African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure. ISSN: 2223-814X

January 2023, Vol 12, 1, pp. 75-97

Impacts of Development of Tourism Destinations on Tourist Perceptions of Destinations' Attributes and Satisfaction in Gateway Communities, Northern Tanzania

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How to cite this article: Mwongoso, A.J., Sirima, A. & Mgonja, J.T. (2023). Impacts of Development of Tourism Destinations on Tourist Perceptions of Destinations' Attributes and Satisfaction in Gateway Communities, Northern Tanzania. African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure, 12(1):75-97. DOI: **https://doi.org/10.46222/ajhtl.19770720.355**

Abstract

Tourists perceptions and satisfaction are likely to be affected by attributes found in a particular stage of destination development. This study examined 24 attributes considered important in influencing tourist perception and satisfaction in three tourism destinations found in gateway communities; Loliondo, lake Natron and Burunge in northern Tanzania. Using confirmatory factor analysis, four factors, namely, Amenities, Accessibility, Core Attractions and Ancillary services, were predictors of tourists' perception and satisfaction. The Importance-Performance Analysis (IPA) model was also employed to assess tourist's perspectives on attribute importance and performance towards overall satisfaction. It was found that, attributes for core attraction factor are the most important to tourists and performed well ("Keep Up the Good work" quadrant of IPA grid). Although, the perceived overall satisfaction among the 422 sample tourists was high, some attributes reflecting on Accessibility, Amenities and Ancillary services factors were perceived to be underperforming ("Concentrate here" quadrant), thus demanding immediate attention of destination managers. This study has addressed the knowledge gap emanating from prior studies in gateway communities by examining tourists' perceptions and extent of satisfaction with destination attributes in the development stage of destination life cycle, thus, provided necessary input information to destination planning for further tourism development.

Keywords: Tourists satisfaction; Importance-performance analysis; tourism development; northern Tanzania

Introduction

The United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) defines destination as "a physical space in which visitors spend at least one night and is made up of tourism products such as support services and attractions, and tourism resources with physical and administrative boundaries that define its management and images/perceptions of market competitiveness" (UNWTO, 2007;1). Similarly, "tourism destinations could be on any scale, from a whole country to a village" (UNWTO, 2007;1). Based on the definition, tourism destinations in Tanzania, like other Sub-Saharan African (SSA) countries, are concentrated mainly in wildlife-protected areas (PAs) (UNWTO, 2019) and within a handful of villages bordering the PAs, known as gateway communities (De Boer & Van Dijk, 2016; Joyner et al., 2019).

The gateway communities (GCs) share the ecosystem with PAs whose categories range from those under conservation through restricted human activities (IUCN categories II-IV) to those where there is controlled interaction between human and wildlife (IUCN category V-VI) (Chung et al., 2018; Dudley, 2008). Therefore, GCs are doorways to PAs (Frauman & Banks, 2011; Joyner et al., 2019; Keitumetse & Pampiri, 2016). In Tanzania, GCs have become tourism destinations as they are endowed with attractions for typically nature-based tourism such as wildlife migration corridors, ancient human foot-prints and active volcanic mountain (Mgonja et al., 2015; Mwongoso et al., 2021).

Residents in GCs of northern Tanzania have been relying on the natural attractions and cultural resources to engage in contractual partnerships with tourism investors. The investor reimburses the communal residents with revenue, which, in turn, is spent in community development projects (De Boer & Van Dijk, 2016). The community-investor agreements allow the investors to utilise a portion of village land for camping and game viewing over a specified period, in turn, the community benefits from tourist activity fee charged per person per day and annual land fees. Game viewing, mountain climbing, tourists' lodging or spending a day in the hosts' residency like Maasai cultural house (Mgonja et al., 2015) coupled with the purchase of cultural items, are some of the attributes that constitute the GC- destinations in northern Tanzania. Therefore, tourism destinations can be conceptualised as products made up by attributes that tourists consume to satiny their needs (Saqib, 2019).

Tourism destinations are inherent state of continuous change. The tourism area life cycle (TALC) model pioneered by Butler (1980) posits that tourism destinations are prone to experience different development stages, namely, exploration, involvement, development, consolidation, stagnation, decline or rejuvenation. Within these distinct stages, significant changes occur, featuring the number and types of tourists, the infrastructure, the marketing strategies, the natural and built environment, residents' involvement in tourism, and their attitudes toward tourism (Látková & Vogt, 2012).

As tourism destination stages of development change over time, the tourists' perceptions, and satisfaction with the consumption of destination attributes do change as well (Bernini & Cagnone, 2014). In other words, tourists' perceptions and satisfaction vary along the stages of destination development. Tourists' perceptions towards a destination entails cognitive and affective positive or negative reactions on attributes constituting a destination (Marinao, 2018). On the other hand, tourists' satisfaction refers to the degree to which a tourists' assessment of the attributes of the destination exceeds his/her expectation for those attributes (Saqib, 2019). Tourists' degree of satisfaction with destination attributes would be lower when a destination is at the stagnation or decline stage compared to other stages (Bernini & Cagnone, 2014). The extent of tourists' satisfaction is determined by attribute performances of a destination, such that when performance is perceived as higher or lower than expectations, a positive/negative disconfirmation will result in satisfaction or dissatisfaction. The intensity of tourists' satisfaction with destination attributes has the potential to tourists re-visit the destination, increase spending and duration of stay at the destination as well as positive word of mouth, leading to thriving tourism industry (Marinao, 2018; Chen et al., 2010)

In the context of GCs, tourists' perceptions and satisfaction can be affected by attributes found in a stages of destination development. In turn, tourists' perceptions and satisfaction shaped by a stage of tourism development may have a direct socio-economic effect on the host community's livelihoods. This means that a satisfied tourist is more likely to re-visit the destination, increase spending and stay longer at the destination. In turn, the host community and individuals directly involved in tourism will earn more revenue. The higher the revenue, the more enhanced living conditions following the increased spend patterns of tourism revenue

into communal projects of priority sectors like health and education on the one hand and increased household livelihood assets at the individual level (Panta & Thapa, 2017).

In a similar manner that business organisations have to pay maximum attention to customers' preferences, tastes and degrees of satisfaction, destination managers in GCs should strive to understand their customers (tourists) perception towards destination attributes and whether tourists are satisfied. Even though knowledge of tourists' attribute-perceptions and satisfaction is crucial for destination planning and financial sustainability, previous studies on tourism destination impacts in GC have paid inadequate attention to grasp the knowledge on tourists' perceptions and extent of satisfaction on performance of destination attributes. Previous studies conducted by Sulle et al. (2011), Sulle et al. (2014) and Nelson (2004; 2008) paid significant attention on amount of tourism receipts to villages and expenditure on communal projects while masking the attribute- perception and satisfaction information about the tourist who are the sources of revenue.

Basing on the aforementioned premise, this study aimed at evaluating tourist perceptions of performance of important destination attributes which may influence tourist's satisfaction. To achieve this aim, the Importance-Performance Analysis (IPA) method is used. The IPA pioneered by Martilla and James (1977) is a widely applied model in service sector management. Initially employed in marketing industry, over the years and in the last decade, IPA has increased its application in various tourism contexts namely, exhibitions (Whitefield & Webber, 2011), parks (Sheng et al., 2014), hospitality (Bhattacharya & Dey, 2015) and hotel (Babić-Hodović et al., 2019). There are other popular models such as Service Quality (SERVIQUAL) (Parasuraman et al., 1988) and Service Performance (SERVPERF) (Cronin & Taylor, 1994). However, many researchers argue that IPA is more superior compared to other models because it enables understanding consumers' satisfaction by matching their perceptions on service-attributes they consider important and attribute-performance that can influence repetitive consumer purchase behaviour (Dabphet, 2017; Deng & Pierskalla, 2018; Lu & Hashim, 2018; Nisco et al., 2015). Contrary to other service management models, IPA underline assumptions are on the existence of the most important destination attributes that have to be identified and their performances measured because they have the highest impacts on tourist's satisfaction while the lowest performing attributes must be improved immediately by destination managers (Dabphet, 2017; Nisco et al., 2015).

Theoretical issues

This study was guided by expectancy-disconfirmation theory which was operationalised to the 'attribute-importance and performance model' featuring on Buhalis (2000) conceptualisation of destination attributes.

Conceptualisation of destination attributes

Tourism destination consists of multiple features that can be viewed as a package of tourism facilities and services, composed of several multidimensional attributes (Markowski et al., 2019). Buhalis (2000) classify destination attributes into the "Six As" general factors. The first 'A' is Attractions, comprised of natural, man-made, artificial, heritage resources and special events, then, Accessibility (whole transportation system containing of routes, terminals and vehicles). The other factors are Amenities (accommodation and catering facilities, retailing and other tourist services) and Available packages (pre-arranged packages by agents and principals). Another component is Activities (all activities available at the destination and what tourists will do during their visit). Lastly is an Ancillary service (services used by tourists such as banks, tele- communications, post, hospitals, etc.).

In the tourism destination attributes-studies, researchers rely on data collected from tourists' evaluation of destination attributes. Tourists' overall satisfaction is, thus, the general result of tourists' perception of relative performance of different attributes of a destination (Ariya et al.,2020; Marinao, 2018).

Destination attributes, perception and satisfaction

Tourism literature contends that there is relationship between destination attributes and tourist satisfaction mediated by perception (Saqib, 2019). A perception takes on three components. First, the destination image which entails a combination of cognitive/functional and affective/psychological attributes that a tourist attaches to a destination (Ezeuduji & Mhlongo, 2019; Saqib, 2019). Secondly, destination attractiveness refers to the external and pulls motivational forces that attract individuals to visit a destination (Yoon & Uysal, 2005). Thirdly, conceptualising destination attributes as indicators of service quality. The image, attractiveness and service quality of a destination can have some correlation with variables such as the satisfaction or dissatisfaction that a tourist derived from the destination (Saqib, 2019). Therefore, some researchers use both "perception and satisfaction" (Saqib, 2019; Philemon, 2018) to emphasise the two-way relationship between these terms. This study adopts the combination of perception and satisfaction because perception accommodates three components (image, attractiveness and service quality). In contrast, satisfaction is an ultimate point reflecting on attribute-performance after the tourist experience (Amoah et al., 2016; Marinao, 2018).

The expectancy-disconfirmation theory

Satisfaction levels of tourists largely depend on whether their perceived performance of attributes exceeds expectations (positive disconfirmation) or fails to meet expectations (negative disconfirmation) (Deng & Pierskalla, 2018; Gebremichael & Singh, 2019; Mmutle & Shonhe, 2017). The disconfirmation theory has resulted in a service quality model namely SERVIQUAL (Parasuraman et al., 1988) and a service performance model called SERVPERF (Cronin & Taylor, 1992). The SERVIQUAL model focuses on the difference between perceived service performance and expectation along five constructs: Responsiveness, Assurance, Tangibility, Empathy and Reliability (RATER). However, it is not easy to obtain people's expectations before leaving for a destination. Also, it is inappropriate to assess their expectations on-site by asking them to remember what they expected before leaving (Deng & Pierskalla, 2018; Nisco et al., 2015). The SERVPERF model, on the other hand is based only on perceptions of performance by excluding expectations. However, evaluating attribute performance without knowledge of whether attributes are important is a shortfall of the SERVPERF model (Wade & Eagles, 2003). To overcome the challenges associated with SERVIQUAL and SERVPERF models, the destination 'attribute-importance and performance' is preferred and used in this study.

Importance–performance analysis (IPA) is used to evaluate the relationship between importance, performance, and overall satisfaction in tourism destinations (Lai & Hitchcock, 2015). The IPA enables understanding tourists' satisfaction by measuring performance and the importance of various attributes. Attributes can be categorised based on their importance (unimportant/ important) and their performance (good/bad) (Rodriguez-Valencia et al., 2019). Thus, "if visitors state that an attribute is 'not at all important' to their visits then performance of this attribute is expected to be irrelevant to their overall satisfaction" (Taplin, 2012;296). IPA's outcome is displaying each attribute in a two-dimensional grid. The y-axis features importance and the x-axis represents performance, creating four quadrants as illustrated in Figure 1. A standard practice is to assign the average of both performance and importance as

the limits of the quadrants in the two-dimensional plane (Rodriguez-Valencia et al., 2019). This study used averages as cross-point to plot the quadrants, a method also known as 'data-centred quadrants.

Nisco et al. (2015) contend that IPA quadrants have managerial implications such that, poor performance on highly important attributes implies extreme priority in strategies for improvement (Concentrate here quadrant). Excellent performances on highly important attributes denote opportunities for maximising or maintaining attractiveness status (Keep up the good work quadrant). Slightly important features that are high in performance signify that resources would be better utilised elsewhere (Possible Overkill quadrant). Lastly, fair performance on slightly important attributes implies that it may not be necessary to focus extra effort on these attributes (Low priority quadrant).

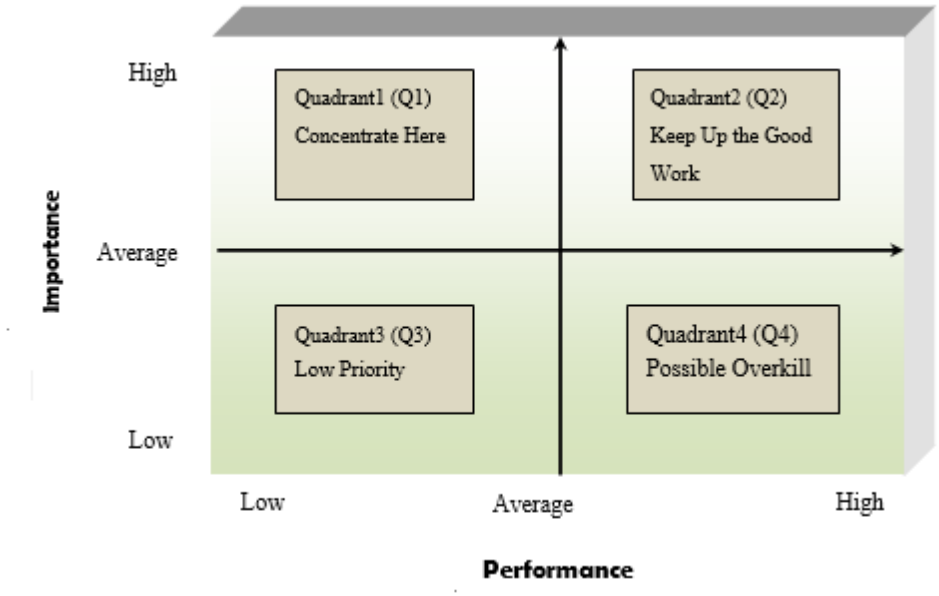

Figure 1: Quadrants of IPA matrix

Empirical Studies Using IPA in nature-based tourism destinations

There are scant studies that employed IPA in nature-based destination within developing countries and in particular Tanzania. In the only existing study in Tanzania by Wade and Eagles (2003) the IPA with 13 attributes was integrated with market segmentation of visitors. It was found that, attributes rated as highly important but with poor performance in Kilimanjaro, include "low level of litter", "security from theft", "knowledge of guide", "low level of crowdedness" and "accommodation". In the Serengeti, attributes that required extremely intervention for improvements were "security from theft" and "low level of crowdedness". A study conducted by Tsegaw (2017) in Nech Sar National Park, Ethiopia, involved 20 attributes. In this study, it was concluded that "transportation" (accessibility), "safety" (security), "livelihood option", and "availability of shower facilities" have high importance and low performance. Outside Africa and in destinations beyond national parks, IPA has been conducted in five provinces featured with historical, natural and cultural attractions in the lower northern region of Thailand (Dabphet, 2017). Out of 25 attributes, it was found that priority interventions to be considered by region include "hygiene, sanitation", "quality of services", "reasonable prices/good value for money" and "activities/sport facilities".

Methodology

Study sites

This study was conducted in three GC-destinations: Burunge, Loliondo and lake Natron. The names of these destinations are adopted from common names of game-controlled areas (GCAs), where interaction between human activities and wildlife is controlled through sustainable consumption of game resources. The Burunge GCA, changed in 2003 to 2006 to become Burunge Wildlife Management Area (WMA) (Burunge A.A, 2011). The GCAs and village lands have been overlapping for many years (Sule et al., 2011). Thus, in this study, GC entails a tourism destination containing a village or several villages sharing parts of its lands with GCA. Specifically, this study selected 9 villages from a total of 29, 17 and 28 villages constituting district administrative divisions of Loliondo, Sale and Mbugwe, respectively. These divisions host the three destinations. Villages were selected based on the compulsory criterion that a village host at least one tourism investor possessing accommodation facilities like a lodge or camp. This criterion is crucial to grasp the tourism experience of tourists who spent at least one night. The other criterion was; a village should be a beneficiary of tourism revenue for about 10 years (from 2008/09 to 2018/19). The village selected were:Vilima Vitatu, Mwada, Sangaiwe, Olasiti and Kakoi (Burunge);Engaresero (Lake Natron); Ololosokwan, Sukenya and Arash (Loliondo) as illustrated in Figure 2.

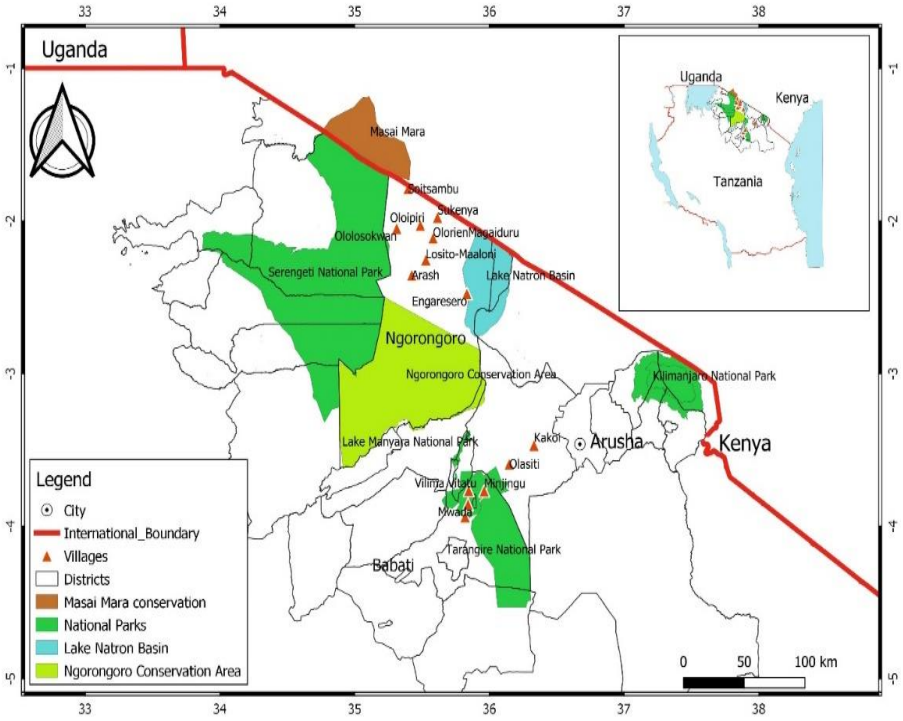

Figure 1: Map showing studied villages in three gateway community-destinations

Burunge lies on the low land, wildlife migratory corridor between Tarangire and Manyara National Parks, Babati district of Manyara region. Loliondo and lake Natron are located adjacent to world natural heritage sites of Serengeti National Park and Ngorongoro Conservation Area, Ngorongoro district in Arusha region. The agro-pastoral and firmed cultural-bond Maasai natives occupies Loliondo and Lake Natron by over 95% and about 30% in Burunge where they share with 55% of agro-pastoral Mbugwe natives as well as minority ethnic groups of Iraque, Warangi and hunter-gather group of Barbaig (Babati District profile, 2019; Ngorongoro District profile, 2019).

The involvement of three GC-destinations was deemed necessary so as to broaden an understanding of attributes underlying tourists' perceptions and satisfaction within and between destinations. Specifically, these destinations were purposely selected in this study basing on two reasons: firstly, relevance of the areas for tourism experience. These GCs are featured with tourism facilities with endowed natural and cultural resources which are the core attractions of nature-based tourism destinations. Proximity to PAs and seasonal wildlife migration (natural movement of wildlife for breeding and feeding) between PAs and adjacent selected villages has influenced visitation and investment of tourism facilities like lodges and campsites (Table1). Different types of tourism facilities exist to cater for different segment of tourists. As shown in Table 1, luxury lodges serve higher-end tourists who afford to pay minimum of 650 US$ per night, compared to 40-180 US$ per night for the permanent standard lodge. The permanent standard lodge is built with concrete materials such as blocks and self-contained rooms without hot-tubs while the permanent luxury lodge is featured with a set of full-furnished concrete cottages and hot tubs. Tented lodges are made up of fancy tents, full furnished, with large windows, wooden floor and veranda.

Table 1: Number of tourists and tourism facilities in year 2018/2019

Destination	Visitors		Permanent luxury lodges	Luxury tented lodges	Permanent Standard lodges
	Domestic	Foreign			
Loliondo	128	4, 207	2	1	3
L. Natron	220	5, 585	2	2	7*
Burunge	611	27, 082	4	6	4

*Attached with camping space

The nature and recreation tourism activities in the study area include: game viewing, camping, walking safaris and bird watching. Ancient human foot prints, waterfalls, hot-springs and hiking the active volcanic mountain "Oldoinyo Lengai" ("Mountain of God" for Maasai) at lake Natron, constitute natural attractions for tourist's safari experience. Furthermore, hunting, is also conducted as these areas are designated as GCAs. Cultural experiences in these areas, have, over the years attracted visitors and contributed to the transformation of these areas into "development stage" of destination evolution (Mwongoso et al., 2021). Culture tourism activities conducted in the study areas include: visit to Maasai households, traditional dances, production and selling of handcraft items such as; Maasai outfits, beaded-jewery, Mbugwe baskets, carpets and exhibition of ancient houses and pottery shards.

The second reason for selecting study areas is associated with TALC. Burunge, Loliondo and Lake Natron are the only GCs in Tanzania, whereby, the TALC status is known to be at "development stage" (Mwongoso et al, 2021). The TALC status is a stepping-stone for studying attributes that tourists consider important along with attribute performances with the need to inform destination managers on where to prioritise resources allocation during destination planning (Formica & Usay, 2006). Furthermore, understanding the extent to which destination development over time establishes perceptions and satisfaction to tourists is important because tourists are among key sources of revenue to GCs. Tourist revenue is needed in GCs as a means to diversify livelihoods and to finance community projects to improve living conditions and residents' quality of life (Nkemngu, 2015) especially the agro-pastoralists in GCs (Nelson, 2004)

Selection of destination attributes

Destination attributes employed in this study were selected from empirical studies that used IPA in nature-based tourism and through consultation with key tourism stakeholders in the study areas. These studies include: Abooali et al. (2015); Dabphet (2017); Tsegaw (2017); Wade and Eagles (2003). The reviewed studies contain a list of attributes ranging from 12 to

25. Not all attributes from literature were selected. Oh (2001) recommends that researchers should consider high level of feature abstraction when the attribute list is prepared. Therefore, Following Oh (2001) recommendation, 31 attributes were selected from aforementioned studies (an average of eight attributes in each study). However, selected attributes were reduced to 19. Reduction in number of attributes came out of necessity of attribute suitability to the respective destinations, following consultation with key informants such as: tour operators, district tourism officers, lodge managers, tour guides and eight tourists. Five attributes, not featured in selected literature, emerged from these consultations. These include: "cultural dance", "access to nearby destinations", "walking safari with sun set view", "opportunity for hiking" and "shopping on handcrafts". The final list of attributes amounts to 24 (Table 3).

The 24 attributes on destination perceived importance were conceived to reflect on Buhalis (2000) destination conceptualisation of six constructs also known as the six "As": Attractions, Accessibility, Amenities, Ancillary services, Available packages and Activities. The former four constructs were considered relevant in the context of this study and were subjected to the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) for construct validity (Table 3).

Data collection and sampling

A self-completed questionnaire was employed whereas, the 24 attributes were randomised in order to avoid bias while respondents fill in answers. To ensure clarity of the questions, a pretest of questionnaires was conducted three months before the full session of data collection. The test involved a random sample of 21 visitors boarded in four lodges at Burunge. The formal data collection was conducted within peak tourism season (from end of July to mid-September of 2019), thus guaranteed availability of respondents.

The content of the questionnaire was in English language, designed to adhere with the standard of Importance-performance instruments consistent with other researchers (Abooali et al., 2015; Dabphet, 2017; Tsegaw, 2017). The first part of the questionnaire captured respondent's trip information including purpose of visit, lengths of stay and whether tourists used package or non-package travel arrangement. The second part consisted of 24 attributes. The "importance" attributes were measured using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Highly unimportant to 5 Highly important). The same scale was used for "attribute performance" (1 = Highly disagree to 5 highly agree) and "overall tourist satisfaction" (1 = Highly dissatisfied to 5 highly satisfied). The last part contained respondent's demographic information and an open-ended question requesting respondents' comments on areas for improvements. To complement data from questionnaire, field site observation was used. This enabled an in-depth awareness of available tourism facilities, cultural and biophysical scenes.

Moreover, this study collected secondary data from district revenue departments and village governments following permission to access official data. Data collected included number of visitors (Table 1), audited annual financial reports and trend in tourism receipts and expenditure on communal projects from year 2008 to 2018/19 (Figure 6). These data were crucial in order to determine the consequences of tourism on residents' livelihoods following access to tourism revenue as a result from tourists' visitations to the destination.

All lodges and camps found in the selected villages were visited. Trained data collectors selected the respondents randomly in keeping with the requirements of probability principles. With the help from lodge/camp managers, the list of expected arrivals was issued, followed by establishment of sample frame basing on criteria of age (above 18 years) and representative person in case of a group. Then, names were randomly selected using RAND function of Excel spreadsheet program. A ten minutes, self-completed questionnaire was issued to randomly selected respondents upon arrival and were asked to fill in the attributes they consider important

about the destination. Three hours before check-out time, the respondents were reminded and asked to finalise the questionnaire with the attribute-performance and overall satisfaction.

Lai and Hitchcock (2015) recommends to researchers conducting IPA to consider the ratio of the number of respondents (N) to the number of measurable items (p) when determining sample size. Based on this suggestion, sample size should be greater than the number of items (N > p). The recommended N: p ratios ranges from 5 with a minimum N > 100 to 10 and 20 (Hair et al., 2010; Kline, 2011; Kyriazos, 2018). Thus, to ensure sufficient responses variance and improve statistical power the 24 attributes would need a minimum of 120 respondents. This study met this requirement. About 170 questionnaires were distributed in each destination. The total of 10 questionnaires were excluded from the 453 returned questionnaires due to systematic incomplete responses. Therefore, the valid questionnaires were 443 from three destinations.

Normality of data and statistical analysis

The data obtained through questionnaire were thoroughly coded and analysed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences software (SPSS, v21). The expectation–maximisation algorithm was used to replace missing data, followed by a data normality check. All 24-attribute importance and performance did not exceed the cutoff value of 3 for skewness and 10 for kurtosis (Brown, 2015). However, multivariate normality test conducted by AMOSv.21 software indicated the presence of multivariate non-normality. This test was conducted by two ways: first, visually, by plotting the Chi-square versus the Mahalanobis distance plot as suggested by Burdenski (2000) and secondly, statistically by Mardias' normalised estimate of multivariate kurtosis and skewness. Following results from these tests, 21 cases with multivariate outliers had to be removed from the data set for Loliondo, Burunge and lake Natron. Eventually, the Mardia's multivariate test value was 26.34, 28.52 and 29.11 for Loliondo, lake Natron and Burunge, respectively. These units are less than the threshold. Thus, multivariate normality was achieved (Lai & Hitchcock, 2015) with a reduced sample of 422 cases where, 121, 138, and 163 respondents were for Loliondo, lake Natron and Burunge, respectively.

Before data analysis, this study tested whether the variances in responses were produced by the instrument rather than the genuine predispositions of the respondents (common method bias). Harman's one-factor test was conducted with an un-rotated factor solution. The test indicated an explained variance of 22.5%, which is below the threshold of 50%. Thus, the instrument for data collection, did not cause significant variances in responses. Subsequently, a common latent factor (CLF) test was conducted, and a comparison was made between standardised regression weights of all items for models with and without CLF. The differences in these regression weights were found to be very small (<0.200) which suggests that common method bias is not a major issue in the data collected (Gaskin, 2017).

CFA was employed to validate the extent to which a predetermined attribute-based theoretical model by Buhalis (2000) fits the observed data of attribute importance. The CFA was performed with Maximum Likelihood Estimation (MLE) in AMOSv21 software. Convergent validity was computed using factor loadings to underlying construct (item reliability), Composite Reliability (also known as Dillon-Goldstein's rho) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). Discriminant validity was computed by comparing the square root of the AVE for a particular construct with the correlations between that construct and all other constructs. Further, the arithmetic means of importance and performance scores were computed followed by running of paired *t*-tests to determine statistical differences between them. Gap analysis is commonly conducted along with IPA quadrant analysis and provides a statistical analysis like *t*-tests for non-zero gaps (Taplin, 2012). The gap entails the mean performance

minus the mean importance. The *p*-values of less than 0.05 would imply the existence of significant differences for the means between performance and importance of attributes, thus informing destination managers to take corrective measures.

Results

Sample characteristics

Table 2 contains sample profile in each destination. The dominant age group was 25-44 years for Loliondo (50%) and Burunge (52%) while in lake Natron it was age group 45-64 years (50%). Male tourists were 66% and 60% in lake Natron and Burunge but, 57% in Loliondo. Findings show that the tourists are relatively highly educated at graduate level in all destinations with Burunge dominating by 64%. About 60% of tourists in Loliondo and lake Natron originating from America while European (40%) were dominant in Burunge. The 'game package' was the main travel arrangement model especially in Loliondo (69%) with three days' duration of stay (98%). About 76% and 72% of tourist used 'full board package' with two days' stay (91%) and (83%) for lake Natron and Burunge respectively.

Table 2: Respondents demographic and travel characteristics

Loliondo			**L.Natron**			**Burunge**		
Gender (n=121)	F	%	*Gender* (n=138)	F	%	*Gender* (n=163)	F	%
Male	69	57	Male	91	65.9	Male	98	60.1
Female	52	43	Female	47	34.1	Female	65	39.9
Age (n=121)			*Age* (n=138)			*Age* (163)		
18-24	18	14.9	18-24	14	10.1	18-24	21	12.9
25-44	61	50.4	25-44	46	33.4	25-44	85	52.1
45-64	35	28.9	45-64	69	50.0	45-64	44	27.0
above 65	7	5.8	above 65	9	6.5	above 65	13	8.0
Education (n=116)			*Education* (n=138)			*Education* (n=161)		
Non-degree	28	24.1	Non-degree	34	24.6	Non-degree	31	19.3
Graduate	45	38.8	Graduate	66	47.8	Graduate	103	63.9
Post graduate	43	37.1	Post graduate	38	27.6	Post graduate	27	16.8
Nationality (n=121)			*Nationality* (n=138)			*Nationality* (n=163)		
Americas	74	61.1	Americas	82	59.4	Americas	54	33.1
European	33	27.3	European	38	27.6	European	66	40.5
Asian	6	5.0	Asian	5	3.6	Asian	14	8.6
Australia	4	3.3	Australia	10	7.2	Australia	21	12.9
African	4	3.3	African	3	2.2	African	8	4.9
Length of stay(n=116)			*Length of stay*(n=129)			*Length of stay*(n=159)		
3 days 2 nights	114	98.3	2 days 1 night	117	90.7	2 days 1 night	132	83.0
4 days 3 nights	2	1.7	3 days 2 nights	11	8.5	3 days 2 nights	27	17.0
			4 days 3 nights	1	.8			
Travel arrangement(n=119)			*Travel arrangement*(n=136)			*Travel arrangement*(n=162)		
Game package	82	68.9	Game package	9	6.6	Game package	27	16.7
Full board package	34	28.6	Full board package	103	75.7	Full board package	117	72.2
Half board package	3	2.5	Half board package	18	13.3	Half board package	18	11.1
			No package	6	4.4			

F: Frequency

CFA

Hair et al. (2010) posit that an item or measure is reliable if its factor loading is greater than 0.50. As shown in Table 3, the standardised factor loadings of all the items (attributes) range from 0.57 to 0.99, thus meeting the benchmark, supporting convergent validity at the item level. The value of 0.70 or more for Composite Reliability (CR) and 0.50 or higher for AVE is statistically considered adequate (Hair et al., 2010). The facts that CR and AVE scores in each destination (Table 3) are all greater than thresholds indicating that the constructs met statistical requirements accurately. These results provide convincing evidence in favor of inclusion of each attribute in the relevant construct. The bottom of Table 3 shows the correlation matrix for

the constructs. The diagonal units have been replaced by the square roots of the AVE. For discriminant validity to be considered adequate, these diagonal units (bolded figures in the Table 3) should be greater than the off-diagonal elements in the corresponding rows and columns. Results in Table 3 shows strong discriminant validity among the four theoretical constructs.

Table 3: Convergent and discriminant validity

Constructs and Attributes	Loliondo			L.Natron			Burunge		
	FL	CR	AVE	FL	CR	AVE	FL	CR	AVE
Ancillary services (AS)		0.94	0.70		0.95	0.75		0.95	0.69
23.Promptly health-care	0.87			0.92			0.91		
17.Visitor's centre	0.92			0.90			0.85		
21.Interaction with natives	0.86			0.88			0.90		
18. Reliable tour-guide	0.85			0.88			0.81		
24.Safe water and hygienity	0.76			0.84			0.86		
20.Pre-visit information	0.80			0.85			0.81		
19.Credit cards and ATMs	0.82			0.90			0.71		
22.Safety and security	0.78			0.76			0.82		
Amenities (AM)		0.93	0.66		0.93	0.71		0.92	0.63
16.Shopping on handcrafts	0.80			0.88			0.92		
14.Walking safari with sun set view	0.90			0.84			0.88		
10.Quality-food and accommodation	0.80			0.91			0.80		
13.Opportunity for Hiking/Mountaineering	0.86			0.94			0.67		
12.Value for money on food and accommodation	0.79			0.78			0.76		
11.Well maintained facilities (lodges, camps)	0.72			0.86			0.75		
15.Cultural dance entertainment	0.81			0.68			0.74		
Core Attractions (CA)		0.91	0.64		0.90	0.65		0.87	0.51
1.Easy wildlife viewing/accessible	0.86			0.95			0.66		
6. Friendliness of local residents	0.82			0.80			0.86		
2.Natural scenic beauty and calmness of the area	0.89			0.77			0.76		
5. Variety of cultural and artistic works	0.87			0.81			0.73		
4.Cultural and Historical uniqueness	0.69			0.76			0.69		
3.Variety of natural attractions	0.64			0.74			0.57		
Accessibility (AC)		0.95	0.85		.982	.96		0.98	0.96
9.Opportunity to access nearby destinations	0.91			0.99			0.98		
7.Quality of roads to and within destination	0.96			0.98			0.97		
8.Availability of air strips	0.90			0.97			0.99		

	Loliondo				L.Natron				Burunge			
	AS	AM	CA	AC	AS	AM	CA	AC	AS	AM	CA	AC
AS	**0.83**				**0.87**				**0.83**			
AM	0.02	**0.81**			0.08	**0.84**			0.08	**0.79**		
CA	0.26	0.19	**0.80**		0.05	0.08	**0.80**		0.03	0.09	**0.71**	
AC	0.04	0.21	0.20	**0.92**	0.04	0.07	0.08	**0.98**	0.04	0.01	0.02	**0.98**

FL: Factor Loading; CR: Composite Reliability; AVE: Average Variance Extracted; ATMs: Automatic Teller Machines.

This study found a four construct-model (AS, AM, CA and AC) to be suitable in describing tourists' perception on attribute-importance of GC-destinations. This is evidenced by several model fit indices: NC (normalised chi-square or chi-square value divided by the model's degrees of freedom = CMIN/DF), CFI (Comparative Fit Index), Standardised Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) and RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation). Results for Burunge are: χ^2 =337.80, df =244, p<0.000 or NC=1.38; CFI=0.97; SRMR=0.052, RMSEA=0.04 while for Loliondo: χ^2 =302.58, df =246, p<0.008 or NC=1.23; CFI=0.98; SRMR=0.055, RMSEA=0.04. The lake Natron results are: χ^2 =345.97, df =242, p<0.000 or NC=1.43; CFI=0.97; SRMR=0.041, RMSEA= 0.05. These results are within the threshold ranges for acceptable model fit recommended by Kline (2011): $1 \le NC \le 2$; $0.05 < SRMR, RMSEA \le 0.08$; $CFI \ge 0.90$

Gap analysis for Loliondo

Table 4 presents the paired-sample *t*-tests for mean differences between performance and importance. As shown, the mean values for importance, performance, and overall satisfaction were (M=3.52, SD =0.10), (M=3.76, SD =0.33), (M=4.92, SD=0.18), respectively. The attribute

"easy wildlife viewing/accessible" had the highest rating, which was also significant, on importance (*M* = 3.71, *SD*=0.74), *t* (120) = 2.48, *p* =0.01 (two tailed). The effect size was small, with a Cohen's *d* of 0.22. The attribute "walking safari with sun set view" was rated highest, and also significant on performance (*M* = 4.18, *SD*=0.80), *t* (120) = 6.34, *p* =0.001 (two tailed), medium effect size, with a Cohen's *d* of 0.57. In contrast, "reliable tour guide services" was rated lowest on importance (*M* = 3.36, *SD*=0.67), *t*(120) = 6.52, *p* =0.001 (two tailed), medium effect size, with a Cohen's *d* of 0.59 and "shopping on handcrafts" was rated lowest on performance (*M* = 3.13, *SD*=0.96), *t* (120) = -2.59, *p* =0.01 (two tailed). The effect size was small, with a Cohen's *d* of 0.24. In regard to the result of effect size, the attribute about the recreation activity of "afternoon-walking while the sun is setting", appeared to create excite experience to tourists, thus, it had a good effect size of 0.57 in the performance. On the other hand, the underlying reason of tourists visiting Loliondo was least influenced by "reliability of tour guide services" attribute. This attribute had the good effective size of 0.59. This is due to pre-conceived notion by tourists that reliable tour guide services can be available in the protected areas and not in GCs.

Table 4: Loliondo: Results of paired sample t-test (n=121) (5-point Likert- type scale)

Attributes	Performance		Importance		Difference			
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	*t*-value	Sig.
1.Easy wildlife viewing/accessible	3.93	0.51	3.71	0.74	0.21	0.95	2.48	0.01
2.Natural scenic beauty and calmness of the area	3.88	0.61	3.66	0.90	0.21	1.12	2.11	0.03
3.Variety of natural attractions	3.86	0.56	3.48	0.99	0.38	1.14	3.66	0.00
4.Cultural and Historical uniqueness	3.32	0.58	3.59	0.89	-0.26	1.00	-2.89	0.01
5. Variety of cultural and artistic works	3.90	0.62	3.67	0.95	0.23	1.18	2.14	0.03
6. Friendliness of local residents	3.84	0.57	3.57	1.01	0.27	1.23	2.43	0.01
7.Quality of roads to and within destination	3.15	0.58	3.45	0.87	-0.30	0.93	-3.58	0.00
8.Availability of air strips	3.75	0.85	3.54	0.88	0.21	1.17	2.00	0.04
9.Opportunity to access nearby destinations	3.79	0.81	3.45	0.89	0.33	1.15	3.21	0.00
10.Quality-food and accommodation	3.84	0.83	3.50	0.93	0.33	1.36	2.73	0.00
11.Well maintained facilities (lodges, camps)	4.14	0.82	3.65	0.91	0.48	1.15	4.64	0.00
12.Value for money on food and accommodation	3.81	0.84	3.53	0.94	0.28	1.35	2.28	0.02
13. Opportunity for hiking/Mountaineering	3.86	0.82	3.47	0.96	0.38	1.36	3.13	0.00
14. Walking safari with sun set view	4.18	0.80	3.46	1.00	0.71	1.24	6.34	0.00
15.Cultural dance entertainment	3.41	0.67	3.63	0.91	-0.21	1.14	-2.05	0.04
16.Shopping on handcrafts items	3.13	0.96	3.45	0.98	-0.32	1.36	-2.59	0.01
17.Visitor's centre	3.25	0.96	3.50	0.79	-0.24	1.26	-2.15	0.03
18. Reliable tour guide	4.02	0.89	3.36	0.67	0.65	1.10	6.52	0.00
19.Credit card ATM services	3.17	0.95	3.40	0.73	-0.23	1.22	-2.08	0.04
20.Pre-visit information	4.06	0.89	3.45	0.73	0.61	1.12	6.00	0.00
21. Interaction with natives	4.03	0.88	3.39	0.72	0.64	1.12	6.30	0.00
22. Safety and security	3.97	0.90	3.46	0.71	0.50	1.11	4.95	0.00
23.Promptly health-care services	4.05	0.87	3.40	0.63	0.65	1.09	6.56	0.00
24. Safe water and hygienity	4.02	0.88	3.63	0.78	0.39	1.16	3.74	0.00
Grand Mean.	**3.76**		**3.52**					
Overall satisfaction (Mean)	**4.92**							

The *t*-Tests showed that all 24 pairs were significantly different. Six attributes: cultural and historical uniqueness, quality of roads to and within destination, cultural dance entertainment, eshopping on handcrafts items, visitor centre and availability of credit cards and ATM services were significantly lower in performance than in importance. Poor performance of these attributes least affected the overall satisfaction score, because the remaining 18 attributes, had substantially higher performance than importance**.**

Importance-performance mapping analysis for Loliondo

From Figure 3, four attributes (1,2,5,6) underlining tourist "Core Attraction-factor", two attributes (11 and 12) reflecting "Amenities factor", one attribute (8) reflecting "Accessibility factor" and one attribute (24) reflecting "Ancillary Services factor" are located in the "keep up the good work" quadrant. Attribute 4, reflecting "Core Attractions factor", attribute 15

reflecting "amenities factor" and attribute 17 reflecting "Ancillary Services factor" are in the "concentrate here" quadrant. The remaining attributes are allocated in other quadrants (Fig.3). The implications of these attributes are explained in the section of managerial implications where emphasise is on "concentrate here" and "possible overkill" quadrants.

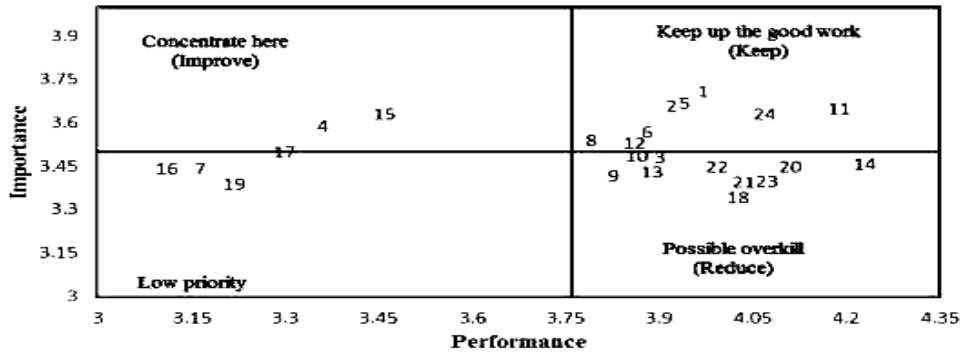

Figure 3: Importance–performance map of destination attributes in Loliondo.

Gap analysis for lake Natron

Table 5 shows the results of paired-sample t-tests for mean differences between performance and importance.

Table 5: Lake Natron: Results of paired sample t-test (n=138) (5-point Likert- type scale).

Attributes	Performance		Importance		Difference			
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	*t*-value	Sig.
1.Easy wildlife viewing/accessible	4.12	0.78	3.89	0.78	0.22	1.12	2.34	0.02
2.Natural scenic beauty and calmness of the area	4.09	0.73	3.66	0.73	0.42	1.16	4.31	0.00
3.Variety of natural attractions	4.03	0.73	3.67	0.73	0.36	1.24	3.40	0.00
4.Cultural and Historical uniqueness	4.12	0.77	3.72	0.77	0.39	1.15	4.05	0.00
5. Variety of cultural and artistic works	3.86	0.72	3.74	0.72	0.11	1.16	1.16	0.24
6. Friendliness of local residents	4.14	0.73	3.72	0.73	0.42	1.18	4.22	0.00
7.Quality of roads to and within destination	2.89	0.86	3.69	0.86	-0.79	1.16	-8.02	0.00
8.Availability of air strips	3.94	0.86	3.70	0.86	0.24	1.24	2.32	0.02
9.Opportunity to access nearby destinations	3.96	0.84	3.68	0.84	0.27	1.23	2.61	0.01
10.Quality-food and accommodation	3.45	1.28	3.83	1.28	-0.38	1.46	-3.07	0.00
11.Well maintained facilities (lodges, camps)	3.03	1.05	3.79	1.05	-0.76	1.36	-6.55	0.00
12.Value for money on food and accommodation	3.03	1.05	3.80	1.05	-0.76	1.41	-6.39	0.00
13. Opportunity for hiking/Mountaineering	4.21	0.44	3.84	0.44	0.37	1.11	3.89	0.00
14. Walking safari with sun set view	4.14	0.50	3.78	0.50	0.35	1.15	3.62	0.00
15.Cultural dance entertainment	4.12	0.55	3.69	0.55	0.42	0.98	5.12	0.00
16.Shopping on handcrafts items	4.16	0.47	3.76	0.47	0.39	1.14	4.09	0.00
17.Visitor's centre	4.80	0.39	3.35	0.39	1.45	0.87	19.61	0.00
18. Reliable tour guide	3.84	0.67	3.26	0.67	0.58	0.95	7.11	0.00
19.Credit card ATM services	2.50	0.94	3.29	0.94	-0.79	1.13	-8.16	0.00
20.Pre-visit information	3.67	0.72	3.37	0.72	0.30	1.03	3.47	0.00
21. Interaction with natives	3.81	0.64	3.21	0.64	0.60	0.95	7.39	0.00
22. Safety and security	3.64	0.63	3.39	0.63	0.25	1.04	2.86	0.00
23.Promptly health-care services	3.12	0.58	3.30	0.58	-0.18	0.89	-2.39	0.01
24. Safe water and hygienity	3.20	0.61	3.38	0.61	-0.17	1.00	-2.11	0.03
Grand Mean.	**3.74**		**3.60**					
Overall satisfaction (Mean)	**4.79**							

The mean values for importance, performance, and overall satisfaction were (*M*=3.60, *SD* =0.21), (*M*=3.74, *SD* =0.28), (*M*=4.79, *SD*=0.28), respectively. The attribute "easy wildlife viewing/accessible" had the highest rating, which was also significant, on importance (*M* = 3.89, *SD*=0.78), *t* (137) = 2.34, *p* =0.021 (two tailed). The effect size was small, with a Cohen's *d* of 0.20. The item/attribute "visitor's centre" was rated highest on performance (*M* = 4.80, *SD*=0.39), *t* (137) = 19.61, *p* =0.01 (two tailed), a small effect size, with a Cohen's *d* of 1.67. However, "interaction with natives" was rated lowest on importance (*M* = 3.21, *SD*=0.64), *t*

(137) = 7.39, p =0.01 (two tailed). The effect size was above medium, with a Cohen's d of 0.63. The "promptly health-care" was rated lowest on performance (M = 3.12, SD=0.58), t (137) = -2.39, p =0.01 (two tailed), a small effect size, with a Cohen's d of 0.20.

The effect size on the attribute "interaction with natives" imply that tourists in lake Natron would prefer minimal interaction with natives at their households (Maasai Bomas). The fact that there is well organised visitor's centre with about 85 local tour guides and museum managed by native Maasai, appeared to be adequate for accessing cultural information, thus reducing any extra need of interacting with natives. Despite higher rating in importance for attribute "easy wildlife viewing/accessible", this attribute had small effect size, implying that tourists at this destination are not first time-visitors.

With exception to one item, "Variety of cultural and artistic works" the t-Tests results showed that 23 pairs were significantly different. Seven attributes scored significantly lower in performance than in importance. These attributes include: quality of roads to and within destination, quality-food and accommodation, well maintained facilities (lodges, camps), value for money spent on food and accommodation, availability of credit cards and automatic teller machines (ATM) services, promptly health-care, safe water and hygienity. The remaining 16 items, had a significantly higher performance than importance**.** Therefore, since the number of well performing attributes outweigh underperformed ones, the overall satisfaction score stood high.

Importance-performance mapping analysis for lake Natron

Figure 4 shows the importance–performance map of destination attributes in lake Natron

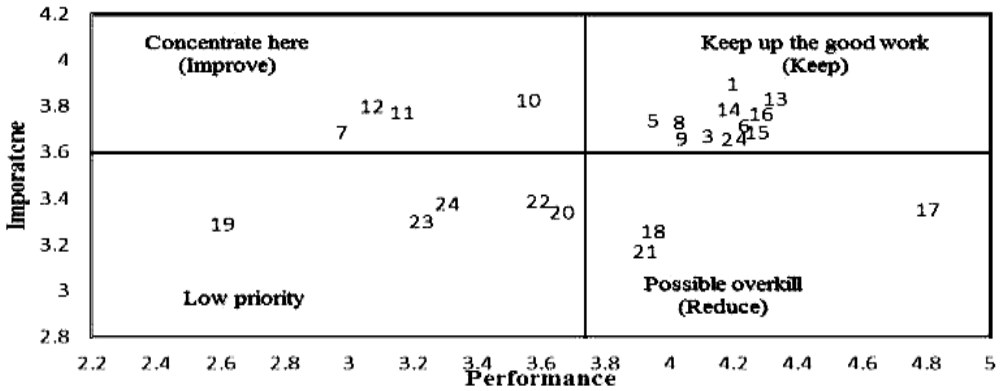

Figure 4: Importance–performance map of destination attributes in lake Natron

The figure 4 contains six attributes (1-6) underlining tourist "Core Attraction-factor", four attributes (13-16) reflecting "Amenities factor", two attributes (8 and 9) reflecting on "Accessibility factor" are located in the "keep up the good work" quadrant. Three attributes (10-12) reflecting "Amenities factor" and attribute 7 reflecting on "Accessibility factor" are in the "concentrate here" quadrant. The remaining attributes are allocated in other quadrants (Fig.4). Section of Managerial implications contains explanation on the implications of these attributes, especially those in "concentrate here" and "possible overkill" quadrants.

Gap analysis for Burunge

Table 6 displays the results for paired-sample t-tests for mean differences between performance and importance. The mean values for importance and performance and overall satisfaction were *(*M=3.50, SD =0.34), (M=3.68., SD =0.12), (M=4.97, SD=0.35), respectively. The attribute "easy wildlife viewing/accessible" had an outstanding score on importance and

performance. This attribute had the highest rating, which was also significant, on importance (M = 3.80, SD =0.80), t (162) = 4.10, p =0.001 (two tailed). The effect size was small, with a Cohen's d of 0.32. However, "reliable tour guide services" was rated lowest on importance (M = 3.30, SD=0.69), t (162) = 4.97, p =0.001 (two tailed), a small effect size with a Cohen's d of 0.39. The "visitor's centres" were rated lowest on performance (M = 2.86, SD=0.50), t (162) = -8.56, p =0.001 (two tailed), above medium effect size with a Cohen's d of 0.67.

Table 6: Burunge: Results of paired sample t-test (n=163) (5-point Likert- type scale)

Attributes	Performance		Importance		Difference			
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	*t*-value	Sig.
1.Easy wildlife viewing/accessible	4.13	0.68	3.80	0.80	0.33	1.03	4.10	0.00
2.Natural scenic beauty and calmness of the area	4.10	0.68	3.59	0.78	0.52	1.01	6.48	0.00
3.Variety of natural attractions	4.06	0.72	3.66	0.94	0.40	1.16	4.35	0.00
4.Cultural and Historical uniqueness	4.07	0.72	3.40	0.84	0.66	1.13	7.45	0.00
5. Variety of cultural and artistic works	4.04	0.73	3.44	0.91	0.60	1.13	6.78	0.00
6. Friendliness of local residents	4.00	0.67	3.58	0.81	0.42	1.06	5.00	0.00
7.Quality of roads to and within destination	3.74	0.71	3.48	0.79	0.26	1.09	3.01	0.00
8.Availability of air strips	3.51	0.67	3.47	0.80	0.04	1.03	0.53	0.59
9.Opportunity to access nearby destinations	3.49	0.67	3.46	0.81	0.03	1.03	0.37	0.70
10.Quality-food and accommodation	3.82	0.85	3.51	0.85	0.31	1.28	3.05	0.00
11.Well maintained facilities (lodges, camps)	3.86	0.82	3.59	0.86	0.27	1.21	2.84	0.00
12.Value for money on food and accommodation	3.37	0.86	3.60	0.82	-0.23	1.18	-2.45	0.01
13. Opportunity for hiking/Mountaineering	3.17	0.47	3.50	0.78	-0.33	0.93	-4.54	0.00
14. Walking safari with sun set view	3.90	0.86	3.61	0.88	0.28	0.10	2.82	0.00
15.Cultural dance entertainment	3.87	0.85	3.67	0.85	0.20	1.18	2.12	0.03
16.Shopping on handcrafts items	3.39	0.59	3.62	0.89	-0.23	1.11	-2.67	0.00
17.Visitor's centre	2.86	0.50	3.49	0.81	-0.63	0.94	-8.56	0.00
18. Reliable tour guide	3.66	0.60	3.30	0.69	0.36	0.92	4.97	0.00
19.Credit card ATM services	3.01	1.02	3.35	0.74	-0.34	1.30	-3.36	0.00
20.Pre-visit information	3.70	0.61	3.40	0.75	0.30	0.99	3.85	0.00
21. Interaction with natives	3.52	0.63	3.34	0.73	0.18	1.03	2.20	0.02
22. Safety and security	3.67	0.58	3.40	0.79	0.27	1.00	3.42	0.00
23.Promptly health-care services	3.69	0.60	3.33	0.73	0.36	0.96	4.80	0.00
24. Safe water and hygienity	3.69	0.61	3.53	0.80	0.17	0.98	2.15	0.03
Grand Mean.	**3.68**		**3.50**					
Overall satisfaction (Mean)	**4.97**							

In regard to the effect size, the attribute "availability of reliable tour guides", played a small role (d = 0.39) among attributes tourists perceived important in Burunge. Moreover, despite the presence of visitor's centre, it was observed to be less active in terms of issuing reception services to the arriving tourists. Therefore, the attribute "visitors centre" performed poorly with largest effect size of 0.67. Wildlife viewing was rated higher in importance and in performance compared to any other attribute. However, the effect size for this attribute was small. This may imply that tourists are the repeat visitors to this destination, such that they have had some prior experience about core attractions of this destination.

The t-tests results showed that only two attributes (8 and 9) were not significant different out of total 24 pairs. Five attributes were significantly lower in performance than in importance. The attributes are: value for money spent on food and accommodation, opportunity for hiking/mountaineering, shopping on handcrafts, visitor's centre, availability of credit cards and ATM services. The remaining 17 attributes, had a significantly higher performance than importance**.** This finding has an implication on overall satisfaction being higher at 4.97 because fewer (five) attributes were observed to perform less than importance.

Importance-performance mapping analysis for Burunge

Figure 5 contains four attributes (1, 2, 3 and 6) underlining tourist "Core Attraction-factor", four attributes (10, 11, 14 and 15) reflecting on "Amenities factor", one attribute (24) reflecting on "Ancillary service factor" are located in the "keep up the good work" quadrant. Two attributes (12 and 16) reflecting on "Amenities" are in the "concentrate here" quadrant. The remaining attributes are allocated in other quadrants (Fig.5). The explanation of quadrant contents, especially the "concentrate here" and "possible overkill" is in the section of Managerial implication.

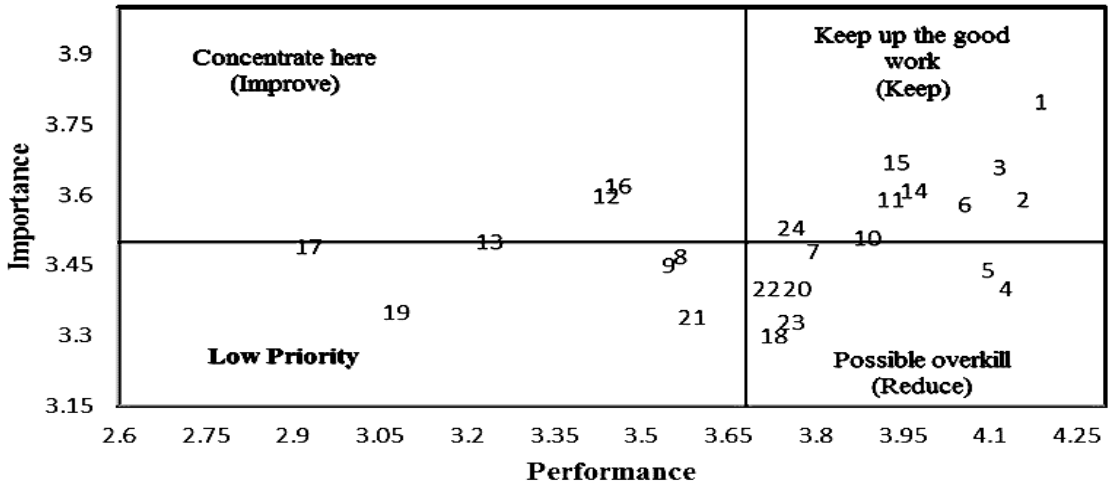

Figure 5: Importance–performance map of destination attributes in Burunge

Discussion of findings and managerial implications

Discussion of findings and managerial implications for Loliondo

From IPA map of Loliondo (figure 3) in the quadrant "concentrate here", there are three attributes that requires destination manager's intervention. These attributes are: cultural and historical uniqueness, cultural dance entertainment and visitors centre. Despite the fact that, the destination is endowed with rich Maasai culture, it is very unfortunate that little is done on cultural aspect of tourism. Therefore, destination managers should concentrate on establishing cultural facilities coupled with activities. These include, the Maasai museum, exhibition, ritual events, sport and dancing competition. In regard to attributes in the "possible overkill" (reduce) quadrant, destination managers may consider reducing the budget associating with disseminating pre-visit information because the destination image seemed to have already been well positioned in the minds of its loyal customers. Similarly, the managers may consider maintaining and not increasing the current level of human and financial resources relating to safety matters. This is due to the fact that, for the last five years there has not been an occurrence of any incidents of accidents (fire outbreak, injuries or deaths from wildlife attack) to the tourists. Also, there is no report on safety challenges relating to recreational activities such as hiking and walking safaris.

Discussion of findings and managerial implications for Lake Natron

Destination accessibility and amenities factors are the major aspects observed from IPA map of lake Natron (Fig 4) in the quadrant "concentrate here". Destination managers should allocate more resources to recruit professional chef, improve interior décor, address unhygienic environment by ensuring cleanliness of washrooms and moderate the perceived unreasonably high prices for food and accommodation. The availability of flight services to the destination are perceived to be expensive as majority of visitors use road network which no any serious

efforts have been done to improve it to tarmac status. Since road network is a public good, then destination managers and District planning department should establish a Public Private Partnership (PPP) road construction projects. Along this infrastructure improvement, the local tour guides can make some contributions. For instance, the Maasai museum centre which also supervise tour-guides services among its 85 local tour guides may decide to have a 1.5 US$ taken from each payment of 20 US$ per tourist and use the money to improve road condition. This proposed contribution from the museum is in line with the attributes in the "possible overkill" (reduce) quadrant which highly relates with presence of visitor's centre (reception services and museum). The importance value attached to the centre by tourists can be increased with improvement in destination accessibility, especially during early rains of November that coincide with the end of year tourism season.

Discussion of findings and managerial implications for Burunge

The attributes shopping on handcrafts and value for money on food and accommodation are the major concern observed from IPA map of Loliondo (Fig.5) in the quadrant "concentrate here". Therefore, destination Managers should review their pricing policies on food and accommodation so that they reflect the deserved value. Moreover, destination managers should establish a business linkage with local entrepreneurs dealing with handcraft products because tourists prefer to transact directly with local residents and not curio shops in their lodges. To address the attributes in the "possible overkill" (reduce) quadrant, destination managers may consider reducing the efforts to promote the already known cultural and artistic works existing at the moment and focus on unexhibited cultural products such as, traditional wedding events, food and seasonal ritual events. Moreover, the managers may consider retaining and not increasing the current level of human and financial resources towards safety matters. This is emphasised basing on realisation that for the past five years there has not been any report of accidents (fire outbreak, injuries or deaths from wildlife attack) to the tourists. Also, there is no report on safety challenges relating to recreational activities such as hiking and walking safaris.

Theoretical contribution

This study was underpinned by expectancy-disconfirmation theory which was executed through 'attribute-importance and performance model' featuring Buhalis (2000) destination attribute-model. It was found a four construct-model; Ancillary services, Amenities, Core Attractions and Accessibility, is suitable in describing tourists' perception towards satisfaction. This means, the two constructs namely, "Available packages" and "Activities" which are present in the parent model constituting "6 As-constructs" proposed by Buhalis (2000), are not specified in this study. This observation can be considered a contribution of this study in specifying the components of the popular parent model. Thus, some and not all of Buhalis' destination attribute-model are relevant in the context of GCs destinations. The contents of four-construct model are discussed in the following section.

Accessibility

Burunge is easily accessible being nearby Arusha City for about 120 Km, along the major Arusha-Dodoma road. On the other hand, Loliondo destination is privileged to have Wasso airstrip and a 45minutes drive to Lobo airstrip which is in Serengeti national park. About 697% of tourists to Loliondo use air transport with the 'game package' (transport to and from nearby airport with full board services) as the main travel arrangement. Thus, accessibility to these two destinations is performing well compared to lake Natron, where, despite the presence of airstrip, visitors use road network which no any serious efforts have been done to improve it to

tarmac status. The transportation challenge at lake Natron is supported by study conducted by Philemon (2018) where road transportation in some Tanzania destinations was among the attributes where tourists are dissatisfied. Tourists accessibility challenge in lake Natron has an implication to local resident's livelihoods. This means, if the lake Natron destination would be easily accessible, then, number of tourists could be above 6,000, compared to the current number of 5,805 (Table 1). In turn, increased number of visitors could have more effect on tourism revenue and spending pattern of tourism receipts, leading to improved livelihoods among residents beyond the current status. As shown in Figure 6, tourism receipts and spending pattern over the years in GCs have been benefiting residents' material (physical infrastructure) by 15.58% and non-material resources (skill enhancement through training and access to health and education services) by 61.89% and 22.53% on other expenditure (administrative overhead expenses) to enhance their livelihoods.

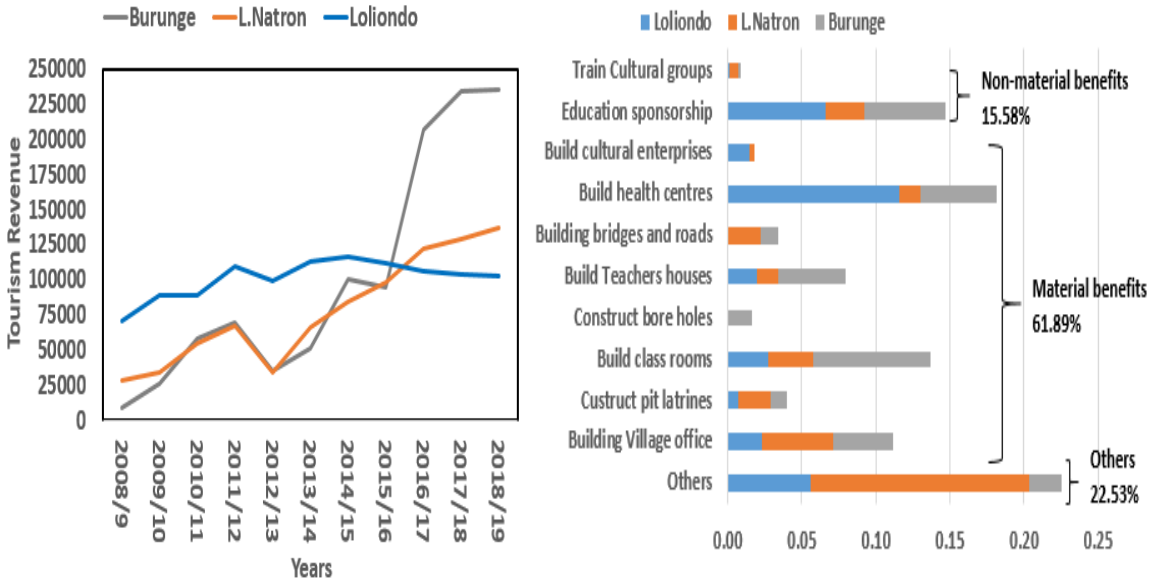

Figure 6: Tourism revenue (in US$) and spending pattern in gateway communities

Amenities

In comparison to Burunge and loliondo, lake Natron was found to have more attributes relating to amenities, performing poorly. These attributes include; quality of food and accommodation, value for money spent on food and accommodation and maintained lodge/camp facilities. These findings are in line with Anderson (2011) and Philemon (2018) who observed shortcomings in Tanzania tourism service performance with regard to unattractive menus, improper presentation, and lack of meals variety. Others include: unhygienic conditions, interior decor, ridiculously high prices coupled with less maintained washrooms in the restaurants. Amenities challenges were associate more with standard lodges charging 40-180 US$ per night and not luxury lodges which are exceptional in amenities, Moreover, lake Natron outweigh Burunge and Loliondo in performance of cultural dance entertainment and shopping on handcraft items.

Ancillary services

Similar to poor performance in amenities, lake Natron, compared to Burunge and Loliondo, was found to perform relatively poor in ancillary services. For instance, lake Natron was the only destination with poor performance in attributes: promptly health care and emergency services and safe water supply and maintained hygiene. Never the less, lake Natron occupied

the upper hand compared to Burunge and Loliondo in the attribute visitors centre (reception services with Maasai museum) which is lacking in Loliondo and less active in Burunge. Furthermore, all three destinations performed poorly on attribute availability of credit card services, ATM and high-speed internet. This situation is contributed by inadequate availability of electricity power supply in Loliondo and lake Natron.

Core attractions

All three destinations performed well in attributes relating to Core Attractions as average performance score was relatively higher than average importance score. These attributes include: easy wildlife viewing, natural scenic beauty and calmness, variety of natural attractions, variety of cultural and artistic works, historical uniqueness and friendliness of local residents. Performance of cultural and natural attractions as seen in the quadrant "keep up the good work" in each destination implies effective conservation of these core tourist's attractions. This finding is similar with the findings of Wade and Eagles (2003), Okello and Yerian (2009) and Philemon (2018) that performance of nature-based destinations in northern circuit of Tanzania is highly influenced by abundance of natural attractions, with biodiversity. In the WEF annual report (2019) for competitiveness of world economies in the global tourism market Tanzania ranks 12th globally due to its numerous World Heritage natural sites (18th), impressive wildlife (12th) and habitat protection (10th).

Overall tourist's satisfaction

Although the overall tourist's satisfaction was 4.92, 4.79 and 4.97, in a 5-point Likert scale, for Loliondo, lake Natron and Burunge respectively, there is significant difference between perceived attribute importance and performance. For instance, in all destinations, there are five to seven attributes, out of 24 whose performances are significantly lower than importance (Table 4, 5 and 6). Therefore, overall satisfaction among tourists is likely to be relatively more when adequate number of tourism destination attributes considered important by tourists are perceived to perform well at the expense of fewer attributes whose average performance is lower than tourists perceived importance.

Conclusion and future studies recommendations

This study employed quantitative design to identify and confirm tourism destination attributes that have shaped tourists' perception and satisfaction at the development stage of the tourism destination life-cycle of three GCs destination in northern Tanzania. The study identified 24 attributes that reflected on four constructs, namely Amenities, Accessibility, Core Attractions and Ancillary services, basing on Buhalis (2000) conceptualisation of destination attributes. Further, the IPA technique was used to measure attribute importance and performance scores from tourists' perspectives so as to identify crucial areas for improvement in accelerating further the development of tourism destinations. According to the findings, Core Attraction attributes (wildlife and culture) are the top priority important aspects influencing tourists' decision to visit these three destinations and also, performance of these attributes determines tourists' satisfaction.

The fact that tourists are satisfied more by Core Attraction have an implication that the natural resource are still at its pristine state. These destinations are currently in the development stage of life cycle (Mwongoso et al., 2021) and not at the stagnation or decline stage where socio-economic and environmental carrying capacity challenges negatively affects both residents' attitude towards tourist and tourists' attractiveness with destination attributes (Látková & Vogt, 2012). Given the current stage of the GCs destination life cycle and the fact that tourists are generally satisfied with destinations attributes, there is higher possibility of

repeat visit among tourists, leading to increased tourist revenue to host villages and improvement of residents' livelihood through community projects funded by tourism revenue.

This study concludes that, tourists' perception and satisfaction are shaped by the quality and quantity of attributes available in GC destinations, which are at the development stage of tourism area life cycle. It is probable that, different results and conclusion can be observed in other GC destinations experiencing different stages of destination life cycle within SSA. Furthermore, as this study examined tourists' perceptions and satisfaction derived from destination attributes using homogeneous sample, further studies may consider stratified samples of tourists' perceptions and satisfaction basing on socio-demographic characteristics.

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