

ASSESSMENT OF CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE AND ITS RELATIVE EFFECTS ON
CUSTOMER EMOTIONS AND PURCHASE BEHAVIOURAL INTENTIONS IN FOUR
& FIVE STAR HOTELS IN KENYA

BY

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DECLARATION

Student's Declaration

I **Chepngetich Beatrice** declares that, except where duly acknowledged and referenced, this research thesis is entirely my own work and has not been submitted for any doctorate degree or other qualification in Maseno University or any other tertiary or higher institution of learning.

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DEDICATION

To my loving husband, Patrick, thank you for your practical and emotional support as I doubled up the role of wife, mother and student.

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To God be the Glory.

ABSTRACT

Growth and survival of hotel industry depends on its ability to manage and create memorable experiences which are still among major challenges in the industry. Whilst realizing the gap between what customers desire from their experiences, firms are challenged to define experience, identify its determinants and engineer their experiences in order to make them better for the customer, organization and staff. The main study objective was to assess customer experience and its relative effects on customer emotions and purchase behavioural intentions in four- and five-star hotels in Kenya. The specific objectives were to: investigate how hotels design and improve customer experiences; examine items defining structure of customer experience; analyse extent to which customer experience influence customer emotions and purchase behavioural intentions; establish relationship among customer experience, emotions and purchase behavioural intentions and establish mediating role of customer emotions in the relationship between customer experience and purchase behavioural intentions. Embedded mixed method research design was adopted. Four and five star hotels within Nairobi (26), Kisumu (1) and Mombasa (6) were assessed. The study population consisted of 33 marketing managers and 3801 guests who stayed in the selected hotels. Marketing managers who participated in the study were selected using convenience sampling and 349 guests were selected as the sample size using multistage sampling procedure. Data were collected using structured interviews conducted with marketing managers and self-administered questionnaires to guests in the hotels. Data from interviews were analyzed using framework analysis. Data from the questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics which included principal axis factoring, correlation, structural equation modelling and bootstrapping. Qualitative findings revealed that organizations should define experience, manage its elements, have all departments be involved in the service design process and be informed of the company's guiding principles to embed into all areas of training. The findings indicated that the respondents agreed with the 35 dimensions as describing their perceptions about customer experience as their means were >4 . Quantitative results proved that experience is composed of humanic, functional and mechanic dimensions which impact on customers' perception of overall experience and some dimensions played a more significant role in the customer's service experience evaluation process than others. Regression results showed that only humanic factor had significant influence on purchase behaviour ($\beta = .17$, $t = 1.94$, $p = .05$) while the other factors had no significant influence. The three customer experience factors with customer emotions accounted for 44% of the total variance explained in behavioural intentions. Mediation results showed that customer emotions fully mediates the relationship between functional factor and purchase behaviour ($\beta = .08$, $t = 1.97$, $p = .05$, VAF = 200%), partially mediates the relationship between humanic factor and purchase behaviour ($\beta = .14$, $t = 3.24$, $p = .00$, VAF = 45%) and mechanic factor and purchase behaviour ($\beta = .11$, $t = 2.21$, $p = .03$, VAF = 50%). Managers should focus on hotel operations' aspects important to the customer and recognize their significance in influencing emotions and purchase behavior. Further studies should be conducted to investigate how individuals of different genders, regions, age and purpose of visit evaluate customer experience.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMNS

AVE	Average Variance Extracted
CB-SEM	Covariance Based-Structural Equation Modelling
CE	Customer Emotions
CEM	Customer Experience Management
CES	Customer Emotion Set
CFA	Confirmatory Factor Analysis
CRM	Customer Relationship Management
EFA	Exploratory Factor Analysis
FCF	Functional Clue Factor
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HCF	Humanic Clue Factor
MCF	Mechanic Clue Factor
NCST	National Council for Science and Technology
PAF	Principal Axis Factoring
PB	Purchase Behavior
PLS	Partial Least Squares
PLS-SEM	Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling
SEM	Structural Equation Modelling
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Science
TQM	Total Quality Management
VAF	Variance Accounted For
VIF	Variance Inflation Factor
WTTC	World Travel & Tourism Council
α	Cronbach's Alpha
β	Standardized Beta Values

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

Customer experience: Refers to the consumers' total outcome from a unique combination of environment, products and services purchased and consumed.

Customer Experience Management (CEM): Is the process of strategically managing a customer's entire experience with a product or a company,

Customer Emotions: Are "intentional" phenomenon that involve a subject-object relationship and have the property of "felt state of action readiness".

Hotel: A commercial establishment which offers lodging, food and beverage, entertainment and other facilities such as conference to people away from home.

Purchase behavioural Intentions: A measure of the strength of one's intention to perform a specific behavior such as repurchase, recommend a product or say positive words about a product.

Touch point: Any occasion on which a customer encounters the product and service from actual experience to personal or mass communication to casual observation

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Tourism is Kenya's most important industry, after agriculture. According to the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC), it is responsible for 8.8 percent of GDP and 8.3 percent of total employment (Economic Report, 2018). In 2018, travel and tourism in Kenya grew by 5.6% which makes Kenya the third largest tourism economy in Sub-Saharan Africa after South Africa and Nigeria. Kenya's international tourists' arrivals stood at 2.03 million in 2018. The Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife has set a target of attracting 2.5 million international tourists annually by the end of 2024 and 3 million by 2030. The sector's performance is below the MTP II annual targets but on a recovery path. For the country to move towards its achievement, focus on the standards and quality of hospitality and tourism facilities is paramount. Although Kenya receives a high volume of tourists, there are significant gaps between arrivals and receipts that seem to reflect on the packaging of tourism products. Furthermore, the sector has been susceptible to market price fluctuations, increasing competition in the region, political instability and the recent global recession.

To address the mismatch between arrivals and revenues there is need to re-look at the packaging of tourism products with a view to exploring the untapped product diversity. Further diversification and improvement of tourism products and joint efforts in tourism promotion are needed to sustain development of the sector in Kenya. According to the ministry of tourism, tourism and hotel industry should scale up and diversify its products to create other ways of generating income by making the experience more attractive to a wide cross-section of tourists. In today's globalized world, the competitive battlegrounds of differentiators are changing than ever before (Mascarenhas *et al.*, 2006). Nowadays, customers are offered with enormous amount of product or service options on a worldwide basis. As such, change of demands in customers' tastes and preferences increases (Arnould *et al.*, 2005). In consequence there is a weak access to market and operational intelligence, a lack of management resources, market power and little or no financial institutional backing. With the passage of time, by examining the evolving market trends, companies have also been shifting their emphasis on various differentiators.

To stay competitive, many companies have adopted approaches like Customer Relationship Management (CRM). However, research revealed that implementing CRM did not bring the results that marketers have expected (Meyer & Schwager, 2007; Schmitt, 2003; Palmer, 2010). Given the formidable facts of rapid shifts in business environments and customers' demands pose the challenges to achieve sustainable competitive advantages in the long run (Gentile *et al.*, 2007). Hotel is essentially a service industry or, perhaps more accurately, an amalgam of service industries. Consequently, its management practices are typically concerned with such issues as quality and productivity as they fall within the field of services marketing. While these concerns are critical, they may only be telling part of the management story. The other side of the story is the '*psychological environment*'; that is, the subjective personal reactions and feelings experienced by consumers when they consume a service. This phenomenon has been termed the service experience and has recently been found to be an important part of consumer evaluation of and satisfaction with services (Orsingher & Marzocchi, 2003).

Hotel industry is now placing the hope on the concept of "customer experience", a relatively new approach to become customer oriented. Customer experiences are extremely relevant to the hotel industry. Since hospitality and tourism is an experience-intensive service industry, travelers are likely to pay much attention to their travel and visit experiences (Ali *et al.*, 2014). Such vibrant enthusiasm in experience notion in consequence, proposed a new management framework to increase companies' differentiation capabilities named Customer Experience Management (CEM). Customer Experience Management (CEM) has become a major organisational change initiative, mostly led from the marketing function. Total Quality Management (TQM), so helpful in manufacturing, was repurposed to the service sectors as service quality as the service economy began to dominate. Whilst realising the "gap" between traditional quality management practices and that which customers desire from their experiences, firms are challenged to define experience, make it operational and manage its implementation effectively. Acknowledging the importance of customer experiences in hospitality and tourism industry therefore leads to three fundamental inquiries: What is customer experience? What are the factors that influence customer experiences? How do customer experiences benefit the service providers? (Cetin & Dincer, 2014). Despite its

significance and coverage, recent literature related to hospitality and tourism, the notion of creating and managing experiences remain vague (Walls *et al.*, 2011). Hence, this is a phenomenon that merits greater attention namely, exploring a more comprehensive theoretical framework and confirming its robustness.

A challenge that seems to be emerging from the literature is how organizations can systematically engineer their customer experiences (Carbone and Haeckel 1994) in order to achieve the “triple bottom line” i.e. to make them not only better for the customer but also better for the organization’s staff and better for its “bottom line” i.e. cheaper and more efficient (Bate & Robert 2007). There appears to be a knowledge gap about how, at a more strategic level, organizations can go about improving specifically their customer experiences to try to achieve a triple bottom line. This paper attempts to respond to this challenge by taking a grounded approach to customer experience and investigating how organizations actually go about designing and improving their customer experiences.

Recently, focusing on customers’ wellbeing via customer experience is gaining importance among both academics and practitioners (Palmer, 2010; Schmitt, 2003; Voss *et al.*, 2008). There are a number of conceptual papers on customer experiences; however, these theories have only been verified by a few empirical studies resulting in insufficient clarification about customer experience determinants (Laderia, Costa & Santini, 2012). In addition, literature related to customer experiences may be considered as complex, inconsistent, indecisive, and subjective (Cetin & Dincer, 2014). There are many viewpoints on the definition, antecedents, variables, measurement, and impacts of customer experiences (Kim & Brown, 2012). These recent discoveries have been positive and point out the significance of a comprehensive synthesis. Hence, this study looks at determinants of customer experiences with regard to guest satisfaction and intentions to revisit the hotel which can contribute towards deriving a comprehensive framework. In addition the methods and measurements used, only described customer experiences by general measures without distinguishing the importance of variables. This study will contribute to closing this knowledge gap by exploring customer service experiences from the customer’s point of view, and by studying the dimensions of

customer service experiences, which are regarded as the mechanisms that evoke customer experiences.

Service marketing literature has also initially focused on service quality and on service value creation recently (Martín et al., 2008) as the key to achieving excellent customer service experiences. However, customers evaluate their experiences and build their service relationships taking into account not only the attributes of the service, but also the outcomes and consequences that those attributes cause on them. The benefits the customer gets from using and experiencing the service includes how they perceive they have profited or gained from the service provided and their experience of it, i.e. how well their requirements and needs have been met. Another outcome of the service from a customer's point of view will be their conscious or unconscious assessment of the service provided (Zomerdijk and Voss 2010), the perceived value of the service received (Bitner and Hubbert 1994, Oliver 1997) and their overall satisfaction or dissatisfaction (an emotion) (Carbone, 2004). These judgments, good, bad or indifferent, will result in intentions, such as the intention to repurchase or not, the intention to recommend it to others, or the intention to complain or not. These intentions may or may not result in action. A review of literature shows that several researchers have sought to put forward a range of elements that influence consumer experiences. A number of elements of experiential design have been identified as having a direct impact on consumers' behavior; however, gaps exist in the current literature in terms of elaborating in greater detail about the extent to which these elements consequently influence purchase behavior.

Since, quality is a dynamic construct, additional consumption experiences influence and modify the existing quality perception and cause changes in this perception (Thompson & Getty, 1994). Similarly, Liljander & Mattsson (2002) in their study demonstrated the importance of past service experiences for customer's responses, especially their repurchase intentions. Since past service experiences or product experiences influence future purchases, marketers need to focus on improving experiences. In a study conducted among 930 consumers in Canada and US by Strativity Group in 2010, it was found that customers are ready to pay higher prices, provide product referrals, give companies more share of wallet

and establish long term relationships, if customer experience is superior (Arussy et al, 2010). In addition, most studies don't provide conclusive empirical result in the extant literature to point out the integrated relationships between customer experience, customer emotions and customer behavior. This study will close this gap by examining the relationships among customer experience, customer emotions and purchase behavioural intentions variables.

Many studies have tried to link service quality with appraisal emotion such as Hume & Mort (2010) study which shows that core service quality, appraisal emotion and peripheral service quality influence perceived value for time and money, with core service quality and peripheral customer service quality in turn influencing appraisal emotion. Designing and developing customer experiences keeping in mind the different experience design dimensions which engage customers on an emotional level can go a long way in enhancing customer satisfaction and eliciting customer commitment and loyalty (Pullman and Gross, 2004). This study explored the role of emotions in mediating the relationships between the dimensions of customer experience and customers' behavioural intentions.

1.2. Statement of the problem

While a lot of vibrant scientific contributions can be found in extent literature, standardized approaches to managing customer experiences are still far from maturity. The increased complexity in customers' preferences and demands together with increased competition in the industry has become a challenge to hotel managers and owners and many of them are waking up to the idea that enhancing customer experience is the key to their business' success. Hotel guest experiences are still considered as a byproduct (context) rather than created (content). Although there are several conceptual studies on experiences, fragmented theories on customer experiences have only been verified by a few empirical studies. There is lack of understanding about how to design and improve customer experiences. This situation fails to build on previous studies and bridge the gap between literature and practice.

Hotel industries are focusing on customer experience elements which may not have any significant impact in shaping purchase behavior. This demonstrates insufficient clarification about the dimensions of customer experiences. There is also lack of uniformity concerning

which customer experience dimensions influence customer emotions and have a significant effect on shaping purchase behavior. As a result most hotels may end up focusing on elements of customer experience which may not have any significant impact in shaping purchase behavior. Although many industries invest heavily in designing experiences in order to encourage repeat purchase, additional exploration is needed in order to understand the structural components of customer experiences and the relationship between customer experience, customer emotions and purchase behavioural intentions.

There has been intense price competition in the Kenyan hotel industry in recent years and the purchase behavioral intentions of customers are playing an increasingly important role in determining hotels' profits. Retaining loyal customers for hoteliers is essential and a core factor in keeping the hotels in shape and competitive enough to level up the changing trends that has impacted business and economic activities of the hotel markets. This calls for provision of products and services that can have a positive impact on purchase behavioural intentions. Hotel managers should understand the reasons why customers stay in hotels and identify the factors that influence their behavioral intentions of choosing a particular hotel. Several studies have focused on the assessment and measurement of behavioral intentions in the tourism industry and little attention has been paid to hotel industry. Identifying critical variables that determine purchase behavior is one of the key challenges in the hotel industry. Lack of understanding of purchase behavioural intentions construct in the hotels will lead to lower sales and inability to sustain the business.

Limited studies have focused on the causal relationships between critical variables (e.g., service quality, emotions, experience, customer value, and customer satisfaction) and purchase behavioural intentions particularly in the hotel industry setting. Despite a number of studies that have been conducted that have specified relationships between customer experience, customer emotions and purchase behavior variables, hotels lack an in-depth understanding concerning which of these constructs have the most significant influence on purchase behavior. It is against this background that the study seeks to develop an explanatory framework of customer experience that addresses antecedents of customer

experience and the relative outcome on customer emotions and purchase behavioural intentions.

1.3. Objectives of the Study

1.3.1. General objective of the study

The general objective of this study was to assess customer experience and its relative effects on customer emotions and purchase behavioural intentions in four and five star hotels in Kenya.

1.3.2. Specific objectives of the study

1. To investigate how four- and five-star hotels in Kenya go about designing and improving their customer experiences.
2. To examine the items that defines the primary structure of customer experience in four- and five-star hotels in Kenya.
3. To establish the relationship between customer experience dimensions, customer emotions and purchase behavioural intentions in four- and five-star hotels in Kenya.
4. To analyse the extent to which customer experience dimensions influence customer emotions and purchase behavioural intentions in four- and five-star hotels in Kenya.
5. To establish the mediating effect of customer emotions on the relationship between customer experience and customers' behavioural intentions in four- and five-star hotels in Kenya.

1.4. Research Questions

To address objectives one and two, the following research questions were formulated.

1. How do four and five star hotels in Kenya go about designing and improving their customer experiences?
2. What are the items that define the structure of customer experience in Kenyan four- and five-star hotels?

1.5. Research Hypotheses

To address objectives three, four and five, the following hypotheses were stated:

H₁. There is no significant relationship between customer experience dimensions, customer emotion and purchase behavioural intentions

H₂. Customer experience dimensions does not significantly influence customer emotions and purchase behavioural intentions

H₃. Customer emotions does not mediate the relationship between customer experience and purchase behavioural intentions

1.6. Significance of the Study

While hospitality organizations have received their fair share of attention in the study of customer experience, they are treated in the same way as other service organizations. Majority of the best-known approaches to customer experience come from the manufacturing sector and little attention has been drawn to the service sector and the particular challenges faced by companies wishing to create a distinctive customer experience for their customers. Despite the recognition of the importance of customer experience by practitioners, the academic marketing literature investigating this topic has been limited. Research on customer experience tends to focus more on managerial actions and outcomes, than on the theories underlying the determinants, antecedents and consequences of customer experience (Pine and Gilmore (1999); Frow and Payne (2007); Meyer and Schwager 2007).

Customer experience management has also been approached from a strategic perspective by focusing on issues such as how and to what extent an experience-based business can create growth (Verhoef, Lemon, Parasuraman, Roggeveen, Tsiros & Schlesinger, 2009) instead of focusing on the relationship and the extent to which customer experience influence customer emotions and customers' purchase behaviour. In addition, literature related to customer experiences may be considered as complex, inconsistent, indecisive, and subjective (Cetin & Dincer, 2014). Against this background, studying the dimensions of customer experience from the customer's point of view and their impact on purchase behavioural intentions could provide a better understanding of the process of service co-creation and customers' purchase behaviour.

1.7. Assumptions of the Study

The following assumptions were made for the study:

- 1) The targeted respondents were truthful in their responses
- 2) Guests were knowledgeable on the area of the study.
- 3) At least one guest would have occupied the rooms in each hotel within a period of two weeks.
- 4) Guests participated in the study only once during their entire stay.

1.8. Limitations of the Study

- 1) While attempts were made to ensure that the research strategies employed in the study provided reasonable and justifiable data, the researcher relied on literature from other countries as information relevant to Kenyan hotel industry was the greatest limitation.
- 2) Since the researcher had no control over the guests with regards to filling the questionnaires, there was a possibility of guests not filling the questionnaires or not returning it. This limitation was overcome by extending the period of data collection by two weeks in order to obtain the desired sample size.
- 3) A higher response rate would have been achieved however due to the timing of data collection period which was an off-peak tourist season data collection period was extended by two weeks to enable the achieved response rate.
- 4) The hotel management did not allow guest interactions with the researcher as this is considered to affect guest experience; it was therefore not possible for the researcher to have a face to face interaction with the respondents. This was minimized by formulating clear and simple instructions on how to fill the questionnaire.

1.9. Scope of the Study

This study was carried out in four and five star hotels within the three cities in Kenya: Nairobi, Mombasa and Kisumu. The cities are the centre of commercial activity and well linked to other major cities in East Africa region. Hotels located within the city were chosen because they have a clear and consistent organizational structure which implies that the results can be generalized without a lot of errors and can give more insight into experiences

because of their experienced and demanding clientele, as well as importance given on product and service design. Since the aspects of chosen problem area were many, the study narrowed down the focus. The researcher specifically assessed customer experience as a determinant of purchase behavioural intentions. Berry and Carbone's Model (2007) was used for measuring customer experience. This model posits that customer experience clues generally fall into three main categories: functional, mechanic and humanic. Functional clues are the "what" of the experience, reflecting the reliability and functionality of the good or service. Mechanic clues come from inanimate objects and offer a physical representation of the intangible service. Humanic clues come from the behavior and appearance of service providers.

1.10. Conceptual Framework

The basic assumption of the model was based on the view that customer experience is the primary antecedent of customer emotions, which in turn acts as a determinant of purchase behavioural intentions. The model positions customer experience variable as the independent variable. The study postulated that customer experience clues generally fall into three main categories: functional, mechanic and humanic (Berry & Carbone, 2007). Functional clues concern the technical quality of the offering. These clues are the "what" of the experience, reflecting the reliability and functionality of the good or service. Anything that influences the customer's perception of technical quality by its presence or absence is a functional clue. Mechanic clues come from inanimate objects and offer a physical representation of the intangible service. Building design, equipment, furnishings, displays, colors, textures, sounds, smells, lighting and other sensory clues visualize the service, communicating with customers without words. Humanic clues come from the behavior and appearance of service providers; choice of words, tone of voice, level of enthusiasm, body language, neatness and appropriate dress.

In delivering excellent experience quality, it is the effect or customer feeling that is paramount, and the effect will not be created the same way for every customer. An organization cannot manage customers' emotions, but it can manage the clues embedded in customers' experiences with the organization that trigger their emotions. To obtain a more

detailed picture of consumption emotions, researchers frequently rely on emotion rating scales. Customer emotions in this study was measured using Richin's (1997) final versions Customer Emotion Set (CES) clues as it captures more variance in the range of emotions than other measures of consumption-based emotions. Customer Emotion Set was developed to assess the specific kinds of emotions experienced in consumption situations (Bagozzi et al., 1999). The advantage of CES is that it makes customer emotions vocabulary more accessible to respondents and enables customers to remember and report their feelings in more detail. The weakness with CES is that data obtained using this technique are sensitive to and dependent upon the specific emotions included in the measurement instrument. Furthermore, CES isn't feasible to include the entire list of emotions a customer might feel in a single instrument hence the need to select the emotions to assess. As Richins (1997) noted, certain emotions are unlikely to be experienced and the researcher chose to omit the descriptors for those emotions from the measuring instrument. As a result, joy, excitement, surprise, contentment, loneliness, peacefulness and optimism were used to measure customer emotions.

The model also positions purchase behavioural intentions variable as the dependent variable. The study postulated that purchase behavioural intentions results more from how customers feel about the total experience they receive than from what they rationally think about a company's products and services. Customer emotions results from customers' interactions with the hotels products and services. Those emotions consciously and unconsciously influence attitudes that drive purchase behavioural intentions. Consumer preference and motivation are far less influenced by the subconscious sensory and emotional elements than the functional attributes of products and services derived by the total experience. Interaction with customer experience clues can directly or indirectly influence purchase behavioural intentions. The study further postulates that customer emotions mediate the relationship between customer emotions and purchase behavioural intentions. The model used for this study is proposed in Figure 1.1.

Independent Variable

Mediating Variable

Dependent variable

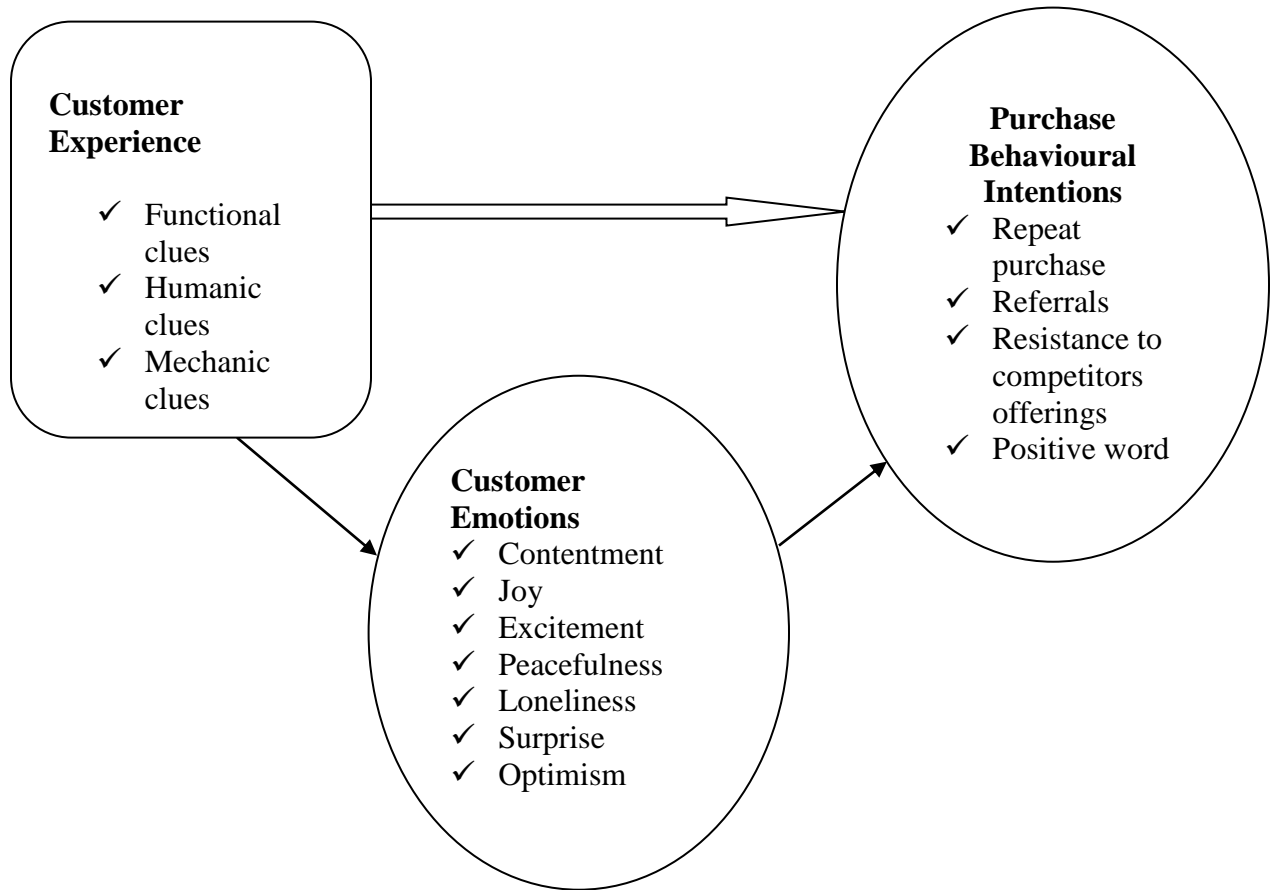


Figure 1.1. Customer experience, customer emotions and purchase behavior model

Source: Berry & Carbone 2007, modified by the researcher, 2019

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter gives an overview of literature and models that are related to the area of study as a basis for establishing both a conceptual and theoretical understanding of customer experience, customer experience dimensions, customer emotions, purchase behavioural intentions, designing and improving customer experiences and interrelationship between customer experience, Customer emotions and purchase behavioural intentions.

