

Service quality is defined as discrepancy between customer's expectation and perception about product or service (Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry, 1985). In the tourism context, service quality is the extent to which visitors' perceived experience exceeded their expectations. Empirical show that service quality is a predictor of tourists' loyalty (Jeong et al., 2019; Priporas et al., 2017; Kim et al. 2015). For instance, a study conducted in South Korea found that quality of services experienced by tourists influenced their satisfaction and eventually their loyalty in terms of future intention for revisit trips (Jeong et al., 2019). Another study conducted in South Korea revealed that overall quality of services influenced destination revisit intentions among elderly tourists (Kim et al., 2015). Similarly, a study conducted in Thailand involving international tourists who visited Phuket Island revealed that there was positive relationship between service quality and loyalty (Priporas et al., 2017).

It is noted, however, that service quality does not necessarily lead to customer loyalty. For example, evidence from a study conducted by Sangpikul (2018) in Bangkok revealed that service quality had positive effect on satisfaction but did not have significant effect on their

loyalty. Similarly, a study conducted in Bangladesh revealed that perceived quality of services did not influence loyalty of tourists to Cox's Bazar Beach (Hossain, Quaddus & Shanka, 2015). Based on those evidence the following null hypothesis was established:

H1: Service quality does not influence tourists' destination loyalty

Destination image is defined as sum of beliefs, ideas and impressions that a visitor has towards a certain destination or place (Assaker & Hallak, 2013). Literature shows that destination image has a positive effect on tourists' loyalty to specific destinations (Atay et al., 2020; Moon & Han, 2018; Türkmen et al., 2018). Evidence from a study conducted in Turkey revealed that personal destination image had positive effect on tourists' loyalty in one of the famous cultural heritage center called Pamukkale – Hierapolis (Atay et al., 2020). Particularly, tourists to that destination demonstrated that they were willing to make revisit trips in the future. Similar findings were also obtained by Türkmen et al. (2018) showing that there was positive relationship between destination image and loyalty. It is of interest to note that tourists' do create destination image based on their experiences. This view is supported by Moon and Han (2018) as well as Loureiro (2014) when they observe that tourists who are contented with overall experience in terms of having feelings, enjoyment and a sense of escapism are likely to have a positive attitude toward a destination and intend to revisit the destination. Several other studies revealed that destination image influenced tourits' revisit intention (Qu et al., 2011; Seabra, Abrantes & Lages, 2007) and positive word-of-mouth (Zhang, Fu, Cai & Lu, 2014; Bajs, 2013; Kim, Holland & Han, 2013). Given the above evidence, this study puts forth the following null hypothesis:

H2: Destination image does not influence tourists' destination loyalty

In the context of tourism, perceived value is an outcome of visitor's evaluation of costs and benefits enjoyed during a trip (Shen, 2016). Studies show that perceived value is a predictor of tourists' loyalty (Kim & Uysal, 2015; Chiu et al., 2014; Kim et al., 2013; Um et al., 2006). It is observed that perceived value has significant influence of tourists' revisit intention (Um et al., 2006). Similarly, some evidences show that perceived value influences loyalty through revisit intention and positive word-of-mouth (Kim & Uysal, 2015; Chen & Chen, 2010). Based on those evidence, this study hypotheses that:

H3: Perceived value does not influence tourists' destination loyalty

Satisfaction is yet another factor to consider while examining the determinant of tourists' loyalty to a destination. According to Bang and Hai (2019), tourists are said to be satisfied when post-travel experience exceeds pre-travel expectations. Satisfaction constitutes pleasant feelings resulting from enjoyment experienced during the travel compared to prior-expectations (Le & Dong, 2017; Akhoondnejad, 2016). Evidence show that there is relationship between tourists' satisfaction and destination loyalty (Mainolfi & Marino, 2020; De Nisco et al., 2017; Wu, 2016). For example, Wu (2016) showed that satisfaction influenced tourists' choice of destination, level of consumption of services and products as well as revisit intention in Taiwan Tourism Welcome Centre. Mainolfi and Marino (2020) examined variables that influenced tourists' behavioural intention in the event *"Luci d'Artista"* (Artist's lights), which is a special event that takes place at Christmas time in the city of Salerno in the Southern Italy. This study revealed that satisfaction was a direct antecedent of loyalty in terms of revisit intention. De Nisco et al. (2017) conducted a study in Italy and found that satisfaction among

international tourists had significant effect on their loyalty to specific destination in terms of revisit intention and positive word-of mouth. Yet, another evidence suggests that tourists who are satisfied with experiences of a destination in terms of entertainment and attraction are likely to remain loyal to the same (Ramseook-Munhurrun, Seebaluck & Naidoo, 2015). Given the above empirical evidence, this study puts forth the following null hypothesis:

H4: Tourists' satisfaction does not influence tourists' destination loyalty

Further, literature shows that satisfaction mediates the relationship between destination image, perceived value and service quality on the one hand and loyalty on the other hand. For example, a number of studies conducted in the tourism industry revealed that satisfaction mediated the relationship between destination image and loyalty (Atay et al., 2020; Mahadzirah et al., 2019). Another study conducted in Turkey tourist industry focusing on Pamukkale-Hierapolis site revealed that tourists' satisfaction partially mediated the relationship between destination image and loyalty to that specific site (Atay et al., 2020). Similarly, Mahadzirah et.al. (2019) found that destination image had both direct and indirect effects on loyalty and further noted that satisfaction was a partial mediator of relationship between destination image and loyalty. One observation that can be drawn from the above literature is that favourable destination image results into higher level of tourist satisfaction which in turn leads to destination loyalty.

More evidence from different service industries show that satisfaction mediates the relationship between service quality and loyalty to a specific destination (Subrahmanyam, 2017; Kim et al., 2013; Chen & Chen, 2010). In the context of tourism, services of high quality are expected to lead to tourists' satisfaction (Wu & Cheng, 2017; Su et al., 2016; Kim et al., 2013). It is worth attention that tourists who experience services of good quality are likely to be satisfied and the satisfied tourists are likely to remain loyal to the destination. Furthermore, evidence from several studies (Lai, Griffin, & Babin, 2009; Yang & Peterson, 2004; Cronin, Brady & Hult, 2000) indicated that customer satisfaction mediated the relationship between perceived value and loyalty. Literally, this means that tourists' who are satisfied because benefits of making a trip are more than the costs incurred are likely to remain loyal to the same destination. Given the above evidence on the mediation role of satisfaction, this study puts forth the following three null hypotheses:

H_5: Satisfaction does not mediate relationship between service quality and destination loyalty
H_6: Satisfaction does not mediate relationship between destination image and destination loyalty
H_7: Satisfaction does not mediate relationship between perceived value and destination loyalty

In summary, therefore, the above literature revealed that destination loyalty is influenced by service quality, destination image, perceived and satisfaction. In these relationships, destination loyalty (DL) behaves as a dependent (endogenous) variable while service quality (SQ), destination image (DI), perceived value (PV) and satisfaction (SAT) are predictor (exogenous) variables. Those relationships are shown by full lines in Fig 1. Literature further showed that satisfaction mediates the relationships between service quality and destination loyalty, between destination image and loyalty and between perceived value and loyalty. Those relationships are given by dotted lines in Fig.1. The seven hypotheses presented above are show as H_1 to H_7.
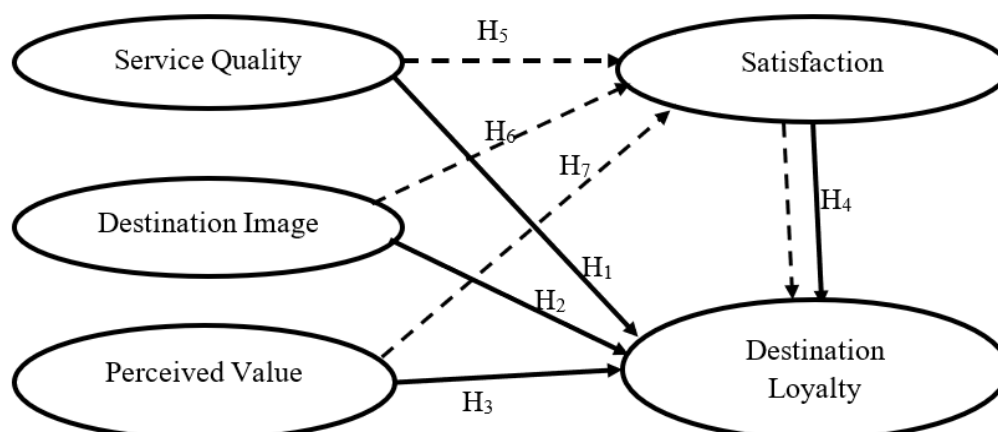
Figure 1: Relationships among key variables

Methodology

This study adopted a cross-sectional research design. The target population were international tourists who visited Serengeti National Park between March and September 2018; a period which was high season for tourism activities. The study adopted a non-probability convenience sampling technique; the process which involved the selection of tourists who were willing to participate in the study at the part exit points. Given that this study intended to use Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) as the main analytical technique, there was a need to use a large sample size (Awang, 2015). Although there was no academic consensus about what constitutes a large sample size, researchers suggest the use of observations to parameter (n:q) ratio (Kline, 2015; Schreiber, Nora, Stage, Barlow & King, 2006). This study adopted n:q ratio of 19:1 and given that the study involved a total of 58 parameters, the minimum sample size would be 1,102. However, to the advantage of the study, the researcher managed to obtain 1,148 respondents.

Data collection

This study relied on primary data collected by using a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was distributed to tourists who were ready to fill them. The study involved five key constructs namely service quality, destination image, perceived value, satisfaction and destination loyalty. Data on the service quality were collected by using the standard SERVQUAL questionnaire with a total of 22 items as suggested by Parasuraman (1998). Those items were grouped into five dimensions including tangibility (four items), reliability (five items), responsiveness (four items), assurance (four items), and empathy (five items). Data on destination image were collected using a total of 24 items that were carefully selected from previous similar studies (Dedeoğlu, 2019; Wu, 2016; Tosun, Dedeoğlu & Fyall., 2015). The items were grouped into six constructs including natural attraction, cultural attractions, accessibility, facilities or amenities, price and value, and social settings. Each of those six constructs involved four items. Data on perceived value was collected by using six items grouped under two dimensions which were financial value (three items) and overall value (three items). This approach to measuring perceived value was adopted from some similar previous studies (Chaulagain, Wiitala & Fu, 2019; Kim et al., 2013).

Data on the remaining two variables namely satisfaction and destination loyalty were collected as follows. Tourists' satisfaction was measured by three statements. Those statements were concerned with overall satisfaction with SENAPA, satisfaction with SENAPA on comparison to prior expectations and satisfaction with SENAPA considering time and efforts

invested. Information about tourists' loyalty was collected using three statements which focused on the three aspects of loyalty that are revisit intention, willingness to recommend the park to friends and relatives, and positive word-of-mouth. During data collection, respondents were asked to rate their opinions using a seven-point Likert scale where: 1 = Very strongly disagree and 7 = Very strongly agree. Use of seven-point scale was intended to provide respondents with wider choice and thus be more realistic in assessing their levels of satisfaction (Gallarza & Saura, 2006).

Data analysis

Data analysis involved two stages. The first stage involved conduction an Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) so as to identify constructs with high factor loading to be included in the further analysis. Based on the suggested factor loading threshold of 0.60 or above (Hair, Anderson, Tatham & Black, 2010), items used to measure service quality and destination image were reduced from 22 to 16 and from 24 to 16 respectively. All six items used to assess perceived value and the three items used to tourists' satisfaction were maintained. Similarly, the three items used to measure tourists' loyalty were retained. In sum, therefore, the original 58 items were reduced to 44 items which were included in the further analysis.

In the second stage, measurement (hypothetical) model was developed. The process involved performing Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). Relevance of the measurement model was assessed by calculating composite reliability, convergent and discriminant validity. Lastly, Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) technique was used to construct an empirical model based on data collected from the field. During this process, the researcher used Maximum Likelihood (ML) estimation algorithm and Promax rotation method were used (Gorsuch, 1983). Goodness of model fit was assessed by a number of indices including chi-square with p-value (χ^2), root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), goodness of fit index (GFI), average goodness of fit index (AGFI), comparative fit index (CFI) and normed chi-square (χ^2/df).

Findings and discussion

Respondents' opinion about constructs used in the study

Respondents were asked to indicate extent to which they agreed with 58 statements used to collect information about the five key variables used in this study namely, service quality, destination image, perceived value, satisfaction and destination loyalty. Given that respondents' opinions were expressed in a seven-point Likert scale, mean scores less than 4 implied that respondents disagreed while those above 4 indicated that they agreed with a given statement. Accordingly, mean scores around 4 meant that they held neutral opinion about given statement.

Table 1: Summated mean scores of measured constructs

Dimension/construct	Summated mean	SD
Service Quality		
Tangibility	5.34	1.397
Reliability	5.56	1.611
Responsiveness	4.52	2.203
Assurance	5.00	2.105
Empathy	4.29	2.299
Destination Image		

Natural Attractions	5.67	1.848
Cultural Attractions	5.37	1.793
Accessibility	5.50	1.697
Amenities	5.40	1.662
Price & Value	5.49	1.617
Social Setting	5.84	1.425
Perceived value	5.93	1.338
Satisfaction	5.56	1.689
Destination Loyalty	5.72	1.416

It was observed that summated mean scores for four out of five dimensions that were used to measure service quality were above 4 indicating that respondents agreed with given statements about tangibility, reliability, responsiveness and assurance. Mean score for empathy was around 4 indicating that respondents held neutral opinions about statements under this dimension. It was further noted that scores for all dimensions used to measure destination image were above 5 indicating that respondents agreed with statements used to measure them. Similarly, scores for the rest of the three constructs including perceived value, satisfaction and destination loyalty were around six meaning that respondents strongly agreed with statements that were used to measure them.

Determinants of tourists' destination loyalty

In this study, destination loyalty was determined by four predictor variables including service quality, destination image, perceived value and satisfaction. As a matter of procedural requirement, the process of determining the effects of those four variables on destination loyalty involved two stages which were; (a) validation of measurement model, and (b) construction of structural model. The measurement (hypothetical) model was evaluated by computing composite reliability, convergent and discriminant validity. Internal consistency of variables was ascertained by Cronbach's alpha values which were above threshold of 0.7 (Brunner & Süß, 2005). Values for composite reliability were above 0.6 indicating that the construct were reliable. AVE values were higher than 0.50 thus indicating that there was convergent validity (Hair et al., 2017). Detailed results on properties of measurement model are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Properties of measurement model

Construct/Dimension	Cronbach's α	CR	AVE
Destination image			
Social Setting	0.910	0.942	0.746
Cultural Attractions	0.913	0.955	0.763
Natural Attractions	0.885	0.912	0.777
Amenities	0.837	0.878	0.707
Accessibility	0.857	0.872	0.773
Service quality			
Empathy	0.917	0.949	0.744
Tangibility	0.895	0.928	0.696
Reliability	0.873	0.890	0.730
Assurance	0.850	0.895	0.741
Responsiveness	0.838	0.851	0.741

Perceived value	0.810	0.857	0.607
Satisfaction	0.887	0.795	0.666
Destination loyalty	0.766	0.872	0.640

Based on the above properties, an acceptable [x^2 = 4742.013; DF= 983, x^2/df=4.742, GFI = 0.919; AGFI = 0.907; CFI = 0.926; RMSEA = 0.061]. All those fit indices were within the acceptable margins. For example, RMSEA value below 0.08 indicated good fit (Garson, 2009). It is also noted that GFI, AGFI, and CFI value of 0.9 and above show good fit of a model (Schreiber et al., 2006). Also, x^2/df value of 4.742 was within the threshold which according to the literature is < 5.0 (Kline, 2005). The fit indices are presented in Fig.2.
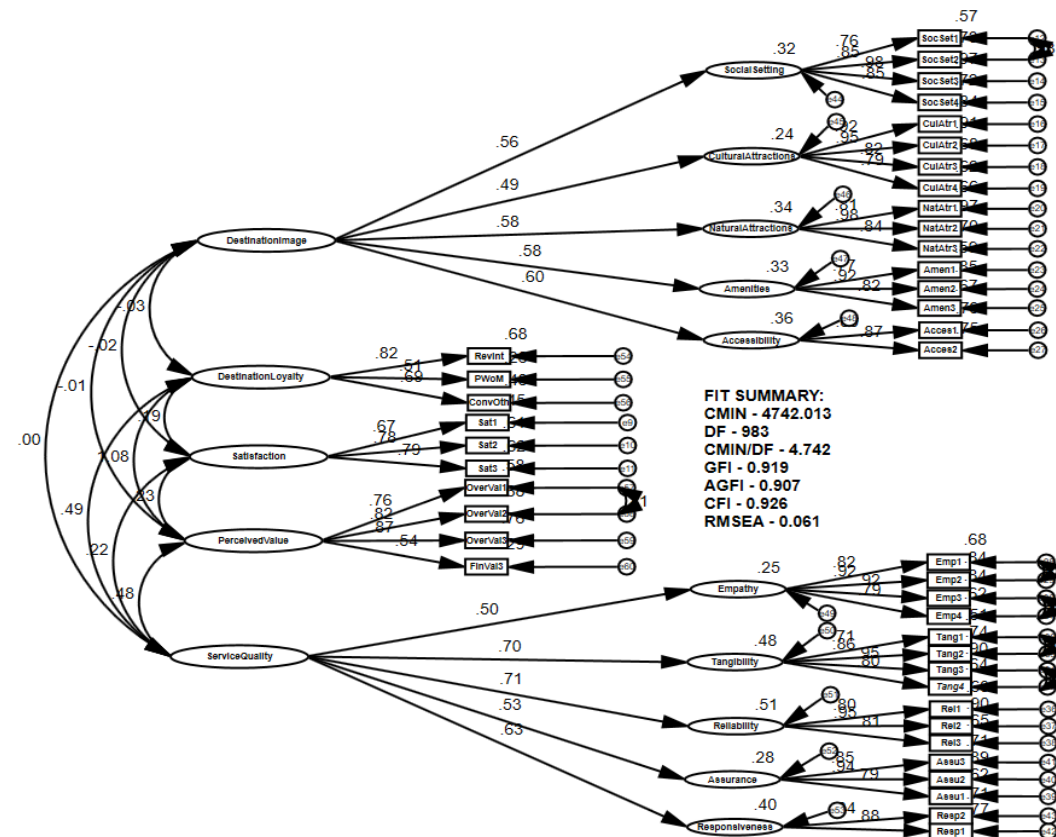

Figure 2: AMOS graphics on properties of measurement model

In the second stage, structural model was constructed to show the structural relationships among the five variables namely service quality, destination image, perceived value, satisfaction and destination loyalty. Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) technique was applied the results of analysis revealed that the empirical model was acceptable [CMIN = 4580.926; CMIN/DF = 4.622; GFI = 0.927; AGFI = 0.914; CFI = 0.955; RMSEA = 0.069]. The details about the structural model are presented in Fig.3.
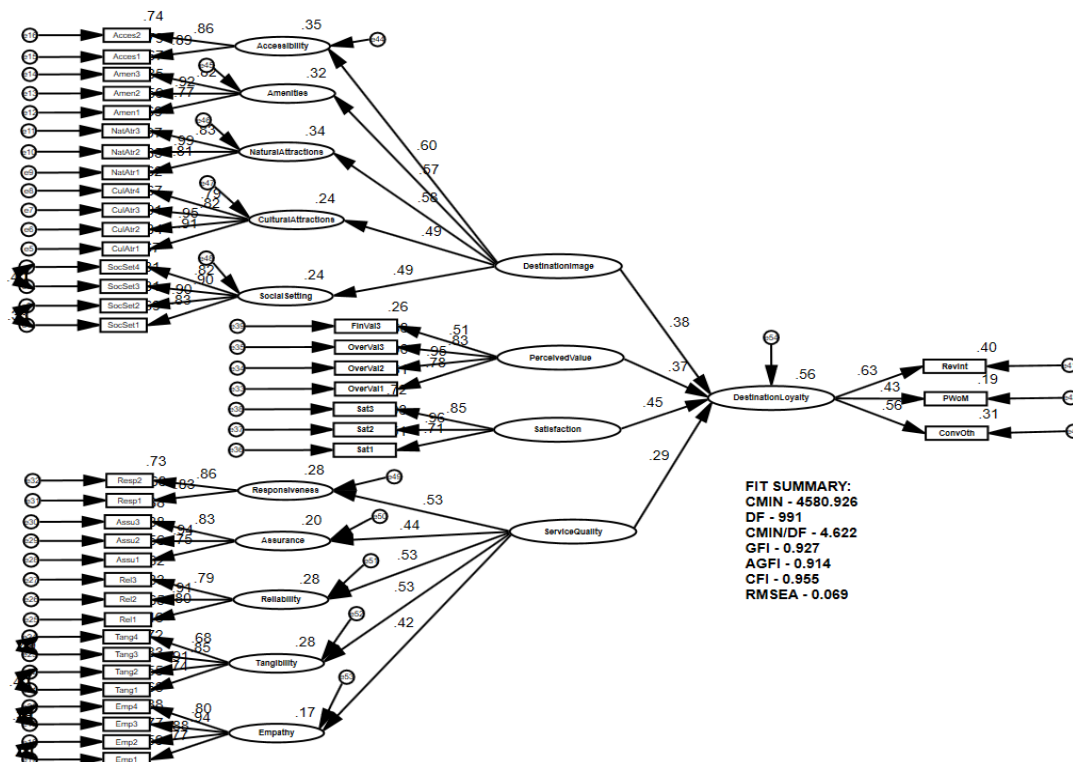
Figure 3: AMOS graphics for determinants of destination loyalty

Findings in Fig. 3 revealed that all four predictors' variables including service quality (SQ), destination image (DI), perceived value (PV) and satisfaction (SAT) had positive effects on destination loyalty (DL). The positive effects are reflected in the beta (β) value which is associated with the arrows that move from the respective predictor variables to destination loyalty (DL) which is the dependent variable. It was discovered that those four predictor variables accounted for 56% variance of the tourists' destination loyalty. Further details about how each predictor variable affected the dependent variable are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Summarized estimates for effects of SQ, DI, PV and SAT on DL

Hypothesis	Direction	Beta (β)	S.E.	C.R.	P-value	Label
H1	SQ--->DL	0.289	0.018	16.056	0.002**	Reject
H2	DI--->DL	0.381	0.033	11.545	0.014 *	Reject
H3	PV--->DL	0.369	0.021	17.571	0.001**	Reject
H4	SAT--->DL	0.447	0.029	15.414	0.000***	Reject

***significant at $p < 0.001$; **significant at $p < 0.01$; *significant at $p < 0.05$

Findings revealed that service quality was a predictor of tourists' destination loyalty (β = 0.289, $p < 0.01$) with a positive effect. It implies that tourists who enjoyed good quality of services at SENAPA were more likely to plan revisit trips, recommend the park to relatives and friends or say positive things about the park. Based on this finding, the first null hypothesis which stated that "service quality does not influence tourists' destination loyalty" was rejected. This finding is in consonance with those of previous studies (Jeong et al., 2019; Wu & Cheng, 2018; Priporas et al., 2017), which also indicated that service quality had a positive effect on destination loyalty.

It is apt to note that in this study service quality comprised five dimensions which are tangibility, reliability, assurance, responsiveness and empathy. Given that all those dimensions had positive contributions to service quality (see Fig. 3), it is implied that they all contributed to influencing tourist's destination loyalty. It could be said that tourists' destination loyalty was derived from quality of tangibles like physical facilities, equipment, and appearance of personnel in terms of neatness. Also, tourists were likely to remain loyal to SENAPA because of reliable services reflected in the ability of providers to offer promised services dependably and accurately, because of employees' willingness to help customers (*responsiveness*), because of knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to inspire trust and confidence (*assurance*), or because caring and individualized attention given to each of them (*empathy*).

Destination image was found to have positive and significant effect on tourists' destination loyalty ($\beta = 0.381$, $p < 0.05$). The finding indicates that tourists who confirmed their pre-conceived image about Serengeti National Park to be real were more likely to remain loyal. It means that those tourists were more likely to plan revisit trips, recommend the park to friends and relatives, or speak positive things about the park. In line with this finding, the second null hypothesis which stated that "destination image does not influence tourists' destination loyalty" was rejected. It is of interest to note that similar results were also obtained in a number of previous studies (Atay et al., 2020; Moon & Han, 2018), which indicated that destination image was a predictor of tourists' loyalty with positive effect.

Destination image constituted five attributes including social setting, cultural attractions, natural attractions, amenities and accessibility. As shown in Fig.3, all those dimensions positively contributed to destination image. Simply, it can be said that tourists' loyalty to SENAPA was enhanced by such aspects as personal safety, cleanliness of environment, hospitality and friendliness of local people, prices for shopping of local products and services as well as variety of local foods and products; among others.

Also, the findings showed that perceived value was found to be a predictor of tourists' destination loyalty with a positive effect ($\beta = 0.369$, $p < 0.01$). Impliedly, tourists who perceived that benefits of visiting Serengeti outweighed the costs associated with their trips were likely to remain loyal to the park. The findings, therefore, lead to rejection of the third null hypothesis which stated that "perceived value does not influence tourists' destination loyalty". Positive relationship between perceived value and destination loyalty was also confirmed in several previous studies (Kim & Uysal, 2015, Kim et al., 2015; Um et al., 2006). As noted earlier in this paper, perceived value was an outcome of individual tourist's evaluation of benefits enjoyed in the trip compared to the costs incurred. If in that evaluation costs are found to be less than benefits then a tourist realizes value for money. Since value was a result of low cost compared to benefits enjoyed, keeping the per-head costs low in the park may increase tourists' loyalty in terms of revisit plans, recommending the park to friends and relatives or simply speaking positive things about it. In other words, competitive park entry fees and prices for accommodations in hotels and lodges, low priced products and services would encourage more tourists to visit SENAPA.

Furthermore, the findings showed that satisfaction had significant positive effect on tourists' loyalty ($\beta = 0.447$, $p < 0.001$). This implies that satisfied tourists were more likely to remain loyal to Serengeti as a tour destination. Given these findings, the fourth hypothesis which stated that "satisfaction does not influence destination loyalty" was also rejected. This empirical stance is supported by several evidences from previous studies which also indicated that satisfaction was an antecedent of tourists' destination loyalty (Mainolfi & Marino, 2020; De Nisco et al., 2017; Wu, 2016). In the context of this study, tourists were satisfied if perceived post-visit experience exceeded their respective expectation before the trip. Satisfaction was also derived by considering time and efforts spent in comparison to the level of excitement

experienced while visiting the park. It is argued here that satisfaction is crucial for a tourist to remain loyal to a destination. It would be difficult or just unlikely for an unsatisfied tourist to plan for a revisit intention or recommend the park to a friend or relative.

Mediated effects through satisfaction

Various studies included in the literature indicated that satisfaction mediated the relationships among service quality, destination image and perceived value on the one hand and destination loyalty on the other hand (Khatoon, Zhengliang & Hussain, 2020; Wibowo, 2019; Ali & Mugadas, 2015). This study therefore, endeavored to determine whether or not satisfaction mediated those relationships. In order to test for the mediation effects, satisfaction (SAT) was introduced in the relationships between SQ and DL, DI and DL and also between PV and DL. Results were as presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Mediated effects of SQ, DI and PV through SAT to DL

Direct effect					Mediated effect				
Effect	Beta (β)	S.E.	C.R.	P-value	Effect	Beta (β)	S.E.	C.R.	P-value
SQ--->DL	0.289	0.019	15.211	0.002**	SQ→SAT→DL	0.257	0.018	14.278	0.004**
DI--->DL	0.381	0.033	11.545	0.014 *	DI→SAT→ DL	0.324	0.021	15.429	0.023*
PV--->DL	0.369	0.023	16.043	0.001**	PV→SAT→ DL	0.289	0.024	12.042	0.031*

**significant at $p < 0.01$; *significant at $p < 0.05$

Results showed that after SAT was entered into the model, the direct effect of SQ on DL was reduced from 0.289 to 0.257 but still remained statistically significant ($p < 0.01$) meaning that the former was a partial mediator. Based on these results the fifth null hypothesis which stated that "satisfaction does not mediate the relationship between service quality and destination loyalty" was rejected. Findings also revealed that SAT was a partial mediator of the relationship between destination image (DI) and destination loyalty (DL) given that after it was introduced in the model, the direct effect was reduced from 0.381 to 0.324 but remained statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). In this specific scenario, the This result led to rejection of the sixth null hypothesis which stated that "satisfaction does not mediate the relationship between destination image and destination loyalty". On similar account, the results showed that SAT was a partial mediator of the relationship between perceived value (PV) and destination loyalty (DL) by reducing the direct effect from 0.369 to 0.289 but remained statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) leading to rejection of seventh null hypothesis which stated that satisfaction does not mediates relationship between perceived value and destination loyalty.

The above results are supported by several other previous studies which showed that satisfaction mediates the relationships between service quality and destination loyalty (Subrahmanyam, 2017; Kim et al., 2015), between destination image and loyalty (Atay et al., 2020; Mahadzirah et al., 2019), and between perceived value and loyalty (Lai et al., 2009; Yang and Peterson, 2004). Drawing from the mediated relationships presented above, it is worth noting that satisfaction is central to tourists' loyalty to destination. An important observation is that when satisfaction mediated the relationships between SQ, DI and PV on the one hand and DL on the other, the model accounted for a variance of 66% (see Fig. 4). This is a large variance compared to 56% when those predictor variables were not mediated by through satisfaction (see Fig. 3). Implicitly, it is plausible to argue that although other factors were important in influencing tourists' loyalty to destination, their effect would be maximized if they left the destination with feelings of satisfaction. Diagrammatically, the above mediation effects are presented in Fig.4.
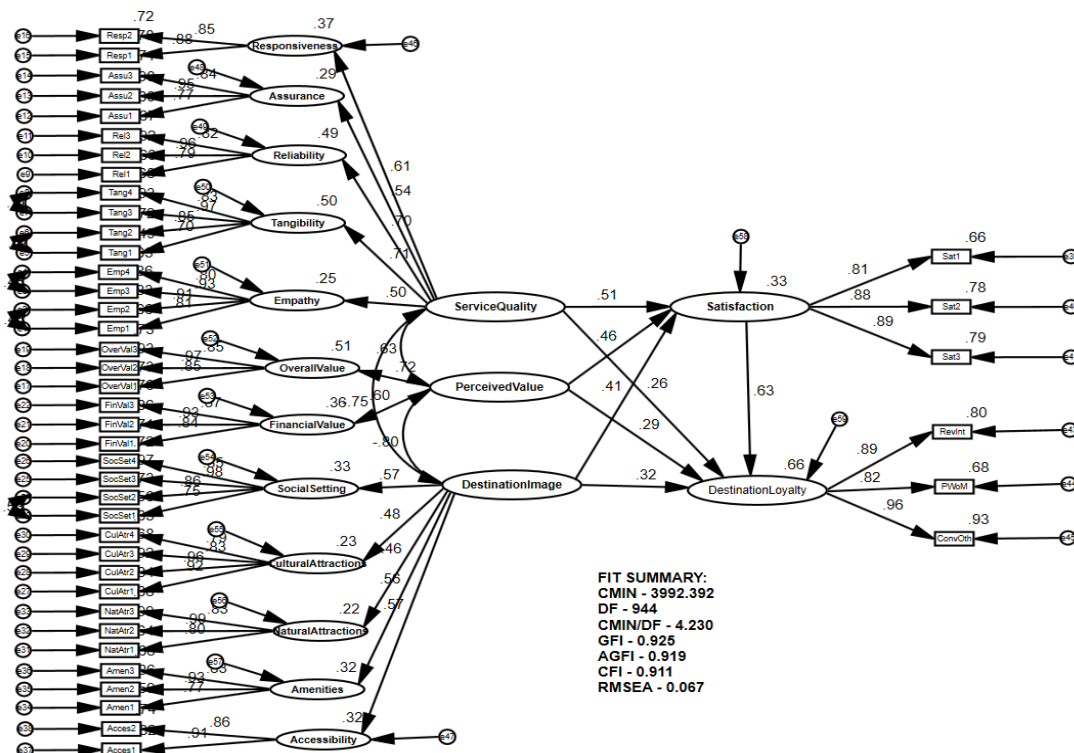
Figure 4: AMOS graphics on mediated effects of SQ, PV and DI throhg SAT to DL

Lastly, it is important to note that the findings of this study supported the Theory of Planned Behaviour that was adopted by this study. In the context of this study the planned behaviour was loyalty of tourists to SENAPA which was measured in terms of tourists' revisit intentions, willingness to recommend the park to friends and relatives or saying positive things about it the park. The findings of this study support the theory because tourists indicated that they were loyal to SENAPA. This was observed in their responses which showed that they strongly agreed with all three statements used to measure loyalty (see Table 1). However, the findings showed that loyalty was positively influenced by service quality, perceived value, destination image and satisfaction. The findings, therefore, suggest that application of TPB in the assessment of tourists' destination loyalty should take on board the aforementioned four predictor variables.

Conclusions and recommendations

Findings revealed that service quality, destination image, perceived value and satisfaction were positive predictors of tourists' loyalty to Serengeti National Park, which in this study was measured in terms of plans for revisit intention, recommendation of the same to friends and relatives or speaking positive things about it. Based on those findings this study concludes that provision of services of high or appreciable quality increased the propensity of international tourists to remain loyal to a destination. This happens because tourists, just like other customers to service of product, would be attracted by experiences of superior quality compared to their expectations before making a trip. It is also concluded that tourists' overall perceived image of a destination would increase their loyalty to it. This would happen when tourists left a destination with feelings that their decision to visit the same resulted into wonderful experience that should also be enjoyed by a friend or a relative. Furthermore, it is concluded that perceived value, which is about extent to which benefits enjoyed outweigh the costs and efforts, is a crucial determinant of tourists' loyalty to a destination. Tourists who leave a destination with feeling that there was value-for-money for their experience in terms of enjoyment would tend

to remain loyal to it. Lastly, the study concludes that satisfied tourists are likely to remain loyal to a destination that was visited. More importantly, the influences of service quality, destination image and perceived value on destination loyalty were maximized when mediated through satisfaction. This means that satisfaction was crucial in explaining tourists' loyalty to a destination.

Based on the above conclusions, this study recommends the following measures. First, SENAPA management should make efforts to ensure that international tourists are provided with services of high quality possible right from the entry to the exit points of the park. This can be achieved by introducing service provision charter on manual that would guide the operations of different stakeholders operating inside the park. Second, SENAPA management should also make efforts to market the park in the international arena so as to maintain its good image and in that way continue to attract more tourists. Third, the management of the park should make efforts that would enhance perceived value among the tourists. This can be achieved by reviewing cost items charged on tourists like park entry fees in view of making them competitive compared to similar parks in the East African region. Affordable costs are likely to encourage visitors to plan for revisit trips or recommend friends and relatives to SENAPA. Lastly, SENAPA and other stakeholders should ensure that the international visitors are always satisfied whenever they visit the park. This can be achieved by conducting mandatory regular tourists' exit surveys for purposes of identifying any areas of weaknesses that need to be improved so as to attract more visitor to the park.

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