2.1. Definition of Key Concepts

2.1.1. Customer Experience

Meyer and Schwager (2007) defined Customer experience as the internal and subjective response customers have to any direct or indirect contact with a company. For Carbone & Haeckel (1994) the perceived customer experience is the “take away” impression formed by peoples’ encounters with products, services and businesses. Customer experience can be seen as a sum of interactions, mental images, and emotions that a customer internally comprises from the company's actions (Uusitalo, 2012). Customer experience is present in every interaction between the company and its customer – be it a sales, service or support interaction. Such a contact usually occurs in the stage of purchase, use or service, and the customer is usually active in initiating this interaction. An indirect contact in general refers to an unplanned encounter with the customer and the company’s representation of its products, services or brands. An indirect contact can also take a form of word of mouth praise or criticism in the customer base, advertising, media coverage or product reviews.

Customer experiences include every point in which the customer interacts with your business, product or service. For a hotel customer, for example, it includes the anticipation of going to the hotel, walking up to a restaurant, opening the door, ordering and paying for the coffee, getting the coffee, sitting down in the atmosphere of the restaurant to enjoy the coffee. Each interaction point is what is called a “moment of truth.” That’s the point at which the customer is engaging with the brand and at which one can make or break the relationship. However, an organization cannot grant an experience to the consumer; rather organizations can only create the environment and the circumstances in which consumers could have an

experience (Mossberg, 2007). It is the consumer or tourist that adds the final link to the production chain by putting together the resources in a consumer experience that produces the tourism experience (Andersson, 2007). In other words, the experiences that consumer's encounter occur inside the person and the outcome or consumer experience depends on how the consumer, based on a specific situation or state of mind, reacts to the staged encounter (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; Mossberg, 2007; Pine & Gilmore, 1999; Wang, 2002).

The concept of customer experience spans over different stages: pre-experience, the actual experience and post-experience (Shaw, 2007). An example of a pre-experience may be an easy access to a certain hotel which is an influencing factor outside the actual customer experience but an important example of how stress free and effortless the whole experience can be. The actual experience is the stage that a company has most control of. A good customer experience also takes into consideration the outside factors influencing the experience. The post-experience has plethora of different aspects to consider such as delivery, after-sales service, user manuals, customer support etc. All these stages are considered as part of the whole customer experience. An experience is inherent; a positive experience is not. Customers consciously and unconsciously filter a barrage of clues, in the form of experiences, and organize them into sets of impressions some rational and others more emotional. Anything perceived or sensed or conspicuous in its absence is an experience clue. If customers can see, smell, taste or hear it, it is a clue.

2.1.2. Customer Emotions

Emotion is a multifaceted compound of different factors, both mental and physical (Izard, 1991; Lazarus, 1991; Lazarus *et al.*, 1980; Omdahl, 2014; Plutchik, 1980). The concept of emotions is often poorly defined (Shouse, 2005; Koenig-Lewis & Palmer, 2014). The exact definition is a matter of dispute among psychologists, philosophers and other researchers (Kleinginna & Kleinginna, 1981) primarily because of the broad range of possible emotions that one can experience and because there is no single defining feature that applies to all emotions (Edwards *et al.*, 2002). Emotions are “intentional” phenomenon, in that they involve a subject-object relationship. Emotions have the property of “felt state of action readiness” which refers to state of readiness and action tendencies (Frida, 1993). Emotions

result from exposure to specific stimuli. Surprise, for example, may be caused from an exposure to unexpected attributes of a product or situation such as unusually high or unusually low quality. Emotion helps our body adapt to its surroundings, instantaneously or on a more lasting basis. The state of readiness reflects an individual's motives to cope with the emotional state or emotional environment. Thus, they are powerful forces that can influence a patron's desire to engage in word of mouth (favourable or unfavourable) and or revisit the establishment. There is no distinct agreement on what emotions are. Due to these complexities, Huang (2001) calls for further investigation of the characteristics of emotions specifically related to marketing. However, there is understanding on several aspects (Table 2.1.). Emotions are acute and are comparatively momentary experiences. This differentiates emotions from moods and from other more general affects which usually last longer (Frijda, 1993). Emotion is, to quote Neuroscientist Antonio Damasio, "in the loop of reason." It guides our opinions and deeds (Shaw *et al.*, 2010).

2.1.3. Purchase Behavioural Intentions

Customer behavior can be defined as the processes involved when individuals or groups select, purchase, use or dispose of products, services, ideas or experiences to satisfy needs and desires (Solomon, Benette & Previte, 2013). Purchase behaviour is the study of how a consumer thinks, feels, and selects between competing products. Moreover, the study of attitudes is critical to understanding the motivation and decision strategies employed by consumers. The combination of beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours influence how a consumer reacts to a product or service. Marketers develop relative, compelling marketing messages using the same combination of information, and ultimately influence Purchase behavior. Customer behavior is an ongoing process not merely what happens at the moment a consumer hands over money or a credit card, in turn receiving a good or service. There are three phases of the Purchase behavior process: pre-consumption, consumption and post consumption. A marketer must understand customer needs at each stage because the level of value created at any of these stages influence the customer's opinions, feelings and action towards the brand or product.

Purchase intention is considered to be the indicator of a consumer's approach behaviour (Pettersson & Söderström, 2015). Whitlar, Geurts, and Swenson (1993) asserted that purchase intention is a purchase probability, associated with an intention at the percentage of individuals that will actually buy the product. Nasermodeli, Ling & Maghnati (2013) claimed that intention to buy is the buyer's prediction of which company he will select to buy. The greater the purchase intention is, the greater a consumer's desire is to buy a product (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2000). Chi *et al.* (2009) and Laroche & Zhou (1996) claimed that marketing endorser's visibility rate can change consumer's personal preference and mind-set and ultimately influence consumer purchase intention. Thus, purchase intention can be regarded as a predictor variable of actual purchase. Purchasing an object is the result of decision-making process. Kotler & Armstrong (2010) pointed that decision-making process has five steps; problem recognition, information search, pre-purchase evaluation of alternatives, consumption and postconsumption evaluation. Solomon, Askegaard and Hogg (2013) argued that there are several factors that would affect the purchase decision, for instance, situational factors, mood and shopping experience. Purchase intentions may be recognized as a reflection of real purchase behavior.

Consumer purchase intention comes from consumers' perception on benefits and values acquisition, and it is an important key to predict consumer purchase behavior. Perceived value and perceived quality will influence purchase intention and the more perceived value and perceived quality, the higher purchase intention is. A consumer's attitude and assessment and external factors determine consumer purchase intention and are critical factors to predict Purchase behavior (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). Purchase intention can measure the possibility of a consumer to buy a product, and the higher the purchase intention is, the higher a consumer's willingness is to buy a product (Dodds *et al.*, 1991; Schiffman & Kanuk, 2000). Purchase intention indicates that consumers will follow their experience, preference and external environment to collect information, evaluate alternatives, and make purchase decision (Zeithaml, 1988; Dodds *et al.*, 1991; Schiffman & Kanuk, 2000; Yang, 2009). Fournier (1998) discovered that if a brand provides product features that meet consumer's need, then consumer will form a mental organization in relation to the importance of the

company toward him or her; subsequently, the consumer will subjectively form his or her relationship with the brand and raise his or her purchase intention accordingly.

Customer Behavioral intentions are associated with customer retention and customer loyalty (Alexandris, Dimitriadis, & Markata, 2002). A number of researchers have noted that behavioral intentions are indications whether hotel customers will remain with or defect from an organization (Alexandris et al. 2002). The tendency of consumer behavior is a set of final results of the items analysed. Various theories suggest that if the number of consumers who abandon the consumption of goods or service is lower, the key to the service providers' ability will generate more profits. Fishbein & Ajzen (1975) defined behavioral intentions as a measure of the strength of one's intention to perform a specific behavior. Jaccard and King (1977) defined behavioural intentions as a perceived relation between oneself and some behaviour. According to (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980) the concept of behavioural intentions was referred to as people's beliefs about what they intended to do in a certain situation. Brady and Hult (2000) stated that consumer behavior trends are related to the service providers' ability to spread instruction to their customers to have positive statements about them (service providers); give recommendations to other consumers about them (service providers), remain loyal to the providers (or buy more from them), spend more time with them and pay the premium price.

2.2. Management of Customer Experience

2.2.1. Customer Experience Management

Customer Experience Management (CEM) is the process of strategically managing a customer's entire experience with a product or a company (Schmitt, 2003). This definition emphasizes on integrating different elements of customers' experience across a variety of touch points. Managing customer experiences is an integrated approach to create distinctive customer value through systematic design and implementation of various context clues (Carbone and Haeckel, 1994). These clues emanate from the product or service, behaviors of people such as service providers and other customers and the physical environment in which the service is being offered. Understanding of the concept of clues which emanate from a range of contexts are of crucial importance for successful implementation of CEM.

The ultimate goal of customer experience management is to enable an organization to deliver just the right set of experience clues that evoke specific feelings desired by its customers. This involves defining a targeted customer perception and set of feelings followed by designing and orchestrating clues that create the desired perception and feelings (Berry & Carbone, 2007). A company has to focus on various touch points which serve as a focal point of customer interaction with the company which includes purchases, service, billing and upgrades etc, (Buttle, 2009). This organizational competency doesn't develop overnight, but management tools are fortunately available to help organizations develop the necessary skills. Managing customer experience requires pushing beyond the limits of older management paradigms.

2.2.2. Designing and improving customer experiences

The notion of customer experience was first brought into focus by Holbrook and Hirschman in mid-1980s, Sadia & Martensen (2011). An increasing number of companies started incorporating the term "Customer Experience" with their service offerings. Entertainment companies such as Walt Disney World are the pioneers in systematically managing customer experience to promote differentiation and increase customer loyalty. Interestingly, inspired by the success of businesses like entertainment companies, a growing number of traditional companies started focusing on customer experience, as a means to provide added values to their customers. Since then consumer researchers have extended their view from the mainstream approach which considered customers primarily as rational decision makers. The experience notion has become an important element to understand Purchase behavior (Addis & Holbrook, 2001). Creating superior customer experience seems to be one of the central objectives in today's retailing environments (Verhoef *et al.*, 2009). Retailers around the globe have embraced the concept of customer experience management, with many incorporating the notion into their mission statements.

Several operational tools have been developed to help both design and assess the customer experience, including creating experience clues, designing the servicescape (Bitner, 1992), customer journey mapping (Shaw & Ivens, 2002, Zomerdijk & Voss, 2010), service

transaction analysis (Johnston, 1999), customer experience analysis (Johnston & Clark, 2008), walk-through audits (Fitzsimmons & Fitzsimmons, 1994), and sequential incident technique (Stauss & Weinlich, 1997).

Stuart & Tax (2004) argued that the customer experience can be enhanced by designing the service system to encourage greater active customer participation. Bate and Robert (2007) introduced an approach which involves customers in the design of the experience; experience-based design. Pickles *et al.* (2008) developed this methodology to demonstrate how three theoretical components of good design: functionality, engineering and aesthetics can be used as a framework to improve performance, safety and governance. The ultimate goal of experience quality management is to enable an organization to deliver just the right set of experience clues that evoke specific feelings desired by its customers. This involves defining a targeted customer perception and set of feelings followed by designing and orchestrating clues that create the desired perception and feelings (Berry & Carbone, 2007). This organizational competency doesn't develop overnight, but management tools are fortunately available to help organizations develop the necessary skills.

In terms of taking a more strategic and holistic approach to experience design, Carbone and Haeckel (1994) divided experience design into four phases; 1) acquisition of service experience design skills, 2) data collection and analysis, 3) service clue design, and 4) implementation and verification. Later Carbone (2004) suggested five steps; build a diverse design team, drill down to the experience core, focus on clues, develop the experience narrative or story line, and prioritize implementation opportunities. Berry and Carbone (2007) proposed a five step approach; 1) identify the emotions that evoke customer commitment, 2) establish an experience motif, 3) inventory and evaluate experience clues, 4) determine the experience gap, and 5) close the experience gap and monitor execution. They further recommended that to transform an organisation to an experience-based one requires; 1) vision and strategy (clear experience statements), 2) leadership such as a CXO (chief experience officer), and 3) transfer of skills and knowledge by getting employee to think in terms of experience clues. These somewhat differing approaches do not appear to be

supported by research-based evidence about what organisations have actually done and the impact of so doing.

Johnston R. & Kong X. (2011) in their study proposed eight broad stages that captured the approaches taken by four organisations to improve the customer experience, although the way they carried out the stages were slightly different. The eight stages of the improvement were; instigation and objective setting, coordinate and oversee the changes, undertake customer research, define the experience, undertake action research, prioritise areas for development, develop and pilot the changes and change the support systems. They further suggested two other additional and related stages at the end; assessing the impact of the change programme against the success criteria and the stages set out in the business case. This was suggested by Berry and Carbone (2007) as “monitor execution”. As a result they proposed a ten stage road map for improving the customer experience (Fig 2.2.). Their study provided an evidence-based approach to experience design documenting how organizations have actually gone about developing their customer experiences. While much operations management research has focused on service design, designing and improving customer experiences has received limited attention.

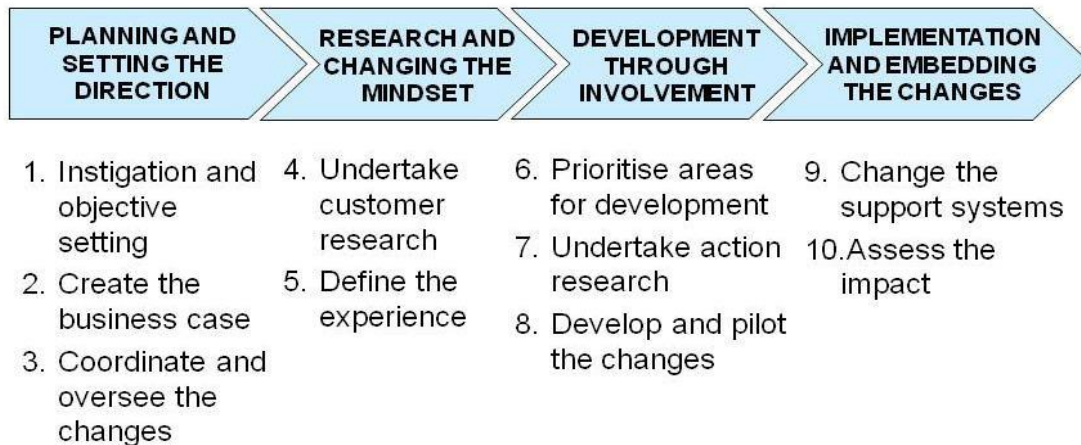


Figure 2.2: Ten stage road map for improving the customer experience

Source: Johnston R. & Kong X., 2011

2.3. Theoretical review of Concepts

2.3.1. Conceptualization of Customer Experience

Customer experience is an abstract concept. Measuring it requires breaking it down into concrete, tangible elements (Alfaro, Velilla, Brunetta, Navarro, Molina, Martinez-Ribes, Ignacio, Burgos, Rivero, Solanas, Castello, Valverde & Munoz, 2014). A substantial number of studies attempted to establish the dimensions of customer experiences (Table 2.1.). The “multiaspect” conceptualization of customer experience can be traced back to Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) when they conceptualise the consumption experience under the heading of “fantasies, feelings, and fun”. Afterwards, a study focused on customer experiences of river rafting (Arnould & Price, 1993) and identified three aspects of customer experience; harmony with nature, “communitas” and personal growth and renewal. Arnould and Price (1993) applied different research methods ranging from focus groups to observation over a seven-month period and the sample comprised participants and guides of the river rafting adventure. However, the authors claim that the findings may have implications for a broad array of services and consumption activities but could not generalize beyond the sample studied.

Otto and Ritchie (1996) offer another attempt to measure the construct of service experience across the tourism industry (airlines, hotels, tours and attractions). The term “service experience” relates to a number of contributory events and a number of transactions or interactions between a customer and a provider in the exchange of the service (Czepiel, 1990). However, the study of Otto and Ritchie (1996) is incomplete, in the sense that content validity, dimensionality, internal reliability of the service experience scales, and a factor analysis were completed but tests such as validity and reliability were not addressed. This research by Otto and Ritchie (1996) identifies six dimensions of service experience: hedonic, novelty, stimulation, safety, comfort and interactive. The first three dimensions are consistent with the experiential benefits described by Bello and Etzel (1985), Havlena and Holbrook (1986) and Holbrook and Hirschman (1982), as cited in Otto and Ritchie, (1996). The safety dimension follows from Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, while comfort is a fundamental benefit of the service encounter. Later, the six dimensions of service experience were narrowed down to four dimensions; hedonic, feeling of escape, peace of mind and recognition (Otto &

Ritchie, 1996). Finally, O'Sullivan and Spangler (1998) claim that the experience construct is complex and can be measured along a continuum which incorporates real to virtual, novelty or communality, degree of mass production or customization and level of interaction with other people.

The seminal work of Pine and Gilmore (1999) offered four realms of customer experiences: entertainment, educational, aesthetic, and escapist experiences. The entertainment realm is related to events that make a customer smile; this is the most basic experience (e.g., watching a stand-up show on TV). Educational experiences are concerned with consumers' need to learn and understand (e.g., reading history books or watching documentaries). Aesthetic experiences are related to customers' tendency to appreciate beauty and harmony (e.g., art works). Escapist dimension of experiences refers to people's desire for a change and to try something new and different (e.g., cultural travel). Although Pine and Gilmore (1999) introduce and develop this framework to understand the nature of customer experience in general, their report lacks a detailed analysis of these dimensions and its measurements and similarly there is a lack of sufficient research to measure these concepts. Poulsson & Kale (2004) claimed that there is no clear differentiation between what they called the commercial experience discussed by Pine and Gilmore (1999) and other kinds of experiences encountered on a daily basis and advocated five elements for a successful experience; personal relevance, novelty, surprise, learning, and engagement dimensions to be the constituents of a successful experience through structured interviews with ten experience providers across a range of industries; gaming, rock climbing gyms, theme parks, museums and hot air balloon rides.

Dube and LeBel (2003) after their five-level qualitative research posited experiences through pleasure and suggested physical, social, emotional, and intellectual pleasure as experience dimensions. Physical experiences are related to physical activity and senses; social experiences refer to affluence and belonging; emotional experiences are related to feelings emerging as a result of external stimuli; and intellectual experiences reflect appreciation and understanding of complexity, knowledge, and advancement. Schmitt (2003) approached experiences from marketing communications perspective and offered five categories: sense, feel, think, act, and relate. Sense dimension of experiences refers to the sensory experiences

that are perceived by the five senses; feel dimension refers to affective experiences such as joy, happiness, pleasure, and pride; think dimension can be associated with intellectual experiences such as creativity and problem solving; act dimension reflects physical experiences such as mountain climbing; and finally, relate dimension refers to social interactions and belonging.

O'Loughlin, Szmigin and Turnbull (2004) conceptualize customer experience within the Irish financial services as brand experience, transactional experience and relationship experience where brand experience is the perceived experience at the corporate brand level by both consumer and managers as representing corporate values and brand image while transactional experience varies from purely functional to personal depending on the nature of the product and the channel used. Relational experience represented the experience of having a relationship with the company over time. Mascarenhas, Kesevan and Bernacchi (2006) asserted that total customer experience encompasses both physical and emotional elements. They argued that experiences are customer-dependent and context-specific.

Oh, Fiore & Jeoung (2007) in their study aimed at developing an initial measurement scale of the tourist's destination lodging experiences. The researchers operationalized and tested the four realms of experience using customers' lodging experiences with rural bed and breakfasts. Additionally, the study introduced some relevant theoretical variables such as arousal, memories, overall quality and customer satisfaction (Oh et al., 2007). However, this study focuses only on one part in the service sector. Gentile et al. (2007) conceptualized customer experience as a multidimensional structure and its components are; sensorial component, emotional component, cognitive component, pragmatic component, lifestyle component and relational component. Hemmington (2007) in his seminal paper identified the host-guest relationship, generosity, theatre and performance, 'lots of little surprises' and safety and security of the guests as the five key dimensions of hospitality experience.

According to Berry & Carbone (2007) experience clues generally fall into three main categories: functional, mechanic and humanic (Table 2.1.). Functional clues concern the technical quality of the offering. These clues are the "what" of the experience, reflecting the

reliability and functionality of the good or service. Anything that influences the customer’s perception of technical quality by its presence or absence is a functional clue. Mechanic clues come from inanimate objects and offer a physical representation of the intangible service. Building design, equipment, furnishings, displays, colors, textures, sounds, smells, lighting and other sensory clues visualize the service, communicating with customers without words. Humanic clues come from the behavior and appearance of service providers choice of words, tone of voice, level of enthusiasm, body language, neatness and appropriate dress. Human interaction in the service experience provides the primary opportunity to extend respect and esteem to customers and, in so doing, exceed their expectations and cultivates emotional connectivity. It is obvious that none of the above dimensions are mutually exclusive.

Table 2.1. Clues of Customer Experience

Type of Clue	Emitted by	Interpretation
Functional	Goods and services	Rational (“What” of the experience)
Mechanic	Overall service environment	Emotional (“How” of the experience)
Humanic	Service Provider	Emotional (“How” of the experience)

Source: Berry & Carbone, 2007

Brakus, Schmitt & Zarantonello (2009) identified four factors of experience (sensorial, affective, behavioural and intellectual); in sum, with a plethora of different definitions and dimensions of customer experience which may be an umbrella construct with distinct dimensions. However, no real consensus yet exists as to what these dimensions might be. Brunner-Sperdin and Peters (2009) also explored dimensions of customers’ service experience which impact guest emotions in context of high-quality hotels in Europe and used the terms ‘hardware’, ‘software’ and ‘humanware’ to describe the operational, organizational and personal dimensions, respectively.

The concept of customer experiences involves not only cognitive evaluations but also affective elements (Verhoef *et al.*, 2009). Verhoef *et al.* (2009) suggest assortment, price and promotions, social environment, atmosphere, and service interface as determinants of customer experience in a retail environment. A more comprehensive conceptualization was

offered by Diller, Shedrof, and Rhea (2008). They formulated experiences through their meaning to the person. Their work stated 15 items (accomplishment, beauty, creation, community, duty, enlightenment, freedom, harmony, justice, oneness, redemption, security, truth, validation, and wonder) that would create positive customer experiences. A study by Walls *et al.* (2011) has succinctly brought together the various dimensions of consumer experience in context of luxury hotel guests. These dimensions include the physical environment, human interaction (of guests with employees as well as fellow guests), the personal characteristics of guests and other trip-related factors such as purpose of the trip, nature of the hotel and the experience continuum.

According to Alfaro *et al.* (2014), customer experience comprises various physical variables; time, cleanliness, functionality, temperature, environment, etc. and various emotional variables, shaped by the character traits of the person involved and her way of perceiving and processing the experience. By adding emotional variables to experience assessment model one can better understand how customers perceive and respond to interactions with the company; this in turn enables us to design better experiences. Experience is not measurable by focusing on conventional physical variables only. Each of these studies represents a different point of view about experience configurations and different authors use different parameters depending on the interest. Dimensions defining customer experience has become one of the biggest challenges that businesses face. In other words, research on customer experience dimensions is fragmented and lacks a structured direction and replication. Although different approaches produced a healthy environment for the development of the concept, many of these dimensions lack enough empirical support.

Table 2.2: Conceptualization of customer experience

Authors	Year	Context	Dimensions
Holbrook & Hirschman	1982	Conceptual article	Fantasies, feelings and fun.
Arnould & Price	1993	River rafting	Harmony with nature, communities and personal growth and renewal.
Otto & Ritchie	1996	Tourism industry (airlines, hotels, tours and attractions)	Hedonic, novelty, stimulation, safety, comfort and interactive
O'Sullivan & Spangler	1998	Conceptual article	Real to virtual, novelty or communality, degree of mass production or customization, and level of interaction with other people.
Pine & Gilmore	1999	Conceptual	Entertainment, education, aestheticism and escape.
Poulsson & Kale	2004	A range of industries; gaming, rock climbing gyms, theme parks, museums, hot air balloon rides, etc.	Personal relevance, novelty, surprise, learning, and engagement.
O'Loughlin et al.	2004	Irish financial services	Brand experience, transactional experience and relationship experience.
Mascarenhas et al.	2006	Conceptual	Physical and emotional elements.
Gentile et al.	2007	A study on some widely known brands	A sensorial, an emotional, a cognitive, a pragmatic, a lifestyle, and a relational component.
Berry & Carbone	2007	Conceptual	Humanic, Functional and mechanic
Diller, Shedrof & Rhea.	2008	Conceptual	Accomplishment, beauty, creation, community, duty, enlightenment, freedom, harmony, justice, oneness, redemption, security, truth, validation, and wonder
Brakus et al.	2009	An empirical study on a variety of brands	Behavioral, sensorial, intellectual and affective.
BrunnerSperdin & Peters	2009	High-quality hotels in Europe	Hardware, software and humanware
Verhoef et al.	2009	Retail environment suggest	Assortment, price and promotions, social environment, atmosphere, and service interface
Walls et al context of.	2011	Luxury hotel guests	Physical environment, human interaction, the personal characteristics of guests and other trip-related factors
Alfaro et al.	2014	Tourism industry	Physical variables and emotional variables

Source: Researcher, 2019

2.3.2. Customer Emotions Theories

2.3.2.1. Dimensional theories of emotions

There are two major approaches to the study and categorization of emotions within the context of marketing and consumer behavior (Oh, 2005). The first approach considers emotions as having continuous dimensions that distinguish specific emotions from others and are often referred to as dimensional theories. The dimensional theories of emotions are Russell and Mehrabian's (1977) pleasure arousal dominance model and Watson and Tellegen's (1985) circumplex model. Dimensional theories have been useful predictors of the consumers' response to store atmosphere (Donovan *et al.*, 1994), service experiences (Hui and Bateson, 1991) and advertising (Holbrook and Batra, 1987). Dimensional approaches distinguish between valence and arousal dimensions, but dimensional approaches have been criticized due to their failure to capture the wide range of emotions experienced by consumers' (Lazarus, 1991).

2.3.2.1.1. Pleasure, Arousal, Dominance Model

Russell & Mehrabian (1974) introduced the idea of using three emotional dimensions, pleasure, arousal, and dominance (PAD), to describe perceptions of physical environments. Pleasure deals with whether the individual perceives the environment as enjoyable or not, while arousal reflects the extent to which the environment stimulates the individual. Dominance captures whether the individual feels in control or not in the environment. In the marketing domain, the PAD model has been used in assessing the emotions associated with television ads (Holbrook & Batra, 1987), the atmospherics in both retail (Donovan & Rossiter, 1982; Donovan, Rossiter, Marcoolyn, & Nesdale, 1994; Turley & Milliman, 2000) and online contexts (Chang *et al.*, 2014; Hsieh *et al.*, 2014), and various consumption experiences (Havlena & Holbrook, 1986). Even though the PAD model was originally configured with three components, pleasure and arousal seem to have been used to a greater extent by researchers than dominance (Bakker, van der Voordt, Vink, & de Boon, 2014). Donovan and Rossiter (1982) chose to omit the dominance portion of the PAD in their model as did Baker, Levy, and Grewal (1992). On the other side of the issue, Yani-de-Soriano and Foxall (2006) made convincing arguments for the continued inclusion of the dominance component.

2.3.2.1.2. Circumplex Model

The circumplex model of affect was originally proposed by Schlosberg (1941, 1952) and subsequently most extensively elaborated upon by Russell (1980). This model postulates that the underlying structure of affective experience can be characterized as an ordering of affective states on the circumference of a circle. The similarity between any two affective states is presumed to be a function of their distance from one another on the perimeter of the circle with the dissimilarity between any two states increasing as the distance between them on the circle increases. More formally stated, the model implies that affective states should have decreasing positive correlations with one another as their separation from one another approaches 90°. At 90° separation, two affective states should be uncorrelated with one another. As the separation approaches 180°, affective states should have increasing negative correlations with one another.

Most advocates of the circumplex model of affect also explicitly postulate two orthogonal psychological dimensions underlying this circular ordering. Some researchers (e.g., Russell, 1980; Larsen & Diener, 1992) have postulated an evaluation dimension and an arousal dimension. Thus, this conceptualization postulates that the underlying dimensions of affective states are similar to two of the three dimensions of connotative meaning (i.e., evaluation and activity) found to underlie language more generally (Osgood, Suci, & Tannenbaum, 1957). Other researchers (e.g., Watson & Tellegen, 1985) have postulated a different set of dimensions rotated 45° from the hypothesized evaluation and arousal dimensions. They have labeled these dimensions positive affect (i.e., high activation positive affect vs. low activation negative affect) and negative affect (i.e., high activation negative affect vs. low activation positive affect). Still others have offered somewhat different conceptualizations of the dimensions underlying affective states (e.g., Diener, Larsen, Levine, & Emmons, 1985; Thayer, 1989).

As with any theory, limitations of the model have been noted. Some have criticized it on the basis of the argument that a two-dimensional representation fails to capture important aspects of emotional experience and therefore sometimes does not reflect crucial differences among some emotions. For instance, fear and anger are both negative-high-arousal emotions that are

located in the same region of the circle yet these emotions are quite different from one another (Larsen & Diener, 1992). Others have noted that different versions of the model sometimes postulate different locations for affective states and that empirically affective states are not always located in their predicted regions of the circle (Watson, Wiese, Vaidya, & Tellegen, 1999). Still others have noted that the model was formulated on the basis of a selection of emotions that was not guided by systematic sampling or clear theoretical guidelines (Morgan & Heise, 1988). Despite these and other limitations, the model has achieved broad acceptance as a useful representation of affect (see Larsen & Diener, 1992; Plutchik & Conte, 1997). However, consideration of the statistical methods by which circumplex structure has been assessed suggests that the data may not be as compelling as is believed.

2.3.2.1. Basic Emotion Theories

The second approach was established to overcome the limitations of dimensional theories and is called basic or discrete emotional set including emotions such as joy, anger, sadness and fear that is natural to all human beings (Izard, 1992; Plutchik, 1982). Thus, emotional response can be described by measuring the extent of the basic emotions that a person experienced (Ritchins, 1997). However, the opponents of basic emotion approach criticize it by arguing that it has no sound theoretical foundation (Roseman, 1984). Bagozzi *et al.* (1999) pointed out that emotions work in broad categories or groupings. Lazarus (1991) identified and classified different emotions into nine negative emotions: anger, fright, anxiety, guilt, shame, sadness, envy, jealousy and disgust and four positive emotions: happiness, pride, relief and love. There is divergence in the content and dimensions of emotions in consumer research (pleasure, arousal, dominance; upbeat, negative, warm; positive and negative affect) and different researchers use different scales to measure emotions (Bagozzi *et al.*, 1999; Mehta and Purvis, 2006).

Among these dimensions Richins' classification of emotions is the most widely used conceptualization (Laros and Steenkamp, 2005) as it captures more variance in the range of emotions. Richins' Consumption Emotion Set (CES) was developed to assess the range of emotions most frequently experienced in consumption emotions (Bearden & Netemeyer,

1999). Although the study of consumption emotions has increased in scope, the appropriate way to measure emotions, remain unresolved (Richins, 1997). Richins (1997) concluded that the existing measures are unsuited for the purpose of measuring consumption related emotions. Although customer emotions are still similar to other kinds of emotions that individuals experience in that a consumer can experience one or more consumption emotions at once or in sequence, consumption emotions should be distinguished from other types of emotions in that consumption emotions represent a lower intensity of emotion and a unique kind of emotion (Phillips, 1999). Richins (1997) determined the difference of consumption emotion from other kinds of emotions experienced during other types of activities and developed a scale, the Consumption Emotion Set (CES), to measure consumption emotions. Although CES has some limitations, Richins (1997) empirical test supported that CES is the most comprehensive measure in assessing consumption-related emotions. Richins (1997) proposed three versions of the CES. The first version covers 16 identifiable clusters comprising 43 descriptors. Another version includes the 16 identifiable clusters as well as an “other items” category. In the third version, Richins added nine more descriptors to the first two versions. Results of six studies using several scaling procedures were used to derive the final versions of the CES (Table 2.2) Therefore, Richins (1997) provided a better measure of the different experiential variables in terms of measuring consumption emotion than other measures of consumption emotion (Phillips, 1999). Richins (1997) noted that certain emotions are unlikely to be experienced; in these cases, the researcher may choose to omit the descriptors for those emotions from their measuring instrument thus, using the entirety of CES will not be necessary. Choosing emotion descriptors through the appropriate procedure, which are likely to be experienced by customers during their hotel stay, is needed for the study of emotions in the hotel industry.

Table 2.3. Consumption Emotion Set (CES)

Cluster (Subscale)	Descriptor (item)
Anger	Frustrated, Angry, Irritated
Discontent	Unfulfilled, Discontented
Worry	Nervous, Worried, Tense
Sadness	Depressed, Sad, Miserable
Fear	Scared, Afraid, Panicky
Shame	Embarrassed, Ashamed, Humiliated
Envy	Envious, Jealous
Loneliness	Lonely, Homesick
Romantic Love	Sexy, Romantic, Passionate
Love	Loving, Sentimental, Warm Hearted
Peacefulness	Calm, Peaceful, Relaxed
Contentment	Contented, Fulfilled
Optimism	Optimistic, Pleased, Hopeful
Joy	Happy, Encouraged, Joyful
Excitement	Excited, Thrilled, Enthusiastic
Surprise	Surprised, Amazed, Astonished

Source: Richins, 1997

Table 2.4. Dimensions of Emotion Measured by Researchers

Researchers	Number of Adjectives/ subscales	Dimensions
Borgatta (1961)	40 adjectives	Lonely (depressed), warmhearted, tired, thoughtful, defiant (aggressive), startled (anxious)
Clyde (1963)	132 adjectives	Friendly, aggressive, clear thinking, sleepy, unhappy, dizzy
Zuckerman & Lubin (1965)	89 adjectives	Depression, hostility, anxiety
Plutchik (1966)	8 adjectives	Happy, agreeable, fearful, angry, interested, disgusted, sad, surprised
McNair, Lorr, & Dropleman (1971)	57 adjectives	Anger-hostility, depression-dejection, vigor-activity, fatigue, inertia, friendliness, confusion
Izard (1972)	30 adjectives	Interest, joy, surprise, distress, disgust, anger, shame, fear, contempt, guilt
Plutchik & Kellerman (1974)	66 adjectives	Sociable, trusting, dyscontrolled, timid, depressed, distrustful, controlled, aggressive
Curran & Cattell (1975)	96 adjectives	Anxiety, stress, depression, regression, fatigue, guilt, extraversion, arousal
Lorr & McNair (1984)	72 adjectives	Composed, anxious, agreeable, hostile, elated, depressed, confident, unsure, energetic, tired, clearheaded, confused
Howarth & Young (1986)	60 adjectives	Concentration, anxiety, anger, depression, potency, sleep, control, cooperation, optimism, skepticism
Watson, Clark, & Tellegen (1988)	20 adjectives	Positive (e.g., proud) and negative (e.g., upset)
Mehrabian & Russell (1974)	18 adjectives	Pleasure, arousal, dominance (PAD)
Edell & Burke (1987)	52 adjectives/ 23 subscales	Upbeat feelings, negative feelings, warm feelings
Westbrook (1987)	30 adjectives / 10 subscales (Izard, 1977)	Positive, negative
Westbrook & Oliver (1991)	10 subscales (Izard, 1977)	Positive (e.g., joy), negative (e.g., surprise)
Richins (1997)	47 adjectives/ 17 subscales	Positive, negative
Phillips (1999)	23 subscales (Edell & Burke, 1987)	Positive, negative

Source: Plutchik (2003)

2.3.3. Purchase Behavioural Intentions

According to Mehrabian and Russell (1974) individual's behavioural reactions to the surroundings are generally classified into two types; approach oriented behaviour and avoidance-oriented behaviour. Both two behaviours are on the basis of visitors' emotional state from the sensory stimulus, including visual stimuli, auditory stimuli, tactile stimuli, and olfactory stimuli (Sullivan & Adcock, 2012). Approach behaviours generally include all individuals' positive responses, such as visitors' patronage intentions to certain environment (Baker *et al.*, 2002), intentions to stay longer (Wakefield & Brodgett, 1994), individuals' increased purchasing intentions (Donovan & Rossiter, 1982), re-patronage intentions as well as the willingness to recommend their visiting store to others (Spies *et al.*, 1996). Avoidance behaviours substantially represent negative reactions, which can be seen when visitors tend to reduce participation into the surroundings, escape from the environment and eventually show a decreased tendency to purchase from that store (Sullivan & Adcock, 2012). Hence, it can be summarized that both these two behaviours enable to exert an impact on individuals' purchasing intentions, but the approach behaviours have a positive influence. This study investigated the positive influence of sensory stimuli on customer's purchase intention.

Various theories suggest that if the number of consumers who abandon the consumption of goods or service is lower, the key to the service providers' ability will generate more profits. Jr, Brady and Hult (2000) stated that consumer behavior trends are related to the service providers' ability to spread instruction to their customers to (a) have positive statements about them (service providers); (b) give recommendations to other consumers about them (service providers); (c) remain loyal to the providers (or buy more from them); (d) spend more time with them; and (e) pay the premium price. According to Zeithaml, Berry and Parasuraman (1996) there are five dimensions of behavioural intentions; attitudinal loyalty, switch propensity, willingness to pay more, external response and responses to the company (internal response). Zeithaml et al. (1996) presented that a model of intentions can be captured with repurchase intentions, word of mouth, loyalty, complaining behavior and price sensitivity. High service quality often leads to favorable behavioral intentions while a low service quality tends to lead to unfavorable intentions. Behavioral intentions can be categorized as favorable or unfavorable. Favorable behavioral intentions represent

customer's conative loyalty (Chen & Chen, 2010) and include positive word of mouth (recommendation), paying a price premium, spending more money with the company, and remaining loyal. Favorable behavioral intentions are associated with a service providers' ability to make its customers say positive things about them (Boulding, Kalra, Staelin, & Zeithaml, 1996), recommend them to other customers (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1991), remain loyal to them (Rust & Zahorik, 1993), spend more with the organization (Lin & Hsieh, 2007) and pay price premiums (Lin & Hsieh, 2007). Zeithaml et al. (1996) further noted that increasing customer retention or lowering the rate of customer defection was a major key to the ability of service providers to produce profits. James (2007) indicated that behavioural intentions were verbal indications based on an individual's intention.

Unfavourable behavioural intentions included customer complaints and a multi-faceted concept which included voice responses, private responses and third-party responses (Zeithaml et al., 1996). Lobo, Maritz & Mehta (2007) indicated that unfavorable behavioral intentions include customer switching behavior and complaint behavior. Behavioral intentions can predict actual customer behavior when behavioral intentions are appropriately measured (Ajzen & Fishbein 1980). Prior studies operationalize behavioral intentions using three variables: intention to return, willingness to recommend and word of mouth. Customer loyalty is an important goal in the consumer marketing community as it is a key component for company sustainability. Measuring loyalty can provide a better understanding of customer retention. Retaining existing customers usually has a much lower associated cost than winning new ones. Furthermore, loyal customers are more likely to recommend friends, relatives or other potential customers to a product/service by acting as free word-of-mouth advertising agents (Shoemaker & Lewis, 1999).

A number of studies have focused on the assessment and measurement of behavioral intentions in the tourism industry (Chen & Tsai, 2007; González, Comesaña, & Brea, 2007; Lee, Graefe, & Burns, 2004). Several researchers recommend that hotel management must not neglect the importance of behavioral intentions and its related constructs. Alexandris *et al.* (2002) explain that an understanding of the reasons why customers stay in hotels and identifying the factors that influence their behavioral intentions of choosing a particular hotel

are beneficial to hospitality planning and marketing. Researchers have noted that few empirical studies have focused on the behavioral intentions construct in the hotel industry (Hu *et al.*, 2009; Kandampully & Suhartanto, 2000). This little empirical research has focused on the behavioural intentions of customers of the hotel industry particularly in other countries (Kang *et al.*, 2004; Chou, 2003; Lai, Ping, & Yeh, 1999). This study will examine behavioural intentions construct in four and five star hotels in Kenya.

2.4. Relationship between Customer Experience and Purchase Behavioural Intentions

The aspect of how customers holistically evaluate services and form repurchase intentions or behaviours has been shown in many studies (Mittal and Kamakura, 2001; Mittal *et al.*, 1999; Seiders *et al.*, 2005). For example, they reveal that emotions (Smith and Bolton, 2002), relationship with the service provider (Yim *et al.*, 2008), participation by customers (Chan *et al.*, 2010), multi-channel effects (Godfrey *et al.*, 2011), evaluations of threats to resources during service failure and recovery attempts (Surachartkumtonkun *et al.*, 2013) and service recovery strategies (Chan *et al.*, 2009) are important in shaping Purchase behavior. Burton *et al.* (2003) stated that customer experience is related to intentions. The more positive the customer's experience the more likely he or she is willing to reuse the service. During the five stages of the decision-making process customers receive and interpret all possible information related to the purchasing objective in the information search stage then develop a degree of product preference. Yang and He (2011) asserted that experience does influence the customers' preferences, which then subsequently affect their purchase behavior.

Igbaria, Guimaraes and Davis (1995) examined the results of customer experience within the structure of the customized Technological Acceptance Model and discovered that the customer experience creates immediate and oblique effect on purchase intention. Bellman, Loshe and Johnson (1999) also concluded that purchase intention is influenced by the levels of consumer experience. Boyer and Hult (2006) performed a research on customer behavioural intentions for online purchasing utilizing data retrieved from the survey of over 2,100 customers and their findings pointed out that behavioural intention will be at variance based on customer experience level. Positive customer experience can build its own momentum, creating an 'ecosystem of goodwill' that costs relatively little to maintain but can

deliver a loyal fan base and tangible bottom-line returns. Moreover, Nasermoadeli, Ling & Maghnati, (2013) proved that there is a positive relationship between the sensory experience and purchase intention, mediated by emotion. Clearly, if the customers increase their positive shopping experience, then their chances of intention to purchase the products and services would be higher.

The fact that experiences also affect organizations as an effective tool for differentiation and competitive advantage in an increasingly commoditized market is a relatively new argument. It has been discussed that experiences are distinct economic offerings just like products and services and they impact consumers' perception of value (Pine & Gilmore, 1999; Walls, 2009). Therefore, experiences create a unique value for customers, hard to be imitated by competition, and strongly affect satisfaction, loyalty, and recommendation behaviours of consumers (Berry, Carbone, & Haeckel, 2002; Pine & Gilmore, 1999). While the importance of brand image, service quality, organization image, customer satisfaction, corporate image, or destination image has been widely discussed in the marketing literature, little research has proposed the integrative model that investigates the antecedents and outcome variables of customer experience in explaining customers' purchase behavior. This study contributes to the call for more investigation of customer experience aspects in influencing customers' purchase behavioural intentions.

2.5. Influence of customer experience on customer emotions and purchase behavioural intentions.

2.5.1. Customer Experience and Customer Emotions

Customer emotions are formed by customer experiences which are sum total of product performance, packaging and display as well as point of purchase perceptions. The production of customer experiences within the hospitality and tourism sector is decisive for positively influencing customers' emotions. This point is difficult to overstate. Emphasizing that the emotional component is a natural part of what a hospitality experience comprises, Otto and Ritchie (1996) observe, "Perhaps more than any other service industry, hospitality holds the potential to elicit strong emotional and experiential reactions by consumer". Other authors also stress this fundamental element of tourism. Williams (2006) argues, for instance, that the

product that tourism providers offer always has close links to the customer experience. The claim, then, that such customer experiences are critical for suppliers of tourism experiences has a strong foundation because the customer can understand these experiences to be the core product (the bundle of memories, as it were, they take away with them). Consequently, customer experiences constitute a crucial factor that influences the customers' willingness to repeat the experience or to recommend it to friends or colleagues. Great organizations establish strong emotional connections with their customers.

Experience triggers our emotions and exerts an influence over them. Even a customer's rational response to a company or brand is hard to measure; the issue is even more complicated when decisions are powerfully influenced by emotion - and this is the case of the customer's "experience." Analysis must further contend with the difficulty of the myriad concepts that have evolved in connection with "experience." Examination of marketing practices reveals emotional motives/appeals used in marketing. Emotional connectivity with customers commoditizes a business, elevating a brand beyond price and features to a higher level of meaning and commitment for customers (Berry & Carbone, 2007). Connecting emotionally with customers requires an organization to create a cohesive, authentic and sensory-stimulating total customer experience that resonates, pleases, communicates effectively and differentiates the organization from the competition. One of the main characteristics of experience-centric services is that they offer memorable and extraordinary customer experiences through engaging customers. Depending on the environment and the level of customers' participation, engagement can be of different types: emotional, physical, intellectual and sometimes spiritual (Zomerdijk & Voss, 2010).

2.5.2. Customer Emotions and Purchase Behavioural Intentions

Several researchers have pointed out that emotions significantly contribute to the selection of service providers, evaluation of service quality, determination of repeat purchasing behaviours, development of brand loyalty and directly influence behavioral intentions (Mattila and Enz, 2002; Jaiswal and Niraj, 2011; Bigdeli and Bigdeli, 2014; Ali and Amin, 2014; Palau-Saumell *et al.*, 2014; Tsaor *et al.*, 2015). Morris *et al.* (2002) stated that emotions are an influential predictor of intentions and attitude, which is in line with Allen *et*

al.'s (1992) study that consumer buying behaviour, is heavily determined by their emotions. Yu and Dean (2001) proposed a high degree of correlation between loyalty and positive emotions. Lee, Amir and Ariely (2009) and Lee, Back and Kim (2009) suggested that consumers' emotions play the leading role in describing loyalty. Suwanamas et al. (2015) showed that customer emotions significantly influence customer loyalty in hospitality and tourism industry.

In the banking sector, Hayiel Hino reported that emotions had direct and positive effect on bank customers' loyalty. Medler-Liraz (2016) found that positive emotions had a significant positive impact on customer loyalty. Ladhari (2007) analyzed the influence of emotions in creating behavioral intentions. Their results revealed that consumers' positive or negative emotional responses will enhance or lessen their consumption experiences that ultimately influence loyalty intentions. Emotions do influence the attitude creation; therefore some of the extent literature suggested that emotions create significant impact in formatting and modifying approaches used by consumers to consume products and services (Hoyer & McInnis, 2001; Price, Arnould & Tierney, 1995). Emotions are key ingredients to motivation. They are what drive people to action. Customer experiences cover emotional, behavioural, sensory and related values (Schmitt, 1999). Customer emotions also constitute a primary source of human motivation and also influence memory and information processing (Kuhl, 1986). Cohen & Areni (1991) in their review of affective processing mechanisms, indicate that consumption emotions leave strong affective traces or "markers" in episodic memory. These memory elements are highly accessible to cognitive operations. That is, these experiences can be readily retrieved and integrated into current evaluative judgments. Customers who are experiencing negative emotional responses tend to have strong brand switching behaviour (Roos, 1999). In addition, "emotionally bonded customers tend to invest more in their relationships than customers lacking affective commitment" (Mattila, 2001).

Phillips and Baumgartner (2002) tested the influence of emotional experiences on satisfaction. They hypothesized that positive consumption emotions will exert a positive impact on satisfaction and negative consumption emotions will exert a negative impact on satisfaction. Their interest was in determining the incremental effects of emotions on

satisfaction when other variables, such as expectations and performance, were included in the model. The findings supported the influence of positive and negative emotions on satisfaction. Barsky and Nash (2002), investigate the magnitude and impact of emotions in hotel industry. Their findings reveal that emotions play a varied role depending on the type of hotel: luxury, extended scale, mid-price or economy. Typically, prior research focuses on tangible operational aspects such as food, ambiance, perceived value and service (Kivela *et al.* 2000; Oh, 2000). Experience is not a new concept though; it is a part of human nature. The marketing discipline views experience from a more objective point of view, where marketers aim to create unforgettable experiences at various interactions that take place between service providers and their customers (Caru & Cova, 2003). Such kind of experiences is termed as extraordinary experiences. Despite the evolution of purchase behavior field, from purely functional theories to more hedonic explanations the influence of customer emotions on purchase behavioural intentions have been subject to limited number of research papers.

2.5.3. Influence of Customer Experience on Purchase Behavioural intentions

Customer experience is the multidimensional takeaway impression or outcome formed by people's encounters with products, services, and businesses (Lewis & Chambers, 2000). These impressions are related to the facets of consumer behavior that relate to cognitive and emotive aspects of one's encounter with market-related products and services (Carbone & Haeckel, 1994; Kumar & Karande, 2000). In the modern service industry, much attention has been given to creating experiences for customers. Some researchers have argued that, as the economy offers an increasing number of commoditized products and services, companies must find new concepts and marketing strategies to differentiate themselves from their respective competitors (Mossberg, 2007; Pine & Gilmore, 1999; Schwartz, 1990). Consumers want more than the purchase of a product and service, but rather the experiences, relationships, and stories behind the transaction (Carlson, 1997). One way to achieve this is to focus on the design and delivery of service experiences to increase customer satisfaction and, ultimately, customer loyalty.

As one of the core concepts in the experiential marketing, customer experience has been used as a base to predict the customer purchase intention. Turney and Littman (2003) asserted that intention to buy is the buyer's prediction of which company he will select to buy. Intention to buy may be recognized as a reflection of real purchase behaviour. The greater the purchase intention is, the greater a consumer's desire is to buy a product (Schiffman and Kanuk, 2000). Igbaria, Guimaraes and Davis (1995) examined the results of customer experience within the structure of the customized Technological Acceptance Model and discovered that the customer experience creates immediate and oblique effect on purchase intention. Bellman, Loshe and Johnson (1999) also concluded that purchase intention is influenced by the levels of consumer experience.

Yang and He (2011) asserted that experience does influence the customers' preferences, which then subsequently affect their purchase decision. Boyer and Hult (2006) performed a research on customer behavioural intentions for online purchasing utilizing data retrieved from the survey of over 2,100 customers and their findings pointed out that behavioural intention will be at variance based on customer experience level. Clearly, if the customers increase their positive shopping experience, then their chances of intention to purchase the products and services would be higher. Scholars have emphasised on the importance of customer satisfaction in developing their loyalty and positive behaviours in the hospitality and tourism industry. However, mere satisfaction is insufficient for loyalty (Brakus, Schmitt, & Zarantonello, 2009; Han & Ryu, 2009) because of the intangible, inseparable and heterogeneous nature of the services provided (Ali, Khan & Rehman, 2012; Pine & Gilmore, 1999).

Service providers are always looking to offer layered and holistic experiences that not only satisfy the customers, but also bond customers emotionally to the service providers (Walls *et al.*, 2011). As highlighted by Grove, Fisk and Dorsch (1998) these determinants of customer experience may include the physical and social environments, that is, interaction with staff and interaction with other customers. Consequently, satisfied customers of these determinants of experience may show willingness to spread positive word of mouth, revisit and pay more for the services provided (Ali *et al.*, 2014). The rich physical and social

interactions found in the hospitality industry makes it an attractive domain to analyse customer experiences (Cetin & Dincer, 2014). In their investigation of guest behaviours in the lodging industry, Han and Back (2007) explained the formation of intentions to revisit. The results of their study showed that guests' intention to revisit is a positive function of satisfaction. In the resort hotel setting, Ali and Amin (2014) found that improving customer satisfaction level is essential to increasing intentions to revisit. Some research has provided evidence to substantiate that customer experience would influence consumer purchase intentions (Schmitt, 2003; Boyer & Hult, 2006; Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982). Clearly, if the customers gain a more favorable shopping experience, then their intentions to repurchase the products and services would be much stronger.

The importance of the customer experience in business is further demonstrated by evidence presented by a few scholars. For example, Reichheld (2006) claims that exceptional customer experience creates, on average, a 5% increase in customer loyalty; Kakabadse *et al.* (2006) say that a single percentage investment in customer care programs has the potential to generate a 10% gain in customer loyalty and sales. Other scholars have pointed out that customer experience would positively influence customers' purchase behavior (Babin and Attaway, 2000; Turley and Milliman, 2000), while few of them provide empirical evidence to test their assertions. Most empirical research focus on testing whether customer experience affects consumer satisfaction and loyalty (Brakus *et al.*, 2009; Shi, 2009). Thus, there is need for empirical research to explore the effect of customer experience on customer purchase intentions. To fill this gap, this study analysed the influence of dimensions of customer experience on purchase behavioural intentions.

2.6. Mediating role of customer emotions in the relationship between Customer Experience and Purchase Behavior variables

Emotions play the critical role in engaging customers in memorable and meaningful ways (Pullman & Gross, 2004). The common practices followed by experience-centric companies show that they focus on such experience design choices that enable them to evoke customer emotions (Voss *et al.*, 2008). The evoked emotions in turn ensure greater value derivation from the memorable experiences. Fournier (1998) and Arnould & Cost (1993) believed that

the consumers' emotional connection with a company is more highly associated with their purchase intention in future. It is commonly recognized that customer experience and long-term personality intention are affected by the emotions that generated throughout the consumption periods of an assistance encounter (Oliver, 1997; Cronin *et al*, 2000; Barsky and Nash, 2002). Emotions play an important role in hotel customers' satisfaction and loyalty and are a better predictor of customer loyalty than are traditional measures of product and service satisfaction (Barsky and Nash, 2003). Guests are willing to pay substantially more per night for the promise of experiencing certain emotions during their stay. Customers seek experiences that would bond them emotionally to the brand and reflect that in their behaviors.

Friman (2004) discovered that the degree of experiencing critical incidents did create impact on emotional reactions. LeDoux (1996) described emotional experience as how a company is able to create emotions and how it can be explained based on response, central, cognitive, and arousal theories. Thus, it is imperative for marketing professionals to understand the influence of consumption emotions on attitude change and how it influences repeat purchase. Consequently, customer experiences constitute a crucial factor that influences the customers' willingness to repeat the experience or to recommend it to friends or colleagues. Research emphasizes that customer experiences that influence a person emotionally are of a special kind because they have a tendency to be stored especially well in memory. Experiences of this nature leave, as Johnston and Clark (2001) term, "mental imprints," which accurately emphasizes the close link of these types of experiences to the arousal of emotions. Since services are intangible, the role of experience may be very prominent in attitude development. Experiences create emotions, exploring the emotions felt during and after the experience might offer clues on how to design products and services to facilitate positive experiences.

The role of emotions has been noted as a distinguishing feature of customer experience, and a stimulus that has a positive affective outcome for one consumer may have a negative outcome for another consumer with a different emotional predisposition (Oliver, 1997). As well as being an antecedent to a consumer-based definition of customer experience, emotions

can also be an outcome. It has been noted by O'Shaughnessy and O'Shaughnessy (2003) that what people get emotional about is indicative of what they consider to be particularly important. Customer perception of belief and attitudes towards a product is shaped by product performance but only few studies integrate it with emotional framework which helps in building sustaining relationships with customers. Several researchers have pointed out that emotions significantly contribute to the selection of service providers, evaluation of service quality, determination of repeat purchasing behaviors, development of brand loyalty and directly influence behavioral intentions (Mattila & Enz, 2002; Jaiswal & Niraj, 2011; Bigdeli and Bigdeli, 2014; Ali and Amin, 2014; Palau-Saumell *et al.*, 2014; Tsaur *et al.*, 2015). Morris *et al.* (2002) stated that emotions are an influential predictor of intentions and attitude, which is in line with Allen *et al.* (1992) study that consumer buying behavior is heavily determined by their emotions.

Yu and Dean (2001) proposed a high degree of correlation between loyalty and positive emotions. Lee, Amir and Ariely (2009) and Lee, Back and Kim (2009) suggested that consumers' emotions play the leading role in describing loyalty. Suwanamas *et al.* (2015) showed that customer emotions significantly influence customer loyalty in hospitality and tourism industry. In the banking sector, Hayiel Hino reported that emotions had direct and positive effect on bank customers' loyalty. Medler-Liraz (2016) found that positive emotions had a significant positive impact on customer loyalty. Ladhari (2007) analyzed the influence of emotions in creating behavioral intentions. Their results revealed that consumers' positive or negative emotional responses will enhance or lessen their consumption experiences that ultimately influence loyalty intentions.

In line with the previous context, Smith and Bolton (2002) examined the effect of consumer emotions in service setting and found that consumers' emotional response significantly influence their decision making and behavioral intentions. These empirical findings highlight the importance of emotions in promoting favorable evaluations of brands/services in the formation and development of loyalty intentions, thus increasing favorable intentions to be loyal (Han *et al.*, 2009; Ladhari, 2007). Moreover, Lee *et al.* (2008) showed that positive emotions had a positive impact on loyalty and negative emotions had a significant indirect

effect on loyalty. Su *et al.* (2014) reported that in hospitality service context, positive emotions had a significant positive impact on loyalty intentions, while negative emotions significantly reduced loyalty intentions. Consumer preference and motivation are far less influenced by the functional attributes of products and services than the subconscious sensory and emotional elements derived by the total experience (Zaltman, 2003). The experience is rooted in the collection of feeling generated by the impressions evoked by clues. Quality improvement through managed clues requires insight into the more dynamic, less linear nature of experience. Managing experience quality requires pushing beyond the limits of older management paradigms. Organizations must think far more deeply about customers' emotional needs and understand how the consistency and effectiveness of clues evoke the emotions that create their customers' experiences of the company.

It is now widely accepted that customer satisfaction and longer-term behavioural intention are influenced by emotions during the pre-, actual and post-consumption stages of a service encounter (Oliver, 1997; Cronin *et al.*, 2000; Barsky & Nash, 2002). Mattila (2001) noted that "Emotionally bonded customers tend to invest more in their relationships than customers lacking affective commitment". Consumers' emotional bonding with a service provider is more strongly linked to their future purchase intentions than the more cognitive component of quality or satisfaction measures (Fournier, 1998; Arnould & Price, 1993; Price, Arnould & Deibler, 1995), O'Shaughnessy and O'Shaughnessy (2003) noted that emotional displays may contain the "true self", on the basis that what people get emotional about reveals what they consider to be particularly salient. Emotions act as a source of information, which are used to evaluate a stimulus and lead to the formation of a behavior. It has been suggested that emotions are more likely to play an important role in shaping customer behaviour and change when they are viewed as relevant to the product being consumed (Hoyer & McInnis, 2001; Price, Arnould & Tierney, 1995). Customer emotions need to be managed effectively to gain and retain customers. Management of customer emotions is important as customer emotions drive and destroy value in an organization (Shaw, 2007) and contribute to relationship dissolution. Most importantly, most relationship dissolutions are based on intuition (Helm, 2005).

Mooradian and Oliver (1997), in their study of the impact of personality and emotion on post-purchase processes, investigated the impact of extroversion and neuroticism on positive and negative consumption-based emotions, respectively, and how these emotions affect satisfaction. They also examined the effects of satisfaction on consumer complaints, product recommendations, and repeat purchase intentions. The findings of their survey show that satisfaction mediates the effects of positive and negative consumption-based emotions on complaints, recommendations, and intentions, even after controlling for confirmation of product expectations. Furthermore, consumer researchers have been exploring the influence of and the interdependence between emotions and many central aspects of consumption, such as persuasion, preference, evaluation, environment, and purchase intentions (Simonson, Carmon, Dhar, Drolet, & Nowlis, 2001).

Emotional response is a powerful predictor of intention and brand attitude (Morris, Woo, Geason, & Kim, 2002). Therefore, Morris *et al* (2002) insisted that researchers need to be more confident that measuring emotions would help to determine consumer intentions. In the study of advertising responses, they also found that affect dominates over cognition for predicting conative attitude and action. Moreover, brand attitude (interest) is not necessarily a precursor to intention. Westbrook and Oliver (1991) demonstrated that the emotion has two dimensions (positive and negative) rather than a single positive dimension. Positive emotions typically lead to higher purchase intentions (Bitner, 1992), yet negative emotions may also enhance purchase intentions depending on activation (Menon & Kahn, 2001) or shopping-environment quality (Mano, 1999).

The important role that emotions play in consumers' lives suggests that emotions can explain behavior in situations where other constructs, such as attitude, do not account for all or even a significant portion of the variability in behavior. For instance, Allen, Machleit, and Kleine (1992) found that emotions supplement attitude in predicting consumption behavior. Few studies have examined the mediating impact of emotions. For instance, in the service setting, emotions act as a mediator of the cognitive antecedents of satisfaction (Smith and Bolton, 2002). Positive emotions guide to higher purchase intentions (Bitner, 1992). However, negative emotions may also augment purchase intentions depending on activation (Menon

and Kahn, 2002), or shopping-environment quality (Mano, 1999). Furthermore, Bloemer *et al.* (1999) revealed that the relationship between satisfaction and loyalty is mediated by positive emotions in high involvement service settings.

In order to make an experience memorable or extraordinary, creating positive emotions are crucial. From this perspective, marketing literatures can be found emphasizing emotions in creating experiences (Shaw, 2007). Emotions (positive and negative) are presented as mediators in this study. A mediator is a variable that affects the strength or direction of the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable (Helm and Mark, 2012). Few studies have examined the mediating impact of emotions. For instance, in the service setting, emotions act as a moderator of the cognitive antecedents of satisfaction (Smith and Bolton, 2002). Despite differences, both purchase behavior and marketing studies have given importance to the roles of emotion to create superior value for customers through experience. While the role of emotions in marketing is well known (Westbrook, 1987), its applications in hospitality industry is limited at best. Organizations must think far more deeply about customers' emotional needs and understand how the consistency and effectiveness of clues evoke the emotions that create their customers' experiences of the company and influence purchase behavior. Many studies have addressed that there is a significant influence of affect and emotions experienced on post-purchase behavior (Mano & Oliver, 1993; Oliver, 1993) however little is known about the mediating effect of emotions on the relationship between customer experience and purchase behavior.

2.7. Knowledge Gap

Customer experience is emerging as a relatively new concept and is regarded as an important determinant for the success of hotel industry. Although there are several conceptual studies on experiences, fragmented theories on customer experiences have only been verified by a few empirical studies. While the literature on service quality improvement focused primarily on delivering better service for the customer, the customer experience literature appears to be limited to coverage about the nature of the experience and the provision of a number of operational tools and techniques. There are different opinions on definition, antecedents, variables, measurement, and impacts of customer experiences. This demonstrates insufficient

clarification on dimensions and determinants of customer experience. Without a clear direction on experience items and their contribution to organizational performance, strategies established to create desired customer experiences might be ineffective (Kim & Brown, 2012).

Although experiences have attracted considerable attention, creating and managing experiences are still among major challenges for hotel industry. Hotels face a challenge in systematically engineering customer experiences to achieve the triple bottom line. So far, literature on customer experience management might be considered as complex, inconsistent, indecisive, and subjective. There appears to be a knowledge gap about how, at a more strategic level, organizations can go about designing and improving their customer experiences to try to achieve a triple bottom line. This situation fails to build on previous studies and bridge the gap between literature and practice. This study bridged this gap by investigating how four- and five-star hotels in Kenya go about designing and improving their customer experiences.

A number of experiential design elements have been identified as having an impact on purchase behavioural intentions; however, there is no clear direction on experience items' significance in influencing customer emotions and purchase behavioural intentions. Most of the literature is also silent on what aspects of customer experience and customer emotions could contribute in shaping purchase behavior. There is insufficient clarification about the relationship among customer experience, customer emotions and purchase behavioural intentions constructs. Most studies don't provide conclusive empirical results to point out the integrated relationships between customer experience dimensions, customer emotions and purchase behavioural intentions. Little is also known about the mediational role of customer emotions in the relationship between customer experience and purchase behavioural intentions. This study attempted to close this knowledge gap by examining the dimensions of customer experiences in four- and five-star hotels in Kenya and to develop an explanatory framework of customer experience that addresses antecedents of customer experience and the relative effects on customer emotions and Purchase behavioural intentions.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents brief description of the research methodology that was used for the study. It covers the research design, study area, target population, sample size, sampling procedure, data collection instrument and procedures, data analysis and presentation.

3.1. Research Design

Research designs are procedures for collecting, analyzing, interpreting, and reporting data in research studies (Creswell, 2013). The study adopted a mixed method research design where both quantitative and qualitative data were collected and analyzed. Mixed methods research is the type of research in which a researcher combines elements of qualitative and quantitative research approaches for the broad purposes of breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration (Johnson *et al.*, 2007). Mixed method research approach was considered since it is comprehensive in providing better understanding to research problems. A number of mixed method research designs exist. These are explanatory sequential design, exploratory sequential design, embedded design, transformative design, convergent parallel design and multiphase design (Creswell & Clark, 2011; Creswell, 2013; Terrell, 2011). These designs can be applied variedly in collecting and analyzing data depending on the objectives of the research.

Given the numerous mixed method designs, this study employed embedded mixed method design in which data was collected and analyzed in two phases: qualitative and quantitative. The embedded design was adopted as it was considered important in collecting and analyzing diverse types of data to best provide an understanding of the research problem and achieve the research objectives (Creswell, 2003). An Embedded Design can use either a one-phase or a two-phase approach for the embedded data and the quantitative and qualitative data are used to answer different research questions within the study (Hanson *et al.*, 2005). The research design also allowed findings to be generalized into theoretical framework and applied into other situations (Everett & Aitchison, 2008). In this design, qualitative data were first collected and analyzed and quantitative data were collected and analyzed using quantitative methods in SPSS in the second phase. Qualitative data played a supplemental role within the overall design.

The intent of this design is not to converge two different data sets collected to answer the same questions (Hanson *et al.*, 2005). Therefore, quantitative data collected in the study was used to answer objective one, three, four and five while qualitative data was used to answer research question two. Quantitative data was deemed to be more useful in understanding the structure, characteristics and the nature of the relationships between the key study constructs and provide a more generalizable picture of the relationship. The design involved administering questionnaires to guests staying in the selected hotels during the quantitative phase of the study. Qualitative data helped in the in-depth understanding of strategic management of customer experience and examining how organizations can design and improve their customer experiences. Data gathered in this phase of the study were analyzed qualitatively using framework analysis.

3.2. Study Area

The study was carried out in the three major cities in Kenya, namely Nairobi, Mombasa and Kisumu. Hotels in these cities were considered because majority of four- and five-star hotels are found here. Hotels in these cities have a clear and consistent organizational structure and can give more insight into experiences because of their experienced and demanding clientele. The three cities were also considered Kenya's major economic hub and thus would have a substantial impact on hotels' operations. It was therefore believed that the different types of hotels in these cities would provide important information needed for this study.

3.3. Instrument pre-testing

Pilot test was conducted to determine the reliability and validity of the tools. It was necessary to pre-test the data collection instrument before using it in the main survey to determine its flaws and correct them (Bailey, 1982). Pre-testing was also useful for the reliability and validity of the questionnaires. In the qualitative phase, the researcher and a key informant drawn from hotel managers reviewed and revised the questions and probes. The questions and probes were then pre-tested and further revised. Additionally, the researcher with the help of key informants developed a set of interview procedures that helped guarantee reliability and consistency across the key informants to be interviewed.

In the quantitative phase the pre-test was conducted in two stages two weeks before the final survey. Ten per cent (10%) of the target sample of guests (i.e. 349 = 35) was used in the pre-

test study. Those who participated in the pre-test study were excluded from the main survey. Participants of the pre-test were drawn from hotels in the three cities: 1 from Kisumu, 25 from Nairobi and 9 from Mombasa. Participants of the pre-test study were issued with the questionnaire to fill by themselves. The first half of the identified respondents were informed that they are participating in a pre-test study and that their comments regarding the data collection instruments were valuable for purposes of enhancing the research output. The result of the first stage pre-test study led to some attributes being eliminated and changing the structure of a few question statements, open-ended and closed-ended questions. After correction, the instrument was then administered to the second group (the remaining half) who were not told that they are participating in a pre-test study. The result from the second group was still used for restructuring the instrument further.

Reliability analysis was used to assess internal consistency among the variables of study. The reliability of the study measures was assessed by computing Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for all items in the questionnaire and the overall assessment was given. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient ranges between 0 and 1 with higher alpha coefficient values being more reliable. A questionnaire with a good internal consistency had high alpha coefficients. Principal component factor Analysis was carried out to test for construct validity and highlight variability among observed variables and also to check for any correlated variables in order to reduce redundancy in data.

3.4. Target Population

The study population constituted managers and guests of 4 and 5 star hotels in Kenya. A total of 33 four and five star hotels located within the three cities; Nairobi, Mombasa and Kisumu in Kenya were the unit of analysis for this study. The selected hotels have a total bed capacity of 7416. A list of these hotels was compiled by the researcher (see Table.3.1). The hotels were selected for the study because they have a clear and consistent organizational structure which implied that the results can be generalized without a lot of errors. These hotels were also regarded as an ideal domain to study experiences as they give more insight into experiences because of the experiences and demanding nature of the clientele as well as importance that they give to product and service design. A marketing manager was chosen from each of the hotels thereby giving a total of 33 respondents for the qualitative phase.

Marketing managers were considered because they are perceived to have a broad overview of customer expectations, satisfaction and experiences and they are responsible for strategic management of customer experiences. The number of guests that participated in the study in the quantitative phase was calculated based on an average bed occupancy rate of 51.25% for 4 and 5 star hotels in 2017 (Cytonn Research, 2017). The study population consisted of 3801 guests who were staying in the selected hotels within a period of four weeks (Table 3.1.).

Table 3.1. List of four and five star hotels in Kenya

Hotel	Bed Capacity	Location (City)	No. of guests to participate in each hotel
The Boma Nairobi	178	Nairobi	8
Crowne-Plaza	254	Nairobi	12
Eka	170	Nairobi	8
Hilton	334	Nairobi	16
Intercontinental	372	Nairobi	17
Laico Regency Hotel	208	Nairobi	10
Nairobi Safari Club Hotel	186	Nairobi	9
Nairobi Serena Hotel	183	Nairobi	8
Ole Sereni	206	Nairobi	10
Panari Hotel	136	Nairobi	12
Safari Park Hotel	206	Nairobi	10
House of Waine	20	Nairobi	1
Sankara	167	Nairobi	7
Sarova Stanley Hotel	440	Nairobi	20
Sarova Panafric	324	Nairobi	15
Southern Sun Mayfair Nairobi	212	Nairobi	10
The Fairmont Norfolk Hotel	200	Nairobi	9
Tribe	154	Nairobi	7
Villa Rosa Kempinski	216	Nairobi	10
Windsor Golf Hotel and Country Club	205	Nairobi	9
Weston	154	Nairobi	7
Silver Springs Hotel	180	Nairobi	8
Fairview Hotel	133	Nairobi	6
Hemingway's Nairobi	50	Nairobi	3
Radisson Blu Hotel Nairobi	354	Nairobi	16
Dusit D2	122	Nairobi	6
Acacia Premier	128	Kisumu	6
Serena Beach Resort	328	Mombasa	15
Sarova Whitesands Beach Resort	435	Mombasa	20
Sun and Sand Beach Resort	285	Mombasa	13
Voyager Beach Resort	472	Mombasa	22
Marina English Point	28	Mombasa	2
Severin Sea Lodge	376	Mombasa	17
Total	7416		349

Source: Tourism Regulatory Authority, 2018

3.5. Sample Size and Sampling Procedures

The study adopted a multistage sampling procedure considering vastness of the study area. Multistage sampling is a sampling procedure that involves use of more than one sampling procedure in selecting participant of the survey in stages. First sampling procedures to determine sample size for the study was conducted in two stages: during qualitative and quantitative phase. In the qualitative phase, purposive sampling was used to determine the marketing managers to participate in the study and convenience sampling was used to select the managers to be interviewed.

In the quantitative phase empirical analysis was based on a sampling frame that consisted of four and five star hotels located in Nairobi, Mombasa and Kisumu. Purposive sampling was used to identify hotels that gave the needed information. The number of guests to participate in the study were determined using Cochran’s formula. Israel (1992) recommended the use of Cochran’s formula in calculating the sample size when the population is huge and can change at any time of the study. The sample size was determined as follows;

Sample size: $n_o = \frac{Z^2 pq}{e^2}$ **Equation 3.1**

Where n_o = Sample Size

Z= Z value which is 1.96 (for 95% level of confidence)

p = estimated proportion of an attribute that is present in the population which is 0.5

q= 1-p

e = desired level of precision (Confidence interval) which in this case will be 0.05

$n = \{1.96^2 * (0.5*0.5)\} \div (0.05)^2 = 384.16.$

Since the population of the study was definite the following equation was used to determine the sample size;

$n = \frac{n_o}{1 + \frac{(n_o - 1)}{N}}$ **Equation 3.2**

Where N= the definite population.

$$\text{The new } n \text{ for guests} = \frac{384.16}{1 + \frac{(384.16-1)}{3801}} = 348.92 = 349$$

Therefore, the required sample size for the study was 349 guests. The total number of guests to participate in the study in each hotel was selected using proportionate sampling. This implied that the bed capacity in each hotel was considered in relation to the total bed capacity in all the hotels and total guests sample size (see Table.3.1). Guests who participated in the study were selected using systematic sampling procedure such that every guest staying in the n th bed was involved in each hotel. This implied that the beds in all the selected hotels were given numbers from 1 to the last bed and “ n ” calculated using;

$$n = \text{Total number of beds} \div \text{Sample Size}$$

3.6. Measurement of Variables

Berry and Carbone’s Model (2007) was used for measuring customer experience. This model posited that customer experience clues generally fall into three main categories: functional, mechanic and humanic. Richins’ (1997) emotion indicators were adopted to represent respondents’ consumption based emotional reactions to a recent hotel stay. Richins (1997) proposed three versions of the CES. The first version covers 16 identifiable clusters comprising 43 descriptors. Another version includes the 16 identifiable clusters as well as an “other items” category. In the third version, Richins added nine more descriptors to the first two versions. Results of six studies using several scaling procedures were used to derive the final versions of the CES. Richins (1997) determined the difference of consumption emotion from other kinds of emotions experienced during other types of activities and developed a scale, the Consumption Emotion Set (CES), to measure consumption emotions. Although CES has some limitations, Richins (1997) empirical test supported that CES is the most comprehensive measure in assessing consumption-related emotions. As Richins (1997) noted that “for some contexts, theory or common sense may suggest that certain emotions are unlikely to be experienced; in these cases, the researcher may choose to omit the descriptors for those emotions from their measuring instrument. Thus, using the entirety of CES was not necessary. Choosing emotion descriptors through the appropriate procedure, which are likely to be experienced by customers during their hotel stay, is needed for the study of emotions in

the hotel industry. In this study, Richins (1997) empirical test was contextualized in terms of happiness, pleasure, amazement, contentment, loneliness, excitement and relaxation. Four scale items, adopted from Zeithaml *et al* (1996) were used to measure purchase behavioural intentions. The items are “I am willing to visit the hotel again.”, “I will resist the offers of other hotels.”, “I will always recommend this hotel whenever anyone seeks my advice” and “I would say positive things about this hotel to others.” All items were measured on a Likert scale ranging from ‘1’ Strongly Disagree to ‘5’ Strongly Agree.

3.7. Data Collection Methods

Based on the research design and objectives, interviews and questionnaires were deemed the most suitable tools for data collection. Interviews were used in the qualitative phase of the study and self-administered questionnaires were used to collect data in the quantitative phase. Key informant interviews were conducted to get in-depth answers pertaining to designing, improving and managing customer experiences. Key informant interview was used because the method sought qualitative information that can be narrated and cross checked with quantitative data. Self-administered questionnaires were considered because the respondents answered at their own convenient time. The questionnaire was structured into information about the hotels and the respondents and questions related to the study research objectives.

3.7.1. Interview Schedule

According to Macionas and Plummer (2002) “an interview is a series of questions a researcher addresses personally to respondents” (McDonald, 2006). There are three main forms of interviewing: structured, semi-structured and unstructured. Denscombe (2003) describes a structured interview as having tight control over format of the questions and answers. Under this method, the researcher has a pre-determined list of questions to which the respondent is invited to offer responses. A semi-structured interview is more flexible in that the questions and their order may differ in order to gain the same data from different people (McDonald, 2006). Researchers use unstructured interviews when trying to gain more in-depth and qualitative data. This study used semi-structured interviews. The first section of the interview schedule focused on the ethical considerations such as: introduction of the researchers to the interviewee, the purpose of the interview and assuring the respondents that

their responses were used for the research purpose only. The second section of the interview schedule focused on the questions. Eight probing questions concerning designing, improving and managing customer experience were asked. The questions structures were as shown on the interview schedule in the appendices section. Face-to-face interviews were conducted to collect qualitative data. The data generated were used to answer research question two.

3.7.2. Questionnaire development

Questionnaires were deemed the most suitable tool for collecting data in the quantitative phase. Questionnaire is one of the most common approaches used in the social sciences to empirically study the characteristics and interrelationships of sociological and psychological variables (Koljonen & Reid, 2000). It is a method of collecting data from people about who they are, how they think and what they do. It is generally descriptive and quantitative in nature. There are many modes in which to administer questionnaires and this study utilized self-administered questionnaires. Questionnaires were self-administered such that each customer was expected to fill the questionnaire if they fall within the sample. The questionnaire consisted of two sections each structured differently. The first section focused on respondents' demographic profile. This included variables such as *gender, nationality, age, purpose of visit* and *period of stay in the hotel*. The second section consisted of scaled variables. The section was constructed in three parts.

A five point Likert scale was used to measure all the variables in this section. The scales provided respondents with a number of brief statements associated with measuring each category within the variable. Likert type scales measure the intensity of the feelings about an area in question (Bryman, 2004). Categories are arranged in accordance with scale position and respondents are expected to select the category that best describes their feelings and the variable being measured (Malhotra and Birks, 2000). The levels were constructed in a continuum ranging from *1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neutral, 4=agree, to 5=strongly agree*. The lowest rating of 1 signified a low opinion by the respondents while a high rating of 5 signified a high rating by the respondent. The advantage of using likert scaling in this study was that it enables attitudinal responses to be summated and facilitates the researcher to examine trends in the responses to particular responses. The first part

required the respondents to evaluate on a five point scale their perceptions based on hotel experiences. The second part required the respondents to indicate their overall feelings about the hotel experience and purchase behavior variable which is the dependent variable of this research. The last part of the questionnaire consisted of an open-ended question which focused on purchase behavior as a variable. This section required the respondents to give some of the suggestions on other factors that affect their purchase behavior apart from experiences. The data generated from the questionnaire were used to answer research questions one, three, four and five.

3.8. Data Collection Procedures

Data collection process was in two stages. The first stage focused on the collection of qualitative data while the second stage concentrated on gathering quantitative data. The data collection procedures involved getting the authority letter from the University to facilitate data collection. The letter of introduction was sent to the selected hotels notifying the managers of the intention to conduct research in the hotels. This paved way for accessibility to the hotels. The interviews were conducted by the researcher after booking an appointment with managers of the selected hotels. Before the interview, the targeted respondents were identified and contacted prior to the impending interview. Phone calls were first made to establish contacts with the hotel managers requesting them to take part in the interview and briefing them on the nature of the interview. This was then followed up with letters that indicated the researcher's intention to conduct research in the targeted hotels, with the marketing managers as the targeted respondents (see appendix A).

On the agreed date for the interviews, the researcher conducted the interviews with each interview lasting between 30-45 minutes. In order to collect the interview information, interview notes were taken by one research assistant as most managers did not accept the use of a digital voice recorder. Despite the questions being structured and predetermined, the respondents were allowed some latitude to answer in their own way and the interviewer probed for more information in promising areas. This allowed the interviewee to provide in-depth information pertaining to participants' experiences and viewpoints. It also offered room for interaction so as to achieve richness and depth of understanding. The questionnaires

to be administered were delivered to the receptionists in each of the selected hotels upon approval by the management. The questionnaires were distributed to those guests checking in to the selected beds by the receptionist during the four weeks data collection period. Guests were instructed to fill the first part of the questionnaire on check in and the other parts upon their departure. After quantitative data collection key informant interviews were conducted to get in-depth answers pertaining to managing, improving and designing customer experiences.

3.9. Data Analysis

Data were analyzed in two phases; qualitative and quantitative. Qualitative analysis was done through framework analysis to investigate how Kenyan hotels design and improve customer experiences. Quantitative data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Means, percentages and tests for normality was used to describe the data. Specifically, factor analysis by principal axis approach was used to examine the specific items that define the primary structure of customer experience. Correlation was used to establish the relationship among customer experience, customer emotions and customer behavioural intentions variables. Structural equation modeling was used to analyze the influence of customer experience dimensions on customer emotions and purchase behavioural intentions. Bootstrapping was used to establish the mediation effect of customer emotions on the relationship between customer experience and purchase behavioural intentions.

3.9.1. Qualitative Data Analysis

Data collected in the qualitative phase were analysed using framework analysis. This approach was considered since it produces highly structured outputs of summarized data. It is also comprehensive and provides systematic and visible stages to the analysis process. Framework analysis also provides an excellent tool to assess policies and procedures from the very people that they affect (Srivastava A. & Thomson S.B., 2009). Using this approach, the gathered data was sifted, charted and sorted in accordance with key issues and themes following the Ritchie and Spencer (1994) five step process: familiarization; identifying a thematic framework; indexing; charting; and mapping and interpretation.

3.9.1.1. Familiarization

Familiarization refers to the process during which the researcher becomes familiarized with the transcripts of the data collected and gains an overview of the collected data (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994). This was achieved through an exhaustive study of the interview notes, identifying key ideas and recurrent themes and making a note of them.

3.9.1.2. Identifying thematic framework

Identifying a thematic framework occurs after familiarization and emerging themes or issues in the data set have been recognized. To achieve this, the notes taken during the familiarization stage dictated the themes and issues. The key issues, concepts and themes expressed by the participants formed the basis of a thematic framework that was used to filter and classify the data. Judgments about the relevance and importance of issues and implicit connections between ideas were made to ensure that the research question is being fully addressed.

3.9.1.3. Indexing

Indexing involved identifying portions or sections of the data that correspond to a particular theme. This process was applied to all the textual data that had been gathered.

3.9.1.4. Charting

At this stage the specific pieces of data that were indexed in the previous stage were arranged in charts of the themes. This means that the data was lifted from its original textual context and placed in charts that consist of the headings and subheadings that were drawn during the thematic framework.

3.9.1.5. Mapping and interpretation

This involved the analysis of the key characteristics as laid out in the charts. This analysis provided a schematic diagram which guided in the interpretation of the data set. It is at this point where concepts are defined, associations identified, explanations provided and strategies developed. Tables were used to map the relationship between the themes identified, sub-themes and their corresponding summaries of interview responses. Interpretation

involved assigning meanings and sense of the analyzed data by finding regularities, similarities, patterns, explanations and propositions in relation to the research questions and study objectives.

3.9.2. Quantitative Data Analysis

3.9.2.1. Descriptive Statistics

Quantitative data collected was entered into Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS 21) where both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze data. Descriptive statistics was used to describe and summarize data in a meaningful way which allowed simpler interpretation of the data. Descriptive statistics consisting of frequencies and means were used to describe the data as well as the demographic characteristics of respondents. The data was also assessed for missing values and outliers. Skewness and Kurtosis were used to determine the distribution of data. Skewness is a measure of the symmetry in a distribution. A symmetrical dataset will have a skewness value between + 1 and -1 (George & Mallery, 2010). Kurtosis is a measure of the combined sizes of the two tails. It measures whether the distribution is too peaked. A general guideline for kurtosis provides that the values should be between +1 and -1 for the data to be considered normal. Means and standard deviations were also used to rank the items for each study constructs, to provide further insight on the relevance of each measurement item.

3.9.2.2. Factor Analysis

Factor analysis is a statistical technique for identifying which underlying factors are measured by a number of observed variables. Factor Analysis (FA) reduces a large number of variables (factors) into a smaller set and establishes underlying dimensions between measured factors and latent constructs, thereby allowing the formation and refinement of theory. Factor analysis is divided into two main categories; Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) (Brown et al. 2010). Although both EFA and CFA methods try to account for as much variance as possible in a set of observed variables with a smaller set of latent variables, factors, or components. EFA is principally suitable for scale development and applied when there is little theoretical basis for specifying a priori the number and patterns of common factors (Allen et al. 2004). In view of this,

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was conducted in SPSS with principal axis factoring (PAF) and varimax rotation to help in data reduction and identify latent variables that explain the relations among the set of study indicators to be modeled in PLS-SEM. PAF was used because it represents higher quality decisions in understanding latent structure for a set of variables that account for relationships among the measured variables. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity were first conducted to examine the adequacy of the sample and the suitability of data for factor analysis. KMO correlation above 0.60 - 0.70 is considered adequate for analyzing the EFA output. Bartlett's test of sphericity provides a chi-square output that must be significant ($p < .05$) for factor analysis to be suitable (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2001).

3.9.2.3. Structural equation modeling

Structural equation modeling (SEM) was used to examine the relationships among latent variables. SEM is a multivariate statistical analysis technique that is used to analyze structural relationships between measured variables and latent constructs (Hair et al., 2010). This technique enabled the researcher to assess and interpret complex, interrelated dependence relationships as well as to include measurement error on the structural. This method was preferred because it estimates the multiple and interrelated dependence in a single analysis. It is a very general statistical modeling technique which is widely used in managerial and behavioral sciences. There are two approaches to estimate the relationships in a structural equation model in modern research practice; Covariance Based SEM (CB-SEM) approach that makes use of software programs such as SAS, LISREL, R, COSAN, SEPATH, AMOS, M-Plus, LISCOMP or EQS and Variance Based SEM (VB-SEM) also known as Partial Least Squares SEM (PLS-SEM) or component based SEM that uses software such as PLS-GUI, PLS-Graph, LVPLS, SmartPLS, SemPLS and WarpPLS (Ringle & Mena, 2012). This study utilized PLS-SEM using SmartPLS since it provided more flexibility in terms of data requirements, model complexity and relationship specification. PLS-SEM has been deployed in many fields, such as behavioral sciences (Bass et al, 2003), marketing (Henseler et al., 2009), organization (Sosik et al., 2009), management information system (Chin et al., 2003) and business strategy (Hulland, 1999).

3.9.2.3.1. Measurement model assessment

Measurement model assessment was done to ensure the reliability and validity of the construct measures and therefore provide support for the suitability of their inclusion in the path model. Reliability is the extent to which an assessment tool produces stable and consistent results while validity refers to the extent to which the construct measures what it is supposed to measure. Evaluation criteria for the measurement models included, use of Cronbach's alpha (α), composite reliability coefficients (Pc) and rho_A coefficient to evaluate internal consistency, Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and Fornell-Larcker criterion to evaluate convergent validity, Variance Inflation Factor to assess collinearity issues and Heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) to assess discriminant validity.

3.9.2.3.1.1. Discriminant validity

Discriminant validity refers to the extent in which the construct is actually differing from one another empirically. It also measures the degree of differences between the overlapping construct. Discriminant validity was evaluated by using Heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio of correlation. Henseler et al. (2015) proposed the superior performance of this method since it achieves higher specificity and sensitivity rates (97% to 99%) compared to the cross-loadings criterion (0.00%) and Fornell-Lacker (20.82%). HTMT values $< .85$ indicated a lack of discriminant validity.

3.9.2.3.1.2. Convergent validity

Convergent validity is the assessment to measure the level of correlation of multiple indicators of the same construct that are in agreement. To establish convergent validity, the average variance extracted (AVE) was examined. AVE value should exceed 0.50 so that it is adequate for convergent validity. According to Fornell and Larcker (1981), an AVE value of 0.50 and higher indicates a sufficient degree of convergent validity, meaning that the latent variable (constructs) explains more than half of its indicators variances.

3.9.2.3.1.3. Internal Consistency

The most common measurement used for internal consistency is Cronbach alpha and composite reliability, in which it measures the reliability based on the interrelationship of the

observed items variables. In PLS-SEM, the values are organised according to their indicator's individual reliability (Hair et al., 2014). Composite reliability values of 0.60 to 0.70 in exploratory research and values from 0.70 to 0.90 in more advanced stages of research are regarded as satisfactory (Nunally and Bernstein 1994). The values range from 0 to 1, where a higher value indicates higher reliability level. In this study, values of composite reliability and Cronbach alpha above 0.7 were deemed acceptable.

3.9.2.4. Evaluating the Structural Model

To show how well the hypothesized relationships predict the research model the structural model was evaluated. The structural model assessment in PLS-SEM was done on the basis of heuristic criteria that were determined by the model's predictive capabilities rather than applying the measures of goodness of fit like in the CB-SEM (Hair et al., 2014). As suggested by Hair et al. (2014) the five steps below were followed in assessing the structural model:

Step 1: Assess structural model for collinearity issues

Step 2: Assess the significance and relevance of the structural model relationships

Step 3: Assess the level of R²

Step 4: Assess the effect sizes f²

Step 5: Assess the predictive relevance Q²

3.9.2.4.1. Collinearity Assessment

This study used a collinearity test to calculate the VIF in SmartPLS 3.2.4 in order to examine multicollinearity. To assess the level of collinearity, researchers can compute tolerance or variance inflation factor (VIF) or both, where tolerance represents the amount of variance of one indicator not explained by the other indicators in the same block and VIF is the reciprocal of tolerance (Hair *et al.*, 2014). In the context of PLS-SEM, a tolerance value $\leq .20$ and a VIF value ≥ 5 indicate a potential collinearity problem (Hair *et al.*, 2011; Hair *et al.*, 2013; Hair *et al.*, 2014; Petter, Straub & Rai, 2007). According to Hair *et al.* (2014), one should consider eliminating constructs, merging predictors into a single construct, or creating higher-order constructs to treat collinearity problems if present.

3.9.2.4.2. Assessing the Coefficient of Determination (R²)

To assess the R², this study adopted the evaluation criteria with the lower threshold being .25 since it's the widely used criteria (Hair *et al.*, 2011 & Henseler *et al.*, 2009). R² measures the proportion of an endogenous construct's variance that is explained by its predictor constructs (Hair *et al.*, 2014). It represents the exogenous latent variables' combined effects on the endogenous latent variable, thus helps depict the model's predictive accuracy.

3.9.2.4.3. Assessing the Pseudo F-test (f² effect size)

The effect size f² is a measure used to assess the relative impact of a predictor (exogenous) construct on an endogenous construct's R² value (Hair *et al.*, 2014). According to Cohen (1988) guidelines for assessing relative effect size of exogenous construct on endogenous construct, the values of .02 may be considered as small, from .15 as medium, and above .35 as large.

3.9.2.4.4. Assessing the Predictive Validity of the Structural Model (Q² effect size)

Stone-Geiser's Q² test was used to test the model capability to predict the endogenous latent construct's indicators adequately (Hair *et al.*, 2011). This was evaluated through the blindfolding technique included in the SmartPLS 3.2.4 software using an omission distance of 7. The technique allows for calculating the Q² value using either cross-validated redundancy approach or the cross-validated communality approach. A latent construct is said to have predictive relevance if the resulting cross validity redundancy measure value (Q²) is greater than 0 for the endogenous construct it is predicting (Hair *et al.*, 2011).

3.9.2.5. Testing for Mediation

Mediation is a causal chain in which one variable affects a second variable that, in turn, affects a third variable. Mediation model seeks to identify and explain the mechanism or process that underlies an observed relationship between an independent variable and a dependent variable via the inclusion of a third variable, known as a mediator variable. Mediation analysis was employed to understand a known relationship by exploring the underlying mechanism or process by which customer experience influences purchase behavior through customer emotions. The methods used to test for presence of mediation

effect are the Sobel's test, causal inference approach and the non-parametric bootstrapping procedure (Bollen & Stine, 1990; Shrout & Bolger, 2002). An increasingly popular method of testing the indirect effect is bootstrapping. To test for mediation nonparametric bootstrap procedure was used. Bootstrapping is a non-parametric method based on resampling with replacement which is done many times. Bootstrapping involves repeatedly randomly sampling observations with replacement from the data set to compute the desired statistic in each resample. The bootstrapping method was preferred because it does not require the normality assumption to be met, and because it can be effectively utilized with smaller sample sizes ($N < 25$) (Preacher & Hayes, 2004).

3.9.2.6. Statistical Techniques for Common Method Bias

The study used Harman's single-factor test (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003) and correlation matrix method (Chin *et al.*, 2013) to check if the common method variance was a serious issue. A number of post hoc methods can be employed in assessing common method bias. These include Harman's single factor test, common latent factor (CLF), marker variable, partial correlation method, the correlation matrix method and method factor in PLS modelling. Harman's single-factor test includes all items from all of the constructs in the study into a factor analysis to determine whether the majority of the variance can be accounted for by one general factor. An examination of the construct correlation matrix was done as suggested by Bagozzi, Yi & Phillips (1991). According to Bagozzi *et al.* (1991) any highly correlated variables are evidence of common method bias usually exhibited by extremely high correlations ($r > .90$).

3.10. Ethical Considerations

A research permit was obtained from Maseno University Ethics Review Committee (MUERC) to conduct research in the area of study. Access permission was also obtained from the various selected hotels through a letter of introduction. The researcher ensured voluntary participation by ensuring that the participants understood that their participation was voluntary and that there were no consequences for refusing to participate in the study or to answer specific questions. The consent of the respondents was obtained prior to administration of the questionnaire (see Appendix B). Respondents were guaranteed

anonymity and assured that their responses were used for purposes of the study only. Confidentiality was ensured by keeping personal information that were revealed confidential and ensuring that no information was identified to a particular study participant. All the information gained from the respondent was treated with confidentiality. The name of the respondent was not included in the study and the data files obtained were kept in lockable cabinets and once it was processed, the data was secured by a password. Respect for other peoples' rights, dignity and diversity was upheld which included respect for others to hold values, attitudes and opinions that differ from those of the researcher. The respondents were free to stop the filling of the questionnaire or the key informant interviews whenever they felt that they were uncomfortable with the contents in the data collection tools. There were no direct benefits to the respondents, however, the results generated from this study will be shared with the various hotel management that participated in this study.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter looks at questionnaire response, reliability and validity tests; respondents' profile and results based on framework analysis, factor analysis, structural equation modeling, correlation, bootstrapping, model predictive capability and common method bias results.

4.1. Qualitative findings

4.1.1. Introduction

In order to fully understand the concept of customer experience and purchase intentions and to achieve the first study objective, the researcher identified through discussion with each of the selected hotel marketing manager in order to gain their views on the concepts. A total of 26 managers were interviewed. Before the actual data analysis validity and reliability was conducted. Framework analysis was then used to analyze the data obtained from the interviews. Framework analysis was done by analyzing textual information obtained from the interviews in a standardized way that allowed the researcher make inferences about that information (Table 4.16 and Table 4.17). The interviews were meant to provide information on the following areas; elements of customer experience, designing customer experience, managing customer experience, feedback methods used to evaluate customer experience and effects of customer experience on repeat purchase. The findings are discussed in the subsequent sections.

4.1.2. Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents in the Qualitative phase

A total of 26 managers were interviewed in the qualitative phase. Some of the hotels did not have the position of a marketing manager but had other equivalent positions referred to as customer service manager, customer relations manager, public relations manager or sales & marketing managers who played similar roles as the marketing managers. Table 4.15 shows the characteristics of the hotel managers interviewed.

Table 4.15. Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Hotel Location (City)	Management Position	Gender	Total Number
Nairobi	Marketing Managers	Male	3
	Marketing Managers	Female	5
	Sales and Marketing Managers	Male	2
	Public relations Managers	Female	3
	Customer service Managers	Male	2
	Customer relations Managers	Male	3
Kisumu	Marketing Manager	Female	1
Mombasa	Sales and Marketing manager	Male	1
	Marketing Managers	Female	3
	Customer service Manager	Male	1
	Customer Relations Managers	Female	2
Total			26

4.1.3. Elements of Customer experience

Most managers gave diverse views on definition and elements of customer experience. Majority of them described customer experience as an evaluation that depends on the comparison between customers' expectations and the stimuli coming from the interaction with the company and its offering in correspondence of the different moments of contact or touch-points. They further explained that customer experience originates from a set of interactions between a customer and a product, a company, or part of its organization, which provokes a reaction. Customers consciously and unconsciously filter such experience elements and organize them into a set of impressions and feelings some more rational or calculative and others more emotional. A number of customer experience elements were pointed out. Majority of the respondents pointed out that the elements of customer experience include physical environment, aesthetics, employee-guest interactions, cleanliness of the hotel, functionality of hotel facilities, food quality and presentation, employee's ability to handle guest complaints and hotel layout. This is in line with the quantitative findings that customer experience is composed of three set of clues (humanic, mechanic and functional) which impacts guests perception of overall experience.

A common thread through the various narratives of the participants was that customer experience is composed of three dimensions that is, employee performance during service delivery, the surrounding environment where provision of service takes place and functionality of the offerings. In particular, one of the respondents commented that:

“...To customers important elements of customer experience include hotels facilities, employee expertise, hotel cleanliness, employee behaviour, surrounding environment, speed of service, food taste, presentation, variety, freshness, temperature, healthiness, and any food quality-related clues...” Respondent no. 5.

This supports the arguments of many researchers that customer experience consists of elements e.g. aesthetics, playfulness, employees behavior and expertise, service excellence, food presentation, hotel interior and exterior that can be obtained through interactions with the hotel in various touch points (Babin, Darden, & Griffin, 1994; Mathwick, Malhotra, & Rigdon, 2001; Yuan & Wu, 2008). The findings further reveal that customers' experiences can simultaneously be affected by a number of internal and external factors such as environmental stimuli, human interactions, individual characteristics, and situational factors (Walls et al., 2011; Thompson, 2006; Wu & Liang, 2009).

4.1.4. Managing customer experience

Most of the managers pointed out that it is the responsibility of all the departments within the organization to design and manage customer experience. They explained that for an organization to design and manage customer experience they must join their efforts as both the revenue generating departments and support service departments are important in meeting customer satisfaction. Majority of the respondents pointed out that the challenge often faced by management is just how to get started and structure their efforts so they can optimize the value their service experiences create for customers. Fundamental to any managers effort is understanding the experience from the customer's perspective, that is, seeing what the customer sees, hearing what the customer hears, touching what the customer touches, smelling what the customer smells, tasting what the customer tastes and above all, feeling what the customer feels. Organizations need to work to become more clue conscious and understand the level of subtle details that are processed in customers' conscious and unconscious thoughts impacting how they feel in an experience.

4.1.5. Managing customer experience from a strategic perspective

In order to ascertain how customer experience is managed from a strategic perspective, the hotel managers interviewed were asked the following question: *“How do you manage customer experience from a more strategic perspective?”* Varied views and opinions regarding management of customer experience from a strategic perspective were elicited. Their narratives demonstrate respondent’s beliefs that managers must first understand customer needs as the starting point for strategic customer experience management. Majority of the respondents pointed out that to be truly successful in customer experience management (CEM); companies must know what their customers care about and design their business to deliver. First call resolution is widely accepted as the ultimate service metric. More important than measuring customer service is managing what enables it. Beyond understanding what customers’ sense from the existing experience and the feelings and stories that experience creates, the organization must also invest in learning what customers *want* to feel in the experience, what will engage them cognitively and emotionally in a manner that creates strong preference and loyalty. This supports the arguments by Thompson (2006) that before you can develop a customer experience strategy; you have to know what your customers want. In particular, one of the respondent commented that:

“... customer experience strategy must start with knowing what the customer needs which will equate to their expectations....to achieve this we speak to the customers....” Interview: Participant 9)

Interviewers’ response further suggested that in strategic management of customer experience, the following critical attributes needs to be addressed by the intended managers;

4.1.5.1. Define customer experience

About 80% of the respondents suggested that for successful management of customer experience, organizations should define customer experience and keep it consistent across all touch points. Once you have defined customer experience, create clear customer experience vision because figuring out how to deliver valuable experiences and getting a valuable return requires a strategy that includes goals and measurements. Most of the respondents pointed out that it is also important to identify and manage customer experience elements. This is further followed by measuring and communicating the quality of customer experiences

throughout the organization and having top management regularly review customer satisfaction and loyalty measurement. It is also important as a manager to let everyone know the company's guiding principles and embed into all areas of training and development. More important than mere measurement, however, are reality checks to continue gauging the customer's experience and viewpoint. Some of the respondents also pointed out that it is important to track all the touch points in which customers interact with your company. This involve examining the customer and his or her experience with your business carefully, mapping out every point at which the customer touches your organization and then tailoring your business to accommodate what you have found out.

4.1.5.2. Align the Organization

Bringing your employees into the mix or of any corporate strategy is important. Managers need to hire the right people from the start. Managers need to find out what employees want, what they are looking for, and what their tastes, attitudes and interests are. This is further followed by looking at each employee as a whole human being, and realizing that he or she is the most important part of the company. Interviewers' response further suggested that employees should be given the freedom to manage their own business i.e. talk to the customer; get to know her name and her drink; anticipate what she wants, make her feel good, look after her, and enjoy working in a team. In particular, one of the respondents commented that:

"....we let our employees actively own the issue and we give them the power to solve customer problems without having to pass onto management..." Interview: Participant 2)

It was further suggested that employees should always be trained to deliver experiences. Employees need to understand the crucial importance of their role for the company, and must be free to find new ways to raise the value of the experience delivered to the customer. Employees should also always imagine themselves in the customer's place so that they can personalize the offering of goods and generate experiences every day. Ensuring regular employee feedback on their performance in terms of experience management and continuous employee motivation were also pointed out as important attributes towards successful strategic customer experience management. This supports Shaw and Ivens (2002) suggestion

that great customer experiences are enabled through inspirational leadership, an empowering culture and empathetic people who are happy and fulfilled.

4.1.5.3. Living your brand

One of the respondents also pointed out that employees should believe in the organizations brand and what it stands for. A brand isn't what an organization says about itself, but what its target market says about it. Brands aren't defined as much by the perception organizations have of themselves but by the combination of the individual opinions and experiences of its target markets connected to the perspectives of third-parties such as the mass media, opinion-leaders and social networks. A brand generates a complex semiotic construction. It bases itself on a combination of elements such as expectations, experiences, needs, wants and hopes. An organization should start by truly understanding how customers perceive the value your brand provides and what will earn their loyalty. In this process the perception of value (concept), its position in the market (context) and consumption and use (experience) are essential to create and manage a powerful brand. This supports Chartrand & Fitzsimons (2008) findings that the type of brand and consumers' perceptions of the brand can influence their behavior. This suggests that customer brand perceptions when primed prior to shopping experience, might significantly influence the customer's experience.

4.1.5.4. Ensure cross-functional collaboration among all departments

To be successful, hotel companies must develop a cross-functional integration between different departments to accelerate processes and facilitate customer information sharing. Cross-functional collaboration can be referred as the integration of systems that take account of both internal and external aspects of an organization. Internal integration involves collaboration and coordination among various functional departments of an organization e.g. marketing, human resources, food and beverage and finance. On the other hand, the external integration is about maintaining ongoing relationship across multi-channel stakeholders outside of the organization like external suppliers. In particular, one of the respondents commented that:

“...we put emphasis on cross-functional collaboration for instance the marketing and sales team and service team are in line across the whole customer experience; they know and deliver a consistent value scheme...” Interview: Participant 5)

This supports the arguments of Voss *et al.* (2008) and Roth & Menor (2003) that the more an organization wants to be experience oriented the more internal and external integration it requires. Majority of the respondents pointed out that integration is quite demanding where the approaches of CEM needs to be incorporated throughout an organization. To ensure a consistent experience throughout the customer journey, hospitality companies must understand how customers interact with their brand at every touch point throughout the “engage”, “nurture” and “convert” phases. Mapping out the customer journey can help hospitality marketers identify, fix gaps and inconsistencies in a customer’s experience and eliminate barriers to purchase. Managers should therefore take a holistic view of customer experience.

4.1.6. Determining when customer experience is “just right” and when it is “off”

All managers pointed out that they can be able to gauge when customer experience is “just right” and when it is “off”. A number of respondents pointed out that when customer experience is “just right” this can be identified by more bookings, repeat purchase, increased customer compliments, reduced customer complaints, increase in sales, rise in the number of new customers and increased customer referrals. When customer experience is “off” the number of customer complaints increases with reduced sales. It was further pointed out that increase in the number of booking cancellations can also suggest that customer experience is “off”. Online customer ratings and reviews also plays an important role in determining when customer experience is “just right” and “off”. Positive online customer ratings and reviews points out that your customer experience is “just right” and vice versa. When there are less customer referrals and reduced repeat purchase this gives an alarm that customer experience is “off”.

4.1.7. Customer feedback methods used in evaluating Customer Experience

Understanding the prevailing customer experience and what it needs to become requires a significant commitment to research. All managers reported that they use a number of

techniques to evaluate customer experience. Majority of the respondents reported that hotels must embrace a clue management approach by typically beginning with a “customer experience audit” with the goal of thoroughly analyzing the current customer experience and revealing customers’ emotional responses to specific clues. Some of the methods pointed out include guests comment cards, spoken complaints and complements, videotaping and digital photography to document actual customer experiences, accompanying customers through a service experience and asking them to comment on what they like and dislike. Some managers also pointed out that in-depth interview may also be held with customers and employees to reveal their feelings about different aspects of an experience.

4.1.8. Attention to details in customer experience

The respondents were told to give their opinions and views on attention to details as used in customer experience. These are all the “small details or critical incidents” experienced in moments in time and space that can have a profound and favorable effect on the customer service experience. The interview findings suggest that small details are critical elements in a firm’s service system that can have an influence beyond their positive main effect on customer’s perceptions of service quality. It was further argued that it can be moderators that enhance customer experiences to create exceptional service experiences. Majority of the respondents pointed out that designing and managing the customer experience necessarily involves paying attention to details that when strategically orchestrated across every customer touch point make big differences to customers.

It was further pointed out that detailed analysis of critical incidents, contact points or a customer’s experience journey show that little things can have a big effect on customer satisfaction and affect service experiences. It was posited that all details are capable of having a large effect on a customer’s overall evaluations of the service consumption experience. It was suggested that one way to pay attention to details to make a big difference is to ensure that all customer organization touch points reinforce the core customer-centric experience thereby creating a holistic experience. It was further pointed out that being keen and vigilant on what customers need that meet their satisfaction is important since missing any detail would mess the whole process of customer experience. This supports Oliver et al.

(2002) and Gremler (2004) arguments that small details can create very high levels of customer satisfaction and stimulate arousal and pleasure, engendering “delight” and (ultimately) fostering customer loyalty. This suggests the need for all managers to pay attention to processes or steps leading to accomplishment of results ensuring efficiency and effectiveness as every process counts.

4.1.9. Effect of customer experience on repeat purchase

In order to determine whether customer experience affect repeat purchase, the hotel managers interviewed were asked the following: “*Do you think customer experience affect repeat purchase?*” From the many interview responses it was posited that customer experience has an effect on repeat purchase. The interview narratives basically pointed out that positive customer experience increases the chances of purchasing products and services from the same organization and vice versa. For instance, one of the respondents expressed that

“...customer experience has a dramatic impact on the buying behaviors among customers. Good customer service experience results in increased personal and business purchases while bad customer service drives customers to find alternatives...” (Interview: Participant 23).

This concurs with the quantitative findings that customer experience influence purchase behavioural intentions. The study supports Yang and He (2011) arguments that customer experience does influence the customers’ preferences, which then subsequently affect their purchase behavior. Positive customer experience can build its own momentum, creating an ‘ecosystem of goodwill’ that costs relatively little to maintain but can deliver a loyal fan base and tangible bottom-line returns. This also agrees with Boyer and Hult (2006) findings on their research performed on customer behavioural intentions for online purchasing utilizing data retrieved from the survey of over 2,100 customers and their findings pointed out that behavioral intention will be at variance based on customer experience level. Clearly, if the customers increase their positive shopping experience, then their chances of intention to purchase the products and services would be higher.

4.2. Quantitative Findings

4.2.1. Questionnaire Response

The target respondents for this research were predominantly guests staying in the selected hotels within the six weeks data collection period. A total of 349 questionnaires were distributed in the selected hotels. The number of responses achieved was 321 providing a response rate of 91.97%.

4.2.2. Validity and Reliability Tests of the Research Instruments

In order to conduct factor and structural equation modeling, the variables in the research model were tested for their validity and reliability. Questionnaires were tested for content validity to establish quality of instrument. These procedures involved pilot testing conducted on 10% of the total sample which was then excluded from the study. There was no variation from the expected result and the instrument was considered to be valid. Piloting was also used to identify the length of time it will take to fill questionnaires, check understanding of the tool and correct simple mistakes like spelling and wording of sentences. The pilot study was done as if it was a normal survey and data generated were used to do a reliability test based on Cronbach's alpha of the items in the instruments. The reliability of the measures was established by testing for consistency and stability of the questionnaire results in the pre-test study and the main survey using Cronbach's alpha. Cronbach's alpha is a reliability coefficient that indicates how well the items in a set are positively correlated to one another. The Cronbach alpha coefficient was computed for all the construct measures in SPSS 21 to ascertain the reliability for all the sets of measures.

Reliability tests were done for all the sets of measures i.e. customer experience, customer emotions and purchase behavior. George and Mallery (2003) rules of thumb was used to classify the Cronbach's alpha coefficients generated. These rules of thumb provide the following: "> .9 – Excellent, > .8 – Good, > .7 – Acceptable, > .6 – Questionable, > .5 – Poor, and < .5 – Unacceptable". The closer the Cronbach's alpha is to 1.0, the higher the internal consistency reliability. During the pre-test, dimensions of customer experience measures registered excellent reliability while customer emotions and purchase behavior measures registered acceptable reliability. Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients registered in the main survey were as follows: Customer experience measures $\alpha = .95$, Customer

emotion measures $\alpha = .78$ and purchase behavior measures $\alpha = .74$ (see Table 4.1). This shows that the items were reliable in measuring their respective constructs given that all the Cronbach's alpha for the constructs in both the pre-test and main survey were $>.7$.

Table 4.1. Reliability test statistics for the questionnaire

Concept Measurement	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha (Pre-test, $N = 10$)	Cronbach's Alpha (Main survey, $N = 321$)
Dimensions of customer experience	35	.95	.95
Customer Emotions	7	.80	.78
Purchase Behaviour	4	.76	.74

4.2.3. Descriptive Distribution for Data

To determine the distribution of data, skewness and kurtosis was used. Skewness assesses the extent to which a variable's distribution is symmetrical while Kurtosis measure whether the distribution is too peaked (Hair *et al.*, 2014). A general guideline for skewness provides that the value should be between + 2 and -2, and if that is exceeded, then it is an indication of a substantially skewed distribution (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2014, George & Mallery, 2010). Likewise, kurtosis values should be between +2 and -2 for the data to be considered normal (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2014). In particular, a kurtosis greater than + 2 indicated that the distribution is too peaked while a kurtosis of less than -2 indicated a distribution that is too flat. Frequencies were first computed for each item and checks made for missing data and outlier responses by producing boxplots in SPSS 21. The results indicated no missing data and outlier issues. On average, the data exhibited normal distribution with the skewness and kurtosis values falling in the range of -2 and +2 (see Table 4.2a).

Table 4.2a. Descriptive Statistics for normal distribution

Measurement Variables for Customer Experience	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Skewn ess	Kurto sis
Employees of the hotel are courteous	3.00	5.00	4.48	0.62	-0.78	-0.39
Employees are neat and well dressed	2.00	5.00	4.40	0.62	-0.62	-0.15
Employees behaviour instils confidence in guests	2.00	5.00	4.40	0.67	-0.72	-0.29
Hotel employees are friendly	2.00	5.00	4.36	0.63	-0.54	-0.23
Employees treat their guests with respect	2.00	5.00	4.38	0.63	-0.57	-0.21
Hotel employees shows interests in solving guests problems	1.00	5.00	4.32	0.73	-1.21	1.98
Employees of the hotel understands guests specific needs	2.00	5.00	4.34	0.67	-0.65	-0.11
Individual attention is given by the hotel staff	2.00	5.00	4.33	0.71	-0.69	-0.37
Hotel staff care about their customers	3.00	5.00	4.39	0.65	-0.58	-0.64
Hotel staff has guests interest at heart	1.00	5.00	4.32	0.70	-0.75	0.49
Employees of the hotel are always willing to help	2.00	5.00	4.35	0.70	-0.65	-0.51
The employees of the hotel deliver services promptly	2.00	5.00	4.37	0.66	-0.64	-0.34
Hotel employees make you feel safe during your hotel stay	2.00	5.00	4.32	0.66	-0.53	-0.41
Employees have the knowledge to answer guests questions	1.00	5.00	4.45	0.68	-1.56	4.71
The hotel is kept clean	2.00	5.00	4.60	0.57	-1.18	0.94
The television in the guest room is in proper working condition	3.00	5.00	4.59	0.61	-1.18	0.34
The exterior appearance of the hotel is visually appealing	3.00	5.00	4.51	0.62	-0.88	-0.24
The layout of the hotel makes it easy to get around	2.00	5.00	4.41	0.65	-0.72	-0.20
The arrangement of the hotel furnishing is done right	2.00	5.00	4.45	0.65	-0.81	-0.06
The physical layout of the furniture and furnishings in the hotel are comfortable	2.00	5.00	4.50	0.63	-0.96	0.24
The ambient conditions such as temperature, ventilation, noise and odour of the hotel are good	3.00	5.00	4.57	0.62	-1.16	0.26
The hotel lighting is pleasant	3.00	5.00	4.48	0.69	-0.96	-0.35
The background music is pleasing	1.00	5.00	4.29	1.03	-1.72	2.69
The overall hotel facility is visually appealing	2.00	5.00	4.44	0.65	-0.79	-0.11
The hotel is flexible in meeting customer needs	2.00	5.00	4.38	0.61	-0.51	-0.17
The hotel delivers its services on time	3.00	5.00	4.31	0.59	-0.22	-0.61
The hotel has standardised product delivery process	3.00	5.00	4.28	0.64	-0.33	-0.69
The additional wi-fi services provided by the hotel are valuable to you	3.00	5.00	4.49	0.60	-0.72	-0.44
The hotel gives prompt responses for your queries	2.00	5.00	4.27	0.70	-0.47	-0.64
The food and drink offered in the restaurant are delicious	1.00	5.00	4.47	0.67	-1.13	1.51
The food presentation is visually attractive	2.00	5.00	4.43	0.67	-0.90	0.17
The hotel has great lobby facilities	3.00	5.00	4.39	0.64	-0.56	-0.63
The hotel has excellent guest rooms	2.00	6.00	4.39	0.67	-0.77	0.43
The hotel offers variety of food and beverage	2.00	5.00	4.45	0.69	-1.20	1.39
The hotel offers variety of recreational facilities	1.00	5.00	4.24	0.86	-1.10	0.97

Note: SD – Standard Deviation, Min – Minimum, Max- Maximum. Valid N (listwise) = 321

Table 4.2b. Descriptive Statistics for normal distribution

Measurement Variables for Customer Emotions and Purchase Behavioural Intentions	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
My current hotel stay experience makes me feel happy	2.00	5.00	4.37	0.64	-0.60	-0.27
I am pleased with my current hotel experience	3.00	5.00	4.34	0.61	-0.34	-0.66
I am amazed with my current hotel experience	3.00	5.00	4.27	0.66	-0.37	-0.78
My current hotel stay experience makes me feel relaxed	2.00	5.00	4.34	0.67	-0.71	0.17
My current hotel stay experience makes me feel contented	2.00	5.00	4.29	0.70	-0.58	-0.37
My current hotel stay experience makes me feel excited	1.00	5.00	4.25	0.80	-1.01	1.32
My current hotel stay experience makes me feel lonely	1.00	5.00	2.52	1.57	0.45	-1.39
I am willing to visit this hotel again	2.00	5.00	4.52	0.70	-1.28	0.87
I will resist the offers of other hotels	1.00	5.00	3.42	1.39	-0.39	-1.12
I will always recommend this hotel whenever anyone seek my advice	1.00	5.00	4.09	0.99	-0.77	-0.38
I would say positive things about this hotel to others	1.00	5.00	4.02	1.05	-0.81	-0.22

Note: SD – Standard Deviation, Min – Minimum, Max- Maximum. Valid N (listwise) = 321

4.2.4. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

This section presents the personal data of 321 customers who stayed in the hotels between February 4th and March 22nd, 2018. The results indicated that 172 respondents (53.60%) were males and that 149 respondents (46.40%) were females. The frequency and the percentage fallout of the demographic analysis depicted that the highest percentage (57.90%) of the people who stayed in the hotels were foreigners and 42.10% were Kenyans. The majority respondents declared their visit for vacation that was around 44.90% of the total respondents. The rest 23.10% were business, 21.80% conference and 6.50% honey moon. Other purposes of visit included cancelled flight, educational trips, humanitarian visit, just to relax and visiting an orphanage which contributed to 3.70% of the total respondents. This implied that majority of the respondents who stayed in four and five star hotels in Kenya during this period were male. Majority of the guests visiting the hotels are foreigners which could be the reason that most of them declare their visit for vacation.

The largest proportion of the respondents (41.70%) was within the age bracket of 20-35 years and the lowest proportions (6.90%) were below 20 years whereas 37.10% and 14% were within the age bracket of 36-50 years and over 50 years respectively. The results further indicated that most of the respondents (95.60%) had stayed in the hotels before whereas 4.40% of the respondents were staying in the respective hotels for the first time. Among those who had stayed before 33.60% had stayed in the hotel once, 23.40% twice, 20.20% thrice and 18.10% had stayed for more than three times. Most of the respondents 29.60%

spend in the hotel for 3 days, 27.70% for 2 days, 20.60% for more than 4 days, 13.40 % for 4 days and 8.70% spend for just a day. The age bracket for most of the guests ranged between 20-35 years followed by 36-50 years implying that majority of the respondents patronizing these hotels are within the age bracket of 20-50 years. Most of the guests who stayed in the hotel are repeat guests implying that most of these hotels rely on repeat business hence the need to emphasize on guest satisfaction to ensure success. The results are displayed in table 4.3.

Table 4.3. Demographic characteristics of respondents

Variables	Frequency	Percentages (%)
Gender		
Male	172	53.60
Female	149	46.40
		N=321
Nationality		
Kenyan	135	42.10
Foreigner	186	57.90
		N=321
Purpose of Visit		
Business	74	23.10
Vacation	144	44.90
Honey moon	21	6.50
Conference	70	21.80
Others	12	3.70
		N=321
Age		
Below 20 years	22	6.90
20-35 years	134	41.70
36-50 years	119	37.10
Over 50 Years	45	14.00
		N=321
Length of stay		
1 day	28	8.70
2 days	89	27.70
3 days	95	29.60
4 days	43	13.40
More than 4 days	66	20.60
		N=321
Number of times previously stayed		
None	14	4.40
Once	108	33.60
Twice	75	23.40
Thrice	65	20.20
More than 3 times	58	18.10
		N=321

Note. N=Total number of responses

4.2.5. Dimensions of Customer Experience

In order to address specific objective one namely: To examine the items that defines the primary structure of customer experience in four and five star hotels in Kenya, mean ranking of the customer experience dimensions was done and subjected to factor analysis. In this case, respondents were required to indicate their level of agreement on a scale of 1-5 against 35 customer experience indicators. To achieve this objective in the analysis stage, mean ranking of the 35 indicators of experience were first done and the results are presented in Table 4.4. The 35 items were then subjected to principal axis factoring (PAF) in SPSS using varimax rotation. The factor analysis results, other than defining the primary structure of customer experience, were relevant for subsequent multiple regression analysis using Smart PLS 3.2.7.

Table 4.4. Mean ranking of customer experience Indicators

Indicators of customer experience	Min	Max	Mean	SD
The hotel is kept clean	2.00	5.00	4.60	0.57
The television in the guest room is in proper working condition	3.00	5.00	4.59	0.61
The ambient conditions such as temperature, ventilation, noise and odor of the hotel are good	3.00	5.00	4.57	0.62
The exterior appearance of the hotel is visually appealing	3.00	5.00	4.51	0.62
The physical layout of the furniture and furnishings in the hotel are comfortable	2.00	5.00	4.50	0.63
The additional WI-FI services provided by the hotel are valuable to you	3.00	5.00	4.49	0.60
Employees of the hotel are courteous	3.00	5.00	4.48	0.62
The hotel lighting is pleasant	3.00	5.00	4.48	0.69
The food and drink offered in the restaurant are delicious	1.00	5.00	4.47	0.67
Employees have the knowledge to answer guests questions	1.00	5.00	4.45	0.68
The arrangement of the hotel furnishing is done right	2.00	5.00	4.45	0.65
The hotel offers variety of food and beverage	2.00	5.00	4.45	0.69
The overall hotel facility is visually appealing	2.00	5.00	4.44	0.65
The food presentation is visually attractive	2.00	5.00	4.43	0.67
The layout of the hotel makes it easy to get around	2.00	5.00	4.41	0.65
Employees are neat and well dressed	2.00	5.00	4.40	0.62
Employees behaviour instils confidence in guests	2.00	5.00	4.40	0.67
The hotel has excellent guest rooms	2.00	6.00	4.39	0.67
Hotel staff care about their customers	3.00	5.00	4.39	0.65
The hotel has great lobby facilities	3.00	5.00	4.39	0.64
Employees treat their guests with respect	2.00	5.00	4.38	0.63
The hotel is flexible in meeting customer needs	2.00	5.00	4.38	0.61
The employees of the hotel deliver services promptly	2.00	5.00	4.37	0.66
Hotel employees are friendly	2.00	5.00	4.36	0.63
Employees of the hotel are always willing to help	2.00	5.00	4.35	0.70
Employees of the hotel understands guests specific needs	2.00	5.00	4.34	0.67
Individual attention is given by the hotel staff	2.00	5.00	4.33	0.71
Hotel employees shows interests in solving guests problems	1.00	5.00	4.32	0.73
Hotel employees make you feel safe during your hotel stay	2.00	5.00	4.32	0.66
Hotel staff has guests interest at heart	1.00	5.00	4.32	0.70
The hotel delivers its services on time	3.00	5.00	4.31	0.59
The background music is pleasing	1.00	5.00	4.29	1.03
The hotel has standardised product delivery process	3.00	5.00	4.28	0.64
The hotel gives prompt responses for your queries	2.00	5.00	4.27	0.70
The hotel offers variety of recreational facilities	1.00	5.00	4.24	0.86

Note: Min – Minimum, Max – Maximum, SD – Standard deviation Valin N (listwise) = 321
Scale: Strongly agree (5), Agree (4), Neutral (3), Disagree (2), Strongly Disagree (1)

Table 4.4 shows that the highest ranked customer experience indicator is “The hotel is kept clean” ($M = 4.60$, $SD = .57$), followed by “The television in the guest room is in proper working condition” ($M = 4.59$, $SD = .61$) and then “The ambient conditions such as temperature, ventilation, noise and odour of the hotel are good” ($M = 4.57$, $SD = .62$). The least ranked customer experience indicator is “The hotel offers variety of recreational facilities” ($M = 4.24$, $SD = .86$). The results generally indicate that the respondents agree with all the 35 indicators as describing their perceptions about customer experience in the hotel given that all the means of the 35 customer experience indicators was > 4 . The study findings support Gentile et al. (2007) argument that Customer experience originates from a set of interactions between a customer and a product, a company, or part of its organization, which provoke a reaction. This experience is strictly personal and implies the customer’s involvement at different levels. Its evaluation depends on the comparison between a customer’s expectations and the stimuli coming from the interaction with the company and its offering in correspondence of the different moments of contact or touch-points. The study proves that customers evaluate experiences from a set of interactions between the product, services, a company or part of its organization. Some indicators of customer experiences are important in service evaluation than others.

On subjecting the 35 customer experience indicators to PAF, three factors accounting for 57.06% of the total variance explained resulted. All factor loadings were $> .60$ with six items (*Employees have the knowledge to answer questions*, *The hotel lighting is pleasant*, *The background music is pleasing*, *The additional wi-fi services provided by the hotel are valuable to you*, *The food and drink offered in the restaurant are delicious* and *The hotel offers variety of food and beverage*) not loading because of low factor loadings $< .06$ (see Table 4.5). The factors were named *Humanic Clues Factor* with 13 items accounting for 25.18%, *Functional Clues Factor* with 7 items accounting for 16.99% and *Mechanic Clues Factor* with 8 items accounting for 14.89% of the total variance explained (see Table 4.5).

The results proved that customer experience is composed of three set of clues (humanic, functional and mechanic) which impact on customers perception of overall customer experience. This suggests that consumers’ evaluation of experience goes beyond the direct

service encounter, and includes direct and indirect encounters with all touchpoints, Payne *et al.* (2008). This supports a number of research findings on dimensions of customer experience (Pullman & Gross, 2004; Hemmington, 2007; Brunner-Sperdin & Peters, 2009; Wells et al, 2011b) who share a common belief that customer experience is developed by various components within the physical and social environments, that is, interaction with staff, other customers and service provider. Investigating the influence of each individual dimension on the outcomes, the study further revealed that humanic clue played a significant role in the customer's service experience evaluation process. Functional clues on the other hand were the second important dimension while mechanic clues were the third important dimension. Humanic clues proved to be a stronger predictor of customer experience followed by functional and mechanic clue respectively. The factors generated under each study construct are discussed in the sub-sections that follow.

4.2.5.1. Humanic Clues

Table 4.4 indicate that of the thirteen items, employee expertise as an indicator of customer experience had the highest mean ranking ($M = 4.45, SD = .68$) followed by employee personal grooming and employee behaviour with ($M = 4.40, SD = .62$) and ($M = 4.40, SD = .67$) respectively. Table 4.5 indicates that the thirteen items that loaded on humanic clue factor (HCF) account for 25.18% of the total variance explained in customer experience. The main indicators that determined humanic clues were employee friendliness, guest respect, understanding guest needs, guests' problem solving, grooming, courteousness, caring about customers, guests interest at heart, behavior, willingness to help, prompt service delivery, individual attention and employee assurance of safety. The findings of this study suggest that all thirteen sub-dimensions are important to hotel industry. The percentage explained by the factors implies that all the thirteen factors were important in evaluation of customer experience as perceived by guests. Of the thirteen factors extracted, employee friendliness, guest respect and understanding of guests' needs explained for the greatest percentage of the total variance 83%.

This is in line with a number of studies (Wu & Liang, 2009; Chua, Jin, Lee & Goh, 2014; Keng et al, 2007; Walls et al, 2011) which delineated that customer-employee were a

significant predictor of customer experience and affected customers' assessments of service experience. A number of research findings have pointed out human interaction as an important dimension which influences customer experiences in the hospitality industry (Kusluvan et al., 2010; Morgan et al. 2009; Brunner-Sperdin & Peters, 2009; Pullman & Gross, 2004). They argued that employees are considered key determinants of service quality, customer satisfaction, repeat patronage, competitive advantage and organizational performance. Humanic clue dimension reflects the emotional benefits customers experience based on the perceived expertise of the service provider and guidance throughout the process leading to the notion of building 'a relationship' with a service provider. This suggests that employees' behaviour and performance during the service are powerful clues that influence the customers' perceptions and evaluation of the total customer experience.

This also support Berry and Carbone (2007) who emphasise that humanic clue is a significant dimension of customer experience. Chua, Jin, Lee & Goh (2014) in their study also pointed out that humanic clue proved to be a stronger predictor of experiential values than functional clues. Their result supports the finding of Wu and Liang (2009) in which the performance of service personnel determines the value of customers' experiences. Thus, humanic clues play a major role in customers' evaluation of overall experience. Humanic clues are concerned with the actions and appearance of employees and the service providers. The higher percentage explained by humanic clue factors could be attributed to the unique characteristic "inseparability" of service industries. Since in hotels you cannot separate the consumer and the service provider there is a lot of interactions between the employee and the customer in the service delivery process. The delivery of service occurs during the interaction between service employees and customers, and, together with the attitudes and behavior of service employees, influences customer perceptions and evaluation of service experience (Iglesias and Guillen, 2004).

The findings generally suggest that employees' behaviour and performance during the service are powerful clues that influence the customers' perceptions of the total customer experience. This support the arguments of Berry *et al.* (2006) and Bitner *et al.* (2008) that an organisation needs to pay attention to humanic clue set in terms of orchestrating the total

customer experience. Having competent, knowledgeable and professional employees leads to provision of quality service as employees dominate the service delivery process. This is attributed to the argument that employees conduct, friendliness, courtesy, commitment, trust, effective solving of customer complaints and other staff personalities (Brady and Cronin, 2001; Caro and García, 2007; Wu et al., 2011) influence the overall service delivery process.

Employees who are well trained on customer service and able to handle guests' requests and complain promptly are equally an important asset to the hotel as it enhances customer experience. Good service training equips service staff with the competence to deliver a high-quality service. Moreover, training and development experience enhances the ability of employees to deliver a high-quality service and to meet the needs of customers more effectively and in a more friendly way. This is because such employees' traits contribute to guests' overall evaluation of customer experience. Management should understand that the vital process of selection, promotion, motivation, training, empowerment, and retention contribute to satisfactory service delivery. In other words, hotel managers should focus on enhancing the knowledge, skills and commitment of their employees by providing regular trainings and incentives (Ali *et al.*, 2014). In short, in determining positive customer experience, relevant competencies and efficient staff are core issues that should be worked on.

Table 4.5. Principal axis factoring of indicators of customer experience

Customer Experience Indicators	Customer Experience Factors			Communalities	
	HCF	FCF	MCF	Initial	Extraction
Employees of the hotel are courteous	0.78			.79	.62
Employees are neat and well dressed	0.78			.83	.65
Employees behaviour instils confidence in guests	0.76			.75	.62
Hotel employees are friendly	0.83			.81	.77
Employees treat their guests with respect	0.83			.79	.75
Hotel employees shows interests in solving guests problems	0.80			.77	.69
Employees of the hotel understands guests specific needs	0.83			.81	.76
Individual attention is given by the hotel staff	0.75			.78	.69
Hotel staff care about their customers	0.78			.78	.70
Hotel staff has guests interest at heart	0.77			.82	.70
Employees of the hotel are always willing to help	0.76			.73	.67
The employees of the hotel deliver services promptly	0.76			.77	.69
Hotel employees make you feel safe during your hotel stay	0.72			.69	.64
<i>Employees have the knowledge to answer guests questions</i>				.39	.24
The hotel is kept clean			0.64	.59	.46
The television in the guest room is in proper working condition			0.73	.69	.57
The exterior appearance of the hotel is visually appealing			0.73	.63	.59
The layout of the hotel makes it easy to get around			0.81	.75	.71
The arrangement of the hotel furnishing is done right			0.71	.70	.61
The physical layout of the furniture and furnishings in the hotel are comfortable			0.68	.62	.55
The ambient conditions such as temperature, ventilation, noise and odour of the hotel are good			0.68	.75	.60
<i>The hotel lighting is pleasant</i>				.74	.52
<i>The background music is pleasing</i>				.69	.26
The overall hotel facility is visually appealing			0.63	.71	.57
The hotel is flexible in meeting customer needs				.66	.38
The hotel delivers its services on time		0.69		.74	.53
The hotel has standardised product delivery process		0.65		.70	.47
<i>The additional wi-fi services provided by the hotel are valuable to you</i>				.62	.35
The hotel gives prompt responses for your queries		0.75		.72	.62
<i>The food and drink offered in the restaurant are delicious</i>				.67	.44
The food presentation is visually attractive		0.67		.68	.53
The hotel has great lobby facilities		0.77		.72	.62
The hotel has excellent guest rooms		0.71		.68	.56
<i>The hotel offers variety of food and beverage</i>				.60	.40
The hotel offers variety of recreational facilities		0.64		.66	.45

Variance explained	25.18	16.99	14.89
	%	%	%
Total variance explained	57.06%		

Note: HCF – Human clue factor, FCF – Functional clue factor, MCF – Mechanic clue factor
 Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy = .92; Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity: Approx. Chi-Square = 9606.83; df = 595, Sig. = .00. Extraction method: Principal Axis Factoring; Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

4.2.5.2. Mechanic Clues

Table 4.4 indicate that of the eight items, hotel cleanliness as an indicator of customer experience had the highest mean ranking ($M = 4.60, SD = .57$) followed by Television working in guestroom with ($M = 4.59, SD = .61$). Hotel layout though registered a higher loading (.81) (see Table 4.5), ranked the least ($M = 4.41, SD = .65$) with respect to customer experience. Table 4.5 indicate that the eight items that loaded on mechanic (MCF) factor account for 14.89% of the total variance explained in customer experience dimension, an indication that all the eight service factors are critical measurement of customer experience. The main indicators that determined mechanic clues were hotel layout, appealing exterior appearance, proper functioning television, proper arrangement of furnishings, comfortable physical layout of furniture and furnishings, good ambient conditions, cleanliness of the hotel and appealing overall hotel facility.

This is in line with Wall & Berry (2007) findings that hotel industries could improve customers’ perception towards a hotel’s services by orchestrating mechanical clues. Chua *et al.*, (2014) in their study also pointed out that mechanic clues significantly and positively affect functional and humanic clues. This further supports Berry and Carbone (2007) findings that mechanic clues are important in creating memorable customer experience dimension. Mechanic clues come from inanimate objects and offer a physical representation of the intangible service. Berry & Carbone (2006) also emphasized that customers usually experience mechanic clues to some degree before experiencing the other types of clues and even before making a purchase decision, such as selecting a restaurant after peering in the windows and seeing tablecloths on the tables. Mechanic clues have an influence on customers’ evaluations of service prior to actual performance of service by employees or outputs such as food and beverage (Ha & Jang, 2012; Namasivayam & Mattila, 2007; Wall & Berry, 2007).

The physical environment where the service is performed influences the customer's perception of service quality in service industry (Bitner, 1992; Baker, Grewal, & Parasuraman, 1994). Mechanic clues are particularly significant in service industry because the imperceptibility of the offering lead customers to depend on tangibles to assess the experience and inspire consumer service observations as these clues are a fragment of the experience (Wall & Berry, 2007). Mechanic clues provide customers with information about what they can expect during a service performance. The study findings however, do not support Garg & Amelia (2016) findings that mechanic clues do not have a significant influence on the dining experience. The study findings corroborate with a number of researchers who argued that mechanic clues are especially influential in affecting quality perceptions for services and influences evaluation of experiences (Bitner, 1992; Ezeh & Harris, 2007; Namasivayam & Mattila, 2007; Wall & Berry, 2007).

Part of the first impressions role that mechanic clues play is their influence on customers' service expectations. Customers' perceptions of service quality are subjective evaluations of a service experience compared to their expectations for the service. Facility design, equipment, furnishings, displays, signs, colors, textures, sounds and lighting among other sensory clues, paint a visual picture of the service experience, communicating to customers without a single word being spoken. These findings imply that the design of mechanic clues should fit and support the company's market strategy. It clearly is not a good idea to create a physical environment for the service that implicitly promises a quality level that cannot be consistently delivered. On the other hand, this suggests that the right kind of mechanic clues help a company attract the type of customer it seeks. Hotel industries should therefore pay attention to the sensory presentation of the product as they are often an important part of product design as it influences how customers feel about an experience.

4.2.5.3. Functional clues

Table 4.4 indicate that of the eleven items, additional wifi services as an indicator of customer experience had the highest mean ranking ($M = 4.49, SD = .60$) followed by delicious food and drink offered with ($M = 4.47, SD = .67$). Table 4.5 indicate that only seven items loaded onto functional clues factor (FCF) accounting for 16.99% of the total

variance explained in customer experience dimension, an indication that all the seven service factors are critical measurement of customer experience. The main indicators that determined functional clues were great lobby facilities, prompt response to queries, excellent guest rooms, real time service delivery, attractive food presentation, standardized product delivery process and variety of recreational facilities.

The study findings support a number of studies which points out that the major function of the functional clues is to increase customers' confidence in the reliability of the service performed which is one of the most significant elements in meeting customer's prospect (Donnelly, 2009; Berry, Parasuraman, & Zeithaml, 1996). The study further agrees with Berry & Carbone (2006) discussion that functional clues are usually important in meeting customers' service expectations because functionality offers the core solution customers buy. Berry *et al.* (2002) suggested that by understanding the customers' expectations before the experience occurs to the assessments, they are likely to make when it's over, managers should pay attention to functional clues which collectively enhance service experiences. Although managing the functional clues can to some extent enhance customers' experiences, it alone is not sufficient enough to satisfy customers with various perceptions and needs (Berry, 2006; Berry & Carbone, 2007).

This study does not support Garg (2014) study which investigated service quality of fast-food restaurants from students' perspective and found an equal effect of both functional and humanic aspects of service on students' perception. Functional clues concern the technical quality of the offering. These are the "what" of the service experience, revealing the reliability and competence of the service. Anything that indicates or suggests the technical quality of the service (its presence or absence) is a functional clue. Functional clues support the core of any service because they address the problem that brings the customer to the market. This finding also coincides with the viewpoint that the outcome of the service encounter and physical surroundings significantly affects customer perceptions of overall customer experience (Leong, 2008). This is because the physical surroundings represented by objects are thought to create a positive consumer experience which plays a pivotal role in sustaining business growth. The findings imply that managers of hotels need to focus more

on those factors perceived to create positive experience. Paying attention to food presentation, product and service delivery process, hotels interior and exterior appearance and hotel layout can build memorable guest experiences. To achieve high quality of service, hotels need to concentrate or dedicate most of their time in improving the hotel facilities, product and service environment.

4.2.6. Relationship between Customer Experience factors, Customer Emotions and Purchase Behavioural Intentions

The study set to establish the relationship between customer experience dimensions, customer emotions and purchase behavioural intentions in four- and five-star hotels in Kenya. To address the objective, the following hypothesis was stated.

H₁. There is no significant relationship between customer experience dimensions, customer emotion and purchase behavioural intentions

Since customer experience was measured using three dimensions generated from factor analysis (Functional Clues Factors, Humanic Clues Factors and Mechanic Clues Factors), the hypothesis was disintegrated as follows:

H_{1a}. There is no significant relationship between functional clues factors and customer emotions

H_{1b}. There is no significant relationship between functional clues factors and purchase behavioural intentions

H_{1c}. There is no significant relationship between humanic clues factors and customer emotions

H_{1d}. There is no significant relationship between humanic clues factors and purchase behavioural intentions

H_{1e}. There is no significant relationship between mechanic clues factors and customer emotions

H_{1f}. There is no significant relationship between mechanic clues factors and purchase behavioural intentions

H_{1g}. There is no significant relationship between customer emotions and purchase behavioural intentions

To test the hypotheses, Pearson correlation analysis in SPSS was conducted and the results are summarized in Table 4.5.1

Table 4.5.1 Correlation between customer experience, customer emotions and purchase behaviour

Constructs	PBI	HCF	FCF	MCF	CE
Purchase Behavioural Intentions (PBI)	1				
Humanic Clues Factor (HCF)	.346**	1			
Functional Clues Factor (FCF)	.045	-.025	1		
Mechanical Clues Factor (MCF)	.190**	-.023	-.049	1	
Customer Emotions (CE)	.520**	.371*	.222**	.198**	1

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

The results indicate that there is a significant relationship between functional clues factor and customer emotions ($r = .222, p < .01$), humanic clues factor and customer emotions ($r = .371, p < 0.01$), humanic clues factor and purchase behavioural intentions ($r = .346, p < .01$), mechanic clues factors and customer emotions ($r = .198, p < .01$), mechanic clues factors and purchase behavioural intentions ($r = .190, p < .01$), and customer emotions and purchase behavioural intentions ($r = .520, p < .01$). Therefore, H_{1a} , H_{1c} , H_{1d} , H_{1e} , H_{1f} and H_{1g} were rejected. The results however indicate that there is no significant relationship between functional clues factor and purchase behavioural intentions ($r = .045, p > .01$), hence H_{1b} was not rejected.

The study reveals that there is a relationship between customer experience factors (humanic, functional and mechanic) and customer emotions. This supports a number of research findings ((Oliver, Rust, & Varki, 1997; Phillips, 1999; Barsky and Nash, 2002; Brunner-Sperdin & Peters, 2009; Pullman and Gross, 2004).) which pointed out that consumption-related emotions are derived from the performance of products, consumers are simply reacting to the quality of the performance of products and services. This implies that if hotels pay attention in enhancing customer experience factors this will have a significant impact on customer emotions. The study further reveals that there is a relationship between customer

experience factors (humanic, functional and mechanic) and purchase behavioural intentions. The findings agree with numerous studies that confirm the positive and direct relationship between customer experiences and behavioral intentions, such as repurchase and word-of-mouth communication (Namkung and Jang, 2007; Oliver, 1999; Ryu et al., 2010; Ryu and Han, 2011). Kivela et al. (1999) found that restaurant dining experiences significantly influenced post-dining behavioral intentions.

Humanic clue factor registered a higher correlation with customer emotions and Purchase behavioural intentions. Humanic component in service provision tend to have significant relationship with customer emotions compared to other customer experience factors. Functional clues came second in its relationship with customer emotions while mechanic clues came last. This suggests that the three customer experience factors combined have a significant relationship with customers emotions. This concurs with the viewpoint that mechanic and humanic clues affect the customers' emotional perceptions and behavioural intentions while functional clues have main impacts on customers' rational perceptions of products and services (Berry & Bendapudi, 2003; Berry & Carbone, 2007; Berry & Seltman, 2007). Concentrating on emotional contacts with customers by offering a cohesive, different and stimulating customer experience would bring you successful business (Berry & Carbone, 2007). The functional clues factors that demonstrate the technical quality of the products and services offered in the hotel failed to explain significant variation in hotel customers' behavior (Li *et al*, 2012). In accordance with this finding, researchers argued that the functional clues are only the foundation of customer experience, neither can you do business with your customers out of serving it, nor can you rely on it to bring you repeat business (Ji & Byun, 2011; Keaveney, 1995; Wall & Berry, 2007).

The study findings further reveal that there is significant relationship between humanic clues, mechanic clues and purchase behavioural intentions however, there is no significant relationship between functional clues factor and purchase behaviour. This is in line with Li, Jiang & Kim (2012) study who found out that only two dimensions of customer experience, that is, humanic clues and mechanic clues made significant contributions to customers' behavioural intentions. They further found out that humanic clues were the best predictor of

customers' behavioural intentions. The results of this study contrast the hypothesized positive relationship between functional clues and customers' behavioral intentions in Namkung and Jang (2007) study. The study findings also contrast with Jin & Goh (2014) findings that humanic clues do not significantly influence customers' behavioral intentions in the context of full-service restaurants. They further pointed out that although employees' services do not contribute significantly to customers' behavioral intentions; it is a critical factor contributing to customers' dining experience. For hotels to significantly influence purchase behaviour they should pay emphasize on humanic clue factors indicating that satisfying products and services do not necessarily mean any repurchase or guarantee non-switching intentions of your customers.

Customer emotions and purchase behavioural intentions registered the highest correlation. This is in line with a number of research findings which pointed out that emotions significantly contribute to the selection of service providers, determination of repeat purchasing behaviors and directly influence behavioral intentions (Mattila and Enz, 2002; Jaiswal and Niraj, 2011; Bigdeli and Bigdeli, 2014; Ali and Amin, 2014; Palau-Saumell et al., 2014; Tsaur et al., 2015). Further Morris et al. (2002) and Allen et al. (1992) stated that emotions are an influential predictor of intentions and consumer buying behavior is heavily determined by their emotions. Yu and Dean (2001) in their study also proposed a high degree of correlation between loyalty and positive emotions.

The study concurs with Kang *et al.* (2010) and Kumar *et al.* (2009) who confirmed that there is a positive relationship between emotions and purchase intention. The study also agrees with other researchers arguments that customer feelings played a prominent role in driving behaviour and decisions and it can be safely stated that customer emotions have the capacity to directly impact decisions to purchase as well as behavior intentions (Ladhari, Brun & Morales, 2008; Namkung and Jang, 2009; Lee, Ha, and Widdows, 2011). Nevertheless, a number of ressearchers have noted that it is being observed that when customers' display positive emotions the likelihood of their purchase decisions, such as intention to return and willingness to pass positive comments tend to increase (Jang and Namkung 2009; Han and

Jeong 2013; Liu and Jang 2009). This suggests that hotels should pay attention to factors that triggers customer emotions as it has a relationship with purchase behaviours.

4.2.7. Influence of Customer Experience on Customer Emotions and Purchase Behavioural Intentions

In order to address specific objective number four PLS-SEM was conducted using Smart PLS 3.2.7. Latent variables were created for customer experience, customer emotions and purchase behaviour. For customer experience, the factors identified in PAF were used as latent variables. The measurement models were first assessed for internal consistency, convergent validity, discriminant validity and collinearity. Internal consistency was assessed using Cronbach’s alpha (α), composite reliability coefficients (Pc) and rho_A coefficient as defined in Dijkstra and Henseler (2015). Values above .70 indicate higher levels of internal consistency (Hair et al., 2014; Dijkstra & Henseler, 2015; Hair et al., 2017). The results indicated that the measures are robust in terms of their internal consistency and reliability. Table 4.6 for instance, show that composite reliabilities (Pc) ranged from .80 (Purchase behaviour) to .96 (Humanic clues factor), an indication of internal consistency.

Table 4.6. Construct Reliability and Validity

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	AVE
Customer Emotions	0.92	0.92	0.92	0.66
Functional Clues Factor	0.85	0.85	0.84	0.52
Humanic Clues Factor	0.97	0.97	0.96	0.68
Mechanic Clues Factor	0.83	0.83	0.83	0.51
Purchase Behavioural intentions	0.78	0.82	0.80	0.52

Note: AVE – Average variance extracted

Convergent validity was assessed using Fornell and Larcker criterion and average variance extracted (AVE) > .5. Table 4.6 shows that all the AVE were > .5, an indication that almost all the constructs explained more than 50% of their indicator’s variance. The table indicate that AVEs for this study ranged from .51 (Mechanic clues factor) to .68 (Humanic clues

factor), implying that, on average, the construct explains more than half of the variance of its indicators. To assess discriminant validity heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) was employed. This study specifically used the conservative heterotrait-monotrait ratio of HTMT_{.85}. Table 4.7 indicates the HTMT results with values ranging between .35 in respect of HTMT (Purchase behaviour [PB], Functional clues factor [FCF]) and .65 in respect of HTMT (Purchase behaviour [PB], Customer emotions [CE]). Comparing these results with the threshold values as defined in HTMT_{.85} (Ringle et al., 2014) does not give rise to discriminant validity concern as all the values are < .85.

Table 4.7. Discriminant validity (Heterotrait-monotrait ratio [HTMT_{.85}] criterion) results

	CE	FCF	HCF	MCF	PBI
Customer Emotions (CE)					
Functional Clues Factor (FCF)	0.40				
Humanic Clues Factor (HCF)	0.48	0.47			
Mechanic Clues Factor (MCF)	0.47	0.60	0.62		
Purchase Behavioural Intentions (PBI)	0.65	0.35	0.48	0.45	

Finally, multicollinearity issues in the study was assessed using variance inflation factor (VIF) in SmartPLS 3.2.7 where a VIF value ≥ 5 indicated a potential collinearity problem (Hair et al., 2011; Hair et al., 2013; Hair et al., 2014; Petter, Straub & Rai, 2007). Table 4.8 shows the result of collinearity assessment among the study constructs as indexed by the variance inflation factor (VIF) values. All the VIF were < 5, suggesting that multicollinearity was not an issue. The highest VIF value (2.11) is registered between Mechanical clues factor (MCF) and Purchase behaviour (PB). The lowest VIF value of 1.43 is recorded between Customer emotions (CE) and Purchase behaviour (PB).

The fourth study objective was to investigate the extent to which customer experience dimensions and customer emotions influence purchase behavioural intentions in Kenyan four- and five-star hotels. To address this objective, the following hypothesis was advanced:

H₂. Customer experience dimensions does not significantly influence customer emotions and purchase behavioural intentions

Since customer experience in this study is measured using three dimensions namely, functional clues factors, humanic clues factor and mechanical clues factor, the hypothesis was further disintegrated as follows:

H_{2a}. Functional clues factor does not significantly influence customer emotions

H_{2b}. Humanic clues factor does not significantly influence customer emotions

H_{2c}. Mechanic clues factor does not significantly influence customer emotions

H_{2d}. Functional clues factor does not significantly influence purchase behavioural intentions

H_{2e}. Humanic clues factor does not significantly influence purchase behavioural intentions

H_{2f}. Mechanic clues factor does not significantly influence purchase behavioural intentions

H_{2g}. Customer emotions does not significantly influence purchase behavioural intentions

To test the hypotheses, the significance of path coefficients, coefficient of determination (R^2) and the effect size measure (f^2) in SmartPLS 3.2.7 were used and results are summarised in Table 4.8. The table shows that of the three customer experience factors, Humanic Clues Factor (HCF) had significant influence on purchase behavioural intentions ($\beta = .17$, $t = 1.99$, $p = .05$) and so was Mechanic Clues Factor (MCF) ($\beta = .27$, $t = 3.69$, $p < .00$). While Functional Clues Factor (FCF) had no significant influence on Purchase Behavioural Intentions, it significantly influenced Customer Emotions ($\beta = .15$, $t = 1.98$, $p = .05$), as did Humanic Clues Factor ($\beta = .28$, $t = 3.78$, $p < .01$) and Mechanic Clues Factor ($\beta = .21$, $t = 2.25$, $p = .02$). The results further indicated that Customer Emotions (CE) significantly influence Purchase Behavioural Intentions (PBI) ($\beta = .52$, $t = 8.51$, $p < .01$) with effect size ($f^2 = .34$) being medium. Therefore, H_{2a}, H_{2b}, H_{2c}, H_{2e}, H_{2f} and H_{2g} were rejected while H_{2d} was not rejected.

Table 4.8. Collinearity assessment and path coefficients among the study constructs

Paths	β	Mean	SD	t-values	P	Sig.	VIF	f ²	ES	Decision
CE -> PBI	0.52	0.52	0.06	8.51	0.00	****	1.43	0.34	Medium	Reject
FCF-> CE	0.15	0.15	0.08	1.98	0.05	**	1.61	0.02	Small	Reject
FCF -> PBI	-0.04	-0.04	0.08	0.54	0.59	NS	1.65	0.00	Small	Do not reject
HCF -> CE	0.28	0.28	0.07	3.78	0.00	****	1.67	0.07	Small	Reject
HCF -> PBI	0.17	0.17	0.09	1.99	0.05	**	1.78	0.03	Small	Reject
MCF -> CE	0.21	0.22	0.09	2.25	0.02	***	2.05	0.03	Small	Reject
MCF-> PBI	0.27	0.12	0.09	3.69	0.00	****	2.11	0.01	Small	Reject

Note: CE – Customer Emotions, FCF – Functional Clues Factor, HCF – Humanic Clues Factor, MCF – Mechanical Clues Factor, PBI – Purchase Behavioural Intentions, β – Beta coefficients, SD – Standard deviation, P – P vales, VIF – Variance Inflation Factor, ES – Effect size, NS – Not significant

Table 4.9 shows that the R² value for the endogenous constructs are above the 25% accepted level set as the threshold in this study. The results indicate that the three customer experience constructs, namely Functional Clues Factor, Humanic Clues Factor and Mechanic Clues Factor accounts for 30% (R² = .30) of the variance explained in Customer Emotions.

Table 4.9. Determinant of coefficients (R2) results for the endogenous constructs

	R2	Adjusted R2	Cut Off	Description
Customer Emotions	0.30	0.29	>.25	Moderate
Purchase Behavioural Intentions	0.44	0.44	>.25	Moderate

The results further indicate that for explaining the 30% of the variance in Customer Emotions, Humanic Clues Factors accounted for the highest effect size (f² = .07) of the variance followed by Mechanical Clues Factor (f² = .03) and lastly Functional Clues Factor (f² = .02) though all the effect sizes were small. For purchase Behavioural Intentions, the R² values (R² = .44) indicate that the three customer experience factors (Functional clue factor, Humanic clue factor and Mechanic clue factor) together with customer emotions account for 44% of the total variance explained in purchase behavioural intentions (see Table 4.9). However, Table 4.8 show that the exogenous constructs Customer emotions (CE), Functional clues factor (FCF), Humanic clues factor (HCF) and Mechanic clues factor (MCF) for

explaining the endogenous latent variable Purchase behavioural Intentions (PBI) have medium effect size ($f^2 = .34$), small effect size ($f^2 = .00$), small effect size ($f^2 = .03$) and small effect size ($f^2 = .01$) respectively.

This imply that of the 44% of variance in purchase behavioural intentions (PB), the three-customer experience factors had smaller influence on purchase behavioural intentions with humanic clue factor having a higher influence and functional clues factor having a smaller influence of the three. The findings agree with a number of studies that have confirmed that customer experience has a significant effect on behavioural intentions (Garcia & Sanudo, 2013; Zomerdijk & Voss, 2010; Kim & Choi, 2013). The findings reveal that customer experience factors (humanic, mechanic and functional) have a significant impact on customer emotions. This concurs with Jang and Namkung (2009) findings that customer's evaluation of service, food and restaurant atmospherics produced positive and negative emotions. Emotional responses result from the customers' overall restaurant experience which according to Ryu and Han (2010) atmospherics, food and services are attributes that form part of customers' evaluation of a restaurant experience. This also support Berry and Carbone (2007) argument stated an organization cannot manage customers' emotions, but it can manage the clues embedded in customers' experiences with the organization that trigger their emotions.

Humanic clue factors have a significant influence on customer emotions and purchase behavioural intentions compared to mechanic and functional clue factor. This agrees with Berry & Carbone (2006) findings that humanic clues created by employees are most salient for labor-intensive, interactive services. Helm (2011) also pointed out that the perceived risk in service industry stimulates customers to attach great importance to the capabilities and knowledge possessed by employees. The dedication of the employees turns the interactions into memorable experiences for customers and influences their intentions for repeat purchase (Cheng et al., 2008). This also concurs with Bhandari (2017) argument that the clues that people emit have greater impact on how customers feel about themselves and therefore have a definitive impact on how they feel about an experience. Humanic clue factors afford the best opportunity to demonstrate to customers a commitment to serving.

Hotel employees' attitude and behavior contribute significantly to customers' evaluation of service experience. This highlights the need for understanding the competencies required by hotel employees for effective guest engagement and repeat patronage. Thus, for effective delivery of hospitality products and services, it is critical for hospitality organizations to keep the customers' perspectives central while designing customer experiences. The more important, personal, and enduring the customer-provider interaction, the more pronounced and emotional humanic effects are likely to be. Human interaction in the service experience offers the chance to cultivate emotional connectivity that can extend respect and esteem to customers and, in so doing, exceed their expectations, strengthen their trust, and encourage repeat purchase. Four and five star hotels in Kenya should therefore manage employee-customer interaction as this can have a significant influence in customer emotions and purchase behaviour.

Mechanic clue factors are the second important significant factors in influencing customer emotions and purchase behavioural intentions. This supports Pullman and Gross (2004) findings which revealed that customers framed their total perceptions of services based on the components of the touchable environment and their dealings with the providers of such services and other customers, which consecutively stimulate emotions that can impact customer behaviours. The findings also corroborate the study carried out in Venezuela by Foxall and Yani-de- Soriano (2005) which revealed that there was a strong influence between mechanic clues and customer behaviour. However, the findings contrast Donnelly et al. (2008) study in the Ireland tourism industry, which found out that there was no significant influence between mechanic clues and customer behaviour. Bhandari (2017) also stated that humanic clues dominate mechanic clues in influencing service experience perceptions.

Mechanic clues can be powerful sources of sensory images helping customers visualize the service (Berry & Carbone, 2006). Four and five star hotels should therefore lay emphasize on mechanic clues factors so as to influence customer emotions and purchase behaviour. Mechanic clues make a positive first impression that will influence customer emotions and customers' choice of service supplier. Hence paying emphasize on the surrounding environment, hotel layout, cleanliness, arrangement of furniture, hotel exterior and interior

can go a long way in influencing customer emotions and purchase behaviour. Customers usually experience mechanic clues to some degree before experiencing the other types of clues and even before making a purchase decision. The idea of mechanic clues painting a service picture or representation of one thing in terms of another is fundamental in influencing emotions and purchase behavior. Part of the first impressions role that mechanic clues play is their influence on purchase intentions.

Functional clue factors on the other hand significantly influence customer emotions but does not significantly influence purchase behavioural intentions. This is consistent with the findings of Berry & Carbone (2007) and Wall & Berry (2007) that the functional clues may not guarantee customers' repeat purchase. They further argued that customers' desire to return to an organization results more from how they feel about the experience they received by mechanic clues and humanic clues than from what they rationally think about functionality of goods and services. The findings also support other researchers' arguments that the functional clues are only the foundation of customer experience but you can't rely on it to bring you repeat business (Ji & Byun, 2011; Keaveney, 1995; Wall & Berry, 2007). The study findings further suggest that functional clues are usually most important in meeting customers' service expectations because functionality offers the core solution customers buy. Functional clues on the other hand support the core of any service because they address the problem that brings the customer to the market. Customers buy solutions that depend on functionality. It is therefore critical for hotels to satisfy their customers with core products and services. Even if the functional clues are insufficient to develop a memorable experience to maintain the hotel customers in the long run it is important as it influence customer emotions.

Compared to the three customer experience factors (humanic, mechanic and functional), customer emotions have the highest influence on purchase behavioural intentions. This is in line with Ladhari (2007) who also analyzed the influence of emotions in creating behavioral intentions and found out that consumers' positive or negative emotional responses had significant influence on purchase intentions. The findings further agree with the arguments that customers who experience positive emotional responses are inclined towards investing

more in their relationship with a firm compared to consumers who are not bonded emotionally (Mattila, 2001; Roos, 1999). This suggests that consumption emotions have greater impacts on purchase behavior. This further supports Tombs & McCollkennedy (2003) argument that customers' emotional responses would lead customers to decide whether to continue doing business with certain service supplier. Customer's emotional response significantly influences their decision making and behavioral intentions. Thus, it is imperative for hotel industries to ensure that they evoke positive customer emotions as it influences customers' purchase decisions and behaviors. Hotels should try multiple ways of improving the customer experience so as to positively trigger their emotions.

4.2.8. Mediating effect of customer emotions on the relationship between customer experience and customers' purchase behavioural intentions

Objective five of the study was to establish the mediating effect of customer emotions on the relationship between customer experience and customers' behavioural intentions in the hotel industry. To address the objective, the following hypothesis was advanced:

H₃. Customer emotions do not mediate the relationship between customer experience and purchase behavioural intentions?

Given that customer experience is measured using three dimensions as already stated, the hypothesis was disintegrated as follows:

H_{3a}. Customer emotions do not mediate the relationship between functional clues factor and purchase behavioural intentions?

H_{3b}. Customer emotions do not mediate the relationship between humanic clues factor and purchase behavioural intentions?

H_{3c}. Customer emotions do not mediate the relationship between mechanic clues factor and purchase behavioural intentions?

To determine whether there is mediation role, the specific indirect effects results obtained using bootstrapping procedure in SmartPLS 3.2.7 were used (Hair et al., 2017; Hair et al., 2014). To determine the type of mediation, ratios of specific indirect effect to total effect were computed where by a VAF > 80% indicates full mediation, $20\% \leq \text{VAF} \leq 80\%$ shows partial mediation while VAF < 20% assumes no mediation (Preacher & Kelly, 2011; Hair et

al., 2014). As indicated in Table 4.10, Customer emotions (CE) fully mediates the relationship between Functional clues factor (FCF) and purchase behavioural intentions (PBI) ($\beta = .08$, $t = 1.97$, $p = .05$, VAF = 200%). Customer emotions (CE) partially mediates the relationship between Humanic clues factor (HCF) and purchase behavioural intentions (PBI) ($\beta = .14$, $t = 3.24$, $p = .00$, VAF = 45%) and the relationship between Mechanic clues factor (MCF) and purchase behavioural intentions (PBI) ($\beta = .11$, $t = 2.21$, $p = .03$, VAF = 50%).

The results of the study reveal that customer emotions appear to be a full mediator in the relationship between functional clues factor and purchase behavioural intentions. Customer emotions fully mediates the relationship between functional clues factor and purchase behavioural intentions which means, to keep customers hotel industries should have to stimulate customer emotions by providing functional experiential elements such as great lobby facilities, prompt response to queries and excellent guestrooms. Customer emotions partially mediate the relationship between humanic clues factor and mechanic clues factor. Customer emotions partially mediates the relationship between humanic clue factor and purchase behavioural intentions which means to keep customers hotel industries should stimulate customer emotions by providing humanic experiential elements such as high level of friendliness, guest respect and understanding of guest needs by employees. Finally, customer emotions partially mediate the relationship between mechanic clue factor and purchase behavioural intentions which means to keep customers hotel industries should stimulate customer emotions by providing mechanic experiential elements such as excellent hotel layout, appealing exterior appearance and proper functioning of hotel equipment.

The results of the study corroborate with various studies which pointed out that different emotions affecting consumption serve as mediators between important factors in a customer's perceptions and resultant behaviour (Gracia et al., 2011; Han and Jeong, 2013; Kim and Moon, 2009; Namkung and Jang, 2010). However, some studies concluded that emotional reactions have a direct impact on customer behavioural intentions (Namkung and Jang, 2010; Han and Back 2007; Lin and Liang 2011). The study findings do not agree with other researchers' findings (Smith and Bolton, 2002; Bitner, 1992; Menon and Kahn, 2002;

Mano, 1999) who pointed out that emotions act as a moderator and guide to higher purchase intentions. Furthermore, Bloemer et al. (1999) revealed that the relationship between experiences and repeat patronage is moderated by positive emotions in high involvement service settings. Their study findings reveal that customer emotional responses will enhance or lessen their consumption experiences that ultimately influence purchase intentions.

The findings of this study further complement the existing literature regarding the role of emotions in service settings and offer a new point of view for the linkage among emotions, customer experience clues and customer purchase intentions. It also agrees with a number of studies that suggested that customer emotions create significant impact in formatting and modifying approaches used by consumers to consume products and services (Hoyer and McInnis, 2001; Price, Arnould and Tierney, 1995). This suggests that the degree of experiencing critical incidents did create impact on emotional reactions of the guests which finally dictates their purchase behavior (Friman, 2004). The findings also corroborate with Allen, Machleit, and Klein (1992) findings that consumers' purchases are strongly influenced by their emotions, and consumption emotions influence both satisfaction and repeat patronage. The findings also agree with the study carried out in a telecom context which concluded that emotional response plays a significant mediating role with behavioral intentions (Alsaggaf, M.A. & Althonayan, A. (2018). Purchase behaviour is driven by emotions in the hotel and tourism industry. Thus, in order to better predict customer purchase intentions, the emotional component is crucial and should be included along with other cognitive components.

Table 4.10. Test of mediation by bootstrapping

Path	Specific indirect effect				Total effect				Total indirect effect				VAF	Mediation	Decision
	β	t-value	p	Sig.	β	t-value	p	Sig.	β	t-value	p	Sig.			
FCF -> CE -> PB	0.08	1.97	0.05	*	0.04	0.40	0.69	NS	0.08	1.97	0.05	*	2.00	Full	Reject
HCF -> CE -> PB	0.14	3.24	0.00	***	0.31	3.89	0.00	***	0.14	3.24	0.00	***	0.45	Partial	Reject
MCF -> CE -> PB	0.11	2.21	0.03	**	0.22	2.20	0.03	***	0.11	2.21	0.03	**	0.50	Partial	Reject

Note: VAF - variance accounted for. VAF computed as a ratio between specific indirect effects and total indirect effects. VAF > 80% indicates full mediation, $20\% \leq \text{VAF} \leq 80\%$ shows partial mediation while VAF < 20% assumes no mediation; FCF–Functional clues factor, CE–Customer emotions, HCF–Humanic clues factor, MCF–Mechanic clues factor, PB–Purchase behaviour; p – p value, β – beta coefficient, Sig.- Significance level, NS – Not significant

* p < .05. ** p < .01, ***p < .001.

4.2.9 Model Predictive Capability (Q² Effect Size) and Fitness Tests

The model predictive validity was assessed using Stone-Geiser's Q² test criterion through blindfolding with omission distance of 7 in SmartPLS 3.2.7 using construct cross validated redundancy. The results are summarised in Table 4.11. The table illustrates that the research model (see Figures 4.1. and 4.2.) fulfils Stone-Geiser's Q² test criterion since all the Q² values are greater than 0 for the endogenous constructs customer emotions and purchase behavioural intentions. The result therefore suggests that all the exogenous constructs (Functional Clues Factor, Humanic Clues Factor and Mechanic Clues Factor) in the model adequately predict their corresponding endogenous constructs (Customer Emotions and Purchase Behavioural Intentions).

Table 4.11. Predictive relevance (Q²) of endogenous (omission distance = 7)

Constructs	Q²	Cut Off
Customer Emotions	0.17	>0
Functional Clues Factor	N/A	N/A
Humanic Clues Factor	N/A	N/A
Mechanic Clues Fcator	N/A	N/A
Purchase Behavioural Intentions	0.19	>0

Note: N/A – Not applicable

Three techniques in SmartPLS 3.2.7 namely Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) < 0.08, Normed Fit Index (NFI) or Bentler and Bonett Index > 0.9 and RMS_theta < 0.12 were applied to test the model fit. The results are summarized in Table 4.12. RMS_theta was used to evaluate the degree to which the outer model residuals correlate. RMS_theta value registered for the study model is 0.08, indicating a well-fitting model since the value is < 0.12. (Henseler et al., 2014). SRMR was used to approximate model fit indices for both the saturated model and estimated model indicating a good model fit with the value registered for both the model being 0.07.

The NFI results registered for both the saturated model and estimated model was $< .90$ (i.e. 0.72) indicating lack of acceptable model fit. While the other two techniques indicate model fit, NFI technique doesn't provide acceptable model fit test for the study model. It should however be noted that NFI has its shortcomings in PLS-SEM in that the more parameters in the model, the larger (i.e., better) the NFI result and vice versa (Henseler et al., 2014). As such, alternative approaches like the non-normed fit index (NNFI) or Tucker-Lewis index are recommended but these have not been implemented in SmartPLS, yet.

Table 4.12: Model fit statistics

Model fit techniques	Saturated Model	Estimated Model
Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR)	0.07	0.07
Normed Fit Index (NFI)	0.72	0.72

Note: RMS Theta = 0.08

Figure 4.1 shows both the structural model and the measurement model of the study with the observed variables and model paths. Figure 4.2 shows the final model outcome with only the significant paths included. The dotted lines show path that are insignificant.

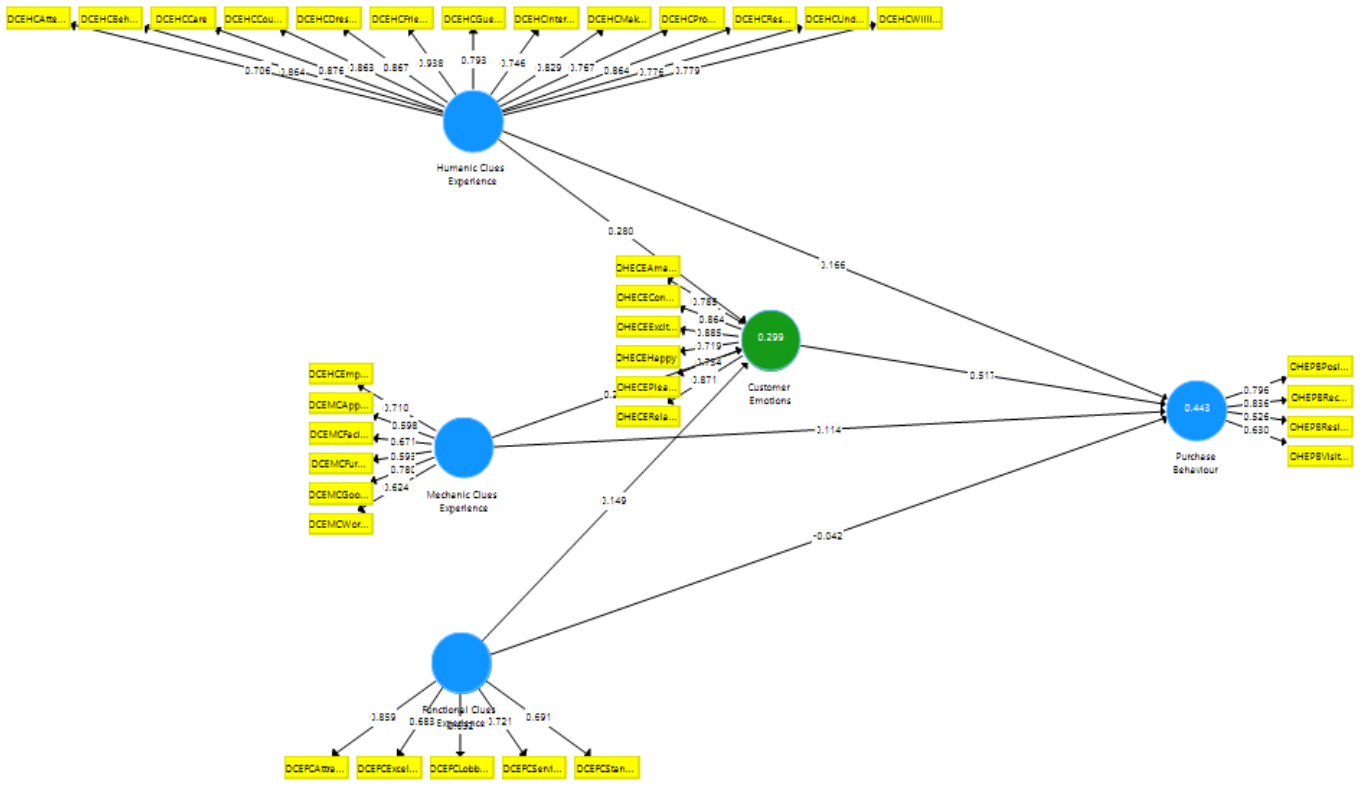


Figure 4.1. Customer experience, customer emotions and purchase behavioural intentions model with observed variables

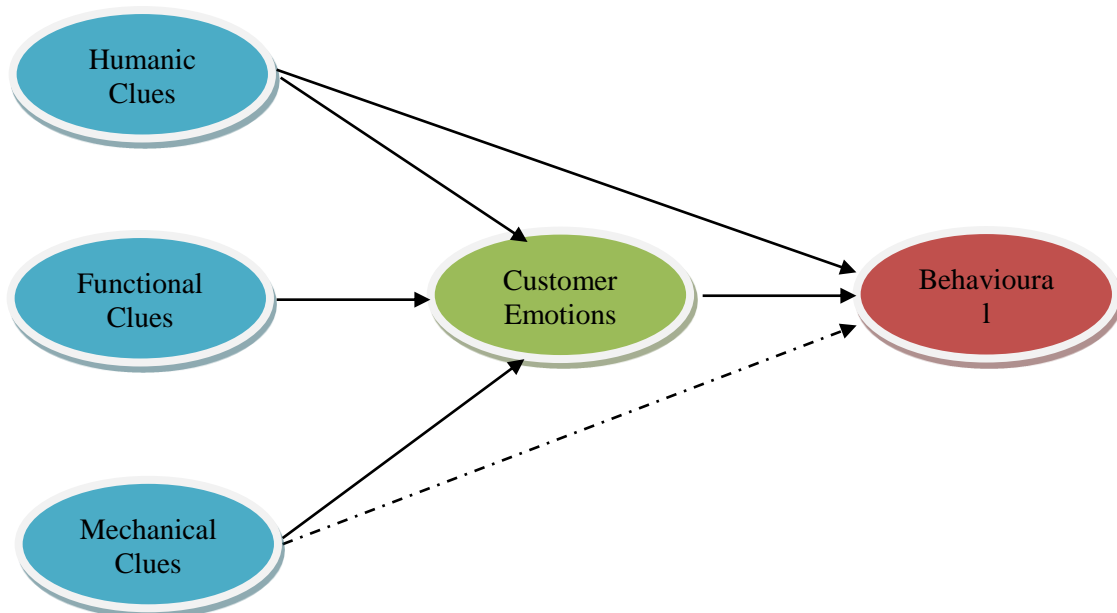


Figure 4.2. Customer experience, customer emotions and purchase behavioural intentions model

4.2.10 Common Method Bias Results

Post hoc methods such as Harman's single-factor test and examination of constructs correlation matrix were used in assessing common method bias in this study.

4.2.10.1 Harman's Single-Factor Test

Harman's single-factor test performed using a principal axis factoring (PAF) in SPSS resulted in eight factors with eigenvalues greater > 1 . The eight factors accounted for 65.875% of the total variance explained with the first factor accounting for 34.658% of the variance. Since multiple factors emerge and the first factor did not account for the majority of the variance i.e. above 50% (see Table 4.13), a substantial amount of common method variance is unlikely to be a serious concern in this study.

Table 4.13. Herman's single factor test using factor analysis

Factor	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	16.253	35.332	35.332	15.943	34.658	34.658
2	4.391	9.546	44.879	4.084	8.878	43.536
3	3.507	7.625	52.503	3.215	6.990	50.526
4	2.841	6.176	58.679	2.497	5.429	55.955
5	2.039	4.433	63.112	1.604	3.487	59.441
6	1.582	3.438	66.550	1.256	2.731	62.172
7	1.366	2.970	69.520	1.060	2.305	64.478
8	1.027	2.233	71.753	.643	1.397	65.875
9	.967	2.102	73.855			
10	.810	1.761	75.616			
11	.767	1.667	77.283			
12	.689	1.498	78.781			
13	.621	1.350	80.131			
14	.604	1.313	81.443			
15	.593	1.288	82.732			
16	.520	1.130	83.862			
17	.504	1.095	84.957			
18	.484	1.053	86.010			
19	.456	.992	87.002			
20	.431	.937	87.939			
21	.375	.815	88.753			
22	.371	.806	89.560			
23	.362	.788	90.347			
24	.356	.773	91.121			
25	.330	.717	91.838			
26	.302	.656	92.494			
27	.295	.642	93.136			
28	.274	.595	93.731			
29	.264	.573	94.304			
30	.249	.542	94.847			
31	.241	.525	95.371			
32	.229	.497	95.868			
33	.211	.458	96.326			
34	.204	.444	96.770			
35	.191	.415	97.185			
36	.170	.371	97.556			
37	.158	.342	97.899			
38	.152	.330	98.228			
39	.133	.289	98.518			
40	.125	.271	98.789			
41	.114	.248	99.036			
42	.108	.234	99.270			
43	.100	.217	99.488			
44	.081	.177	99.664			
45	.080	.174	99.838			
46	.074	.162	100.000			

Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring.

4.2.10.2 Constructs Correlation Matrix Test

Further examination of the study constructs correlation matrix (see Table 4.14) also showed that common method variance is not a problem for this study since all correlations were $< .9$. The table shows that the highest correlation coefficient ($r = .63$) is registered between Purchase Behavioural Intentions (PBI) and Customer Emotion (CE).

Table 4.14. Construct correlation coefficient matrix results

Study Constructs	CE	FCF	HCF	MCF	PBI
Customer Emotions (CE)	1.00				
Functional Clues Factor (FCF)	0.41	1.00			
Humanic Clues Factor (HCF)	0.48	0.47	1.00		
Mechanic Clues Factor (MCF)	0.48	0.60	0.62	1.00	
Purchase Behavioural Intentions (PBI)	0.63	0.32	0.47	0.44	1.00

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS, CONTRIBUTIONS AND RECCOMENDATIONS

5.1. Conclusions

Customer experience is emerging as a robust differentiator in the advent of excessive commodization of services and an important aspect in achieving success in hotel industry. There has been a paradigm shift from the use of product to service to relationships and now to customer experiences as sources of building sustainable competitive advantage. However, delighting customers by mastering the concept and execution of an exceptionally good customer experience has been a challenge in the hotel industry. Previous research has focused primarily on delivering better service for the customer, there is need for empirical research and to develop a robust and comprehensive scale to assess the customer experience and various aspects like experience clues, services cape, service design and role of customer experience as a source of competitive advantage. Lack of studies of this nature in the Kenyan context implies that four- and five-star hotels need to identify the antecedents, measurement and impacts of customer experience on purchase behavioural intentions. This can help organizations parse the factors driving what customers say satisfies them and also the actual customer behavior that creates economic value. The main aim of this study therefore was to assess customer experience and its relative effects on customer emotions and purchase behavioural intentions in four and five star hotels in Kenya. Based on this, five specific research objectives were identified. To achieve the research objectives, embedded mixed method research was conducted in which data was collected and analyzed. Study conclusions are therefore founded on the five research objectives.

First and foremost, this study sought to investigate how four- and five-star hotels in Kenya go about designing and improving their customer experiences. Using data collected in the qualitative phase the study findings suggested that hotels should take a holistic approach in designing and improving experiences. This can be done by defining experience and identifying its elements, letting everyone know the guiding principles and embedding into all areas in the customer journey. Measuring and communicating the quality of customer experience throughout the organization is important and all departments should be involved in the design process. Hotels should also provide means of focusing everyone in the

organization on the same customer experience and providing the mechanism for everyone to understand the part that he or she individually needs to play in improving customer experience. To do this, organizations need to break down customer experience into the individual elements that the organizations wish to focus on. From this, standards to be attained driven by the value that the customer places on them should be set. Once this is achieved external and internal measures should be set based on the chosen sub-elements and identify initiatives that will help achieve the target, or that will improve the measure for that property element. By carefully designing customer journeys and applying the other design principles we have identified, companies can begin to improve customer experiences and better engage their customers.

The second objective of the study was to examine the items that define the primary structure of customer experience in four- and five-star hotels in Kenya. Using data from the quantitative and qualitative phase it was identified that customer experience is composed of three set of clues; humanic, functional and mechanic which impact on customers perception of overall customer experience. While the three dimensions played a role in the customers' service experience evaluation process humanic clue played a more significant role followed by functional and mechanic clue respectively. Customers perceive the three clues when evaluating service experience. The customer experience, which is developed by various dimensions, is full of messages that impact how customers feel and tell a story about the service and the hotel. These clues act synergistically to create an overall experience for the customer. Understanding the three customer experience dimensions enable hotel marketers design appropriate marketing and promotional strategies.

The third objective of this study was to establish the relationship between customer experience factors, customer emotions and purchase behavioural intentions variables in the hotel industry. The study indicated that there is a relationship between the three customer experience factors and customer emotions. Functional clue factor had no significant relationship with purchase behavioural intentions while the two other factors had significant relationship. In this regard, customer emotion is considered to be a direct result of consumers' satisfaction and positive experience with organizations' services. Customer

emotional relationships can be strengthened by learning about, meeting and exceeding consumer expectations. To obtain favourable purchase behavioural intentions hotels should concentrate on mechanic and humanic clue factors. Delivering what a customer wants during each interaction is the core of success of any hotel industry and subsequently influence purchase decisions.

The fourth objective of this study was to analyse the extent to which customer experience dimensions influence customer emotions and purchase behavioural intentions. The findings of quantitative phase indicated that of the three customer experience dimensions humanic clue factor had the most significant influence on customer emotions and purchase behavioural intentions followed by mechanic clue factors. Functional clue factor had no significant influence on purchase behavioural intentions though it has a significant influence on customer emotions. This implied that hotel managers should pay attention to humanic clue experiential elements as it has significant influence on customer emotions and purchase behavioural intentions. Hotel operators should design activities in all touch points in an effort to establish emotional connections with the customers and stimulate repeat purchase. Hence, creating a fulfilling experience for a customer can influence customer emotions and purchase behavioural intentions. Hotels need to integrate different customer experience practices in order to win customer satisfaction and their desire based on attachment.

Finally, the study also sought to establish the mediating effect of customer emotions in the relationship between customer experience and customers' behavioural intentions. The study findings indicated that customer emotions fully mediate the relationship between functional clues factor and purchase behavior and partially mediates the relationship between humanic clue factor, mechanic clue factor and purchase behavior. Provision of functional experiential elements is crucial in enhancing emotional connection with customers which subsequently influence purchase decisions. Customer emotions play an important mediating role in a consumer decision making process after interaction with a service provider. This suggests that hotel managers should continuously monitor hotel customer emotions derived from services and hotel attributes in order to increase customers' positive consumption emotions and retain their customers. Based on the results of this study, hotel managers must consider

the mediating role of customers' emotions on post purchase behaviors in developing better marketing and service strategies.

5.2. Research Contributions

5.2.1 Contribution to Theory

This present research provides a number of theoretical and empirical contributions to customer experience management research and its relative effects on purchase behavioural intentions particularly in the hotel industry. This study investigates the relationship between dimensions of customer experience, customer emotions and purchase behaviour in four and five star hotels in Kenya. In developing countries particularly Kenya, there is limited literature on customer experience dimensions, the extent to which these dimensions influence purchase behaviour and the relationship between customer experience, customer emotions and purchase behaviour variables. This study adds to previous work in various ways.

Firstly, the study investigated how Kenyan hotels go about designing and improving their customer experiences. Using the data from the interviews the study makes a number of theoretical contributions including a definition of customer experience, managing customer experience, evaluation of experiences, attention to details and relationship between customer experience and repeat purchase. The study revealed that for organisations to design and improve their experiences it is important to first define customer experience and manage customer experience elements. This is further followed by measuring and communicating the quality of customer experiences throughout the organization and having all departments be involved in the service design process. It is also important for top management to let everyone know the company's guiding principles and embed into all areas of training and development. Managers should also track all the touch points in which customers interact with your company and there should be continuous evaluation and reality checks to continue gauging the customer's experience and viewpoint. The study provides some empirical support for the existing stage models (Stuart & Tax, 2004; Carbone, 2004; Pullman & Gross, 2004; Bitner, 1992; Bate & Robert, 2007; Johnston & Clark, 2008; Zomerdijk & Voss, 2010) which have provided an evidence-based approach to experience design documenting how organisations have actually gone about developing their customer experiences.

Secondly, the results of this study provide a better understanding on the specific items that define the primary structure of customer experience in four and five star hotels in Kenya. The findings of the study identifies that customer experience is composed of three set of clues (humanic, functional and mechanic) which impact on customers perception of overall customer experience in luxury hotels in Kenya. The study further revealed that humanic clue played a significant role in the customer's service experience evaluation process, functional clues on the other hand were the second important dimension while mechanic clues were the third important dimension. The findings might be used in improving marketing strategies, to create, manage, and control guest experiences in hotel industry. It contributes to research which focuses to consider these dimensions as antecedents that determine managerial practices hoteliers take into consideration to enhance customer experience in hotels. The results of this study support previous studies (Payne et al., 2008; Wall & Berry, 2007; Ali et al., 2014; Leong, 2008; Wu et al., 2011; Brady & Cronin, 2001; Iglesias & Guillen , 2004) which have made numerous efforts to understand the dimensions and sub-dimensions of customer experience.

Thirdly, the study identifies the relationship that exists between customer experience, customer emotions and purchase behavioural intentions variables in Kenyan four- and five-star hotels. The results of this study provide a better understanding on the relationship between customer experience dimensions and purchase behavioural intentions. The study revealed that the three customer experience factors had smaller influence on purchase behavioural intentions with humanic clue factor having a higher influence and functional clues factor having a smaller influence of the three. The results of this study support previous studies (Cronin et al., 2000; Liu & Jang, 2007; Kivela et al., 2000; Mohr & Bitner, 1995; Ha & Jang's, 2010; Namkung & Jang, 2004) which have made numerous efforts to prove the effect of customers' evaluations of service performance on customer's behavioral outcomes This previous studies have reported a relationship between customers' evaluation of service performance and customers' behavioral intentions. Implicit in this belief is that positive experiences are likely to produce increased loyalty, future visitation, and other behavioral intentions (Baker & Crompton, 2000).

Fourthly, the study analyses the extent to which customer experience dimensions influence customer emotions and purchase behavioural intentions in four- and five-star hotels in Kenya. The results of this study provide a better understanding on the extent of influence of customer experience dimensions and customer emotions on purchase behavioural intentions. The study revealed that humanic clue factor and mechanic clue factor had significant influence on purchase behaviour while functional clue had no significant influence. The three customer experience factors combined had smaller influence on purchase behaviour with humanic clue factor having a higher influence and functional clues factor having a smaller influence of the three. The understanding of the influence of these customer experience dimensions can be helpful to managers in crafting and executing strategies that have the most effect on consumers' behavioural intentions. Consequently, this will allow organizations to manage customer experience properly that ultimately results into customer satisfaction, repeat purchase and positive word-of-mouth.

Furthermore, this study establishes a direct linkage between firms marketing inputs and their consumer behavioural outcomes. The findings confirm that all the three dimensions of customer experience have a positive and significant impact on purchase behaviour, validating the notion that the customer experience evaluation goes beyond the direct service encounter, and includes direct and indirect encounters with all organisational functions of the organisation and possible channels and touch points. The empirical findings support a number of studies (Payne et al. 2008; Voss et al. 2008; Kim, 2010; Ali et al., 2014) who have pointed out that understanding how clients evaluate service experience is crucially important for a company success and determines relationship quality from the customer's perspective. This provide a guide for the development of the service offer by taking into account the variables the customers use to evaluate service experience and provides the firm with a sustainable competitive advantage.

Fifthly, the study considers the mediational role of customer emotions in the relationship between customer experience and purchase behavioural intentions. The study revealed that customer experience appears to be a full mediator in the relationship between functional clue factor and purchase behavioural intentions but a partial mediator in the relationship between

humanic clue factor, mechanic clue and purchase behavioural intentions. The empirical findings support a number of studies (Bloomer et al., 1999; Mano, 1999; Menon & Kahn, 2002; Bitner, 1992; Smith & Bolton, 2002; Helm & Mark, 2012) who have examined the mediating impact of emotions in the relationship between the dimensions of customer experience and purchase behaviour in service settings. This is an important contribution since most previous studies have reported the direct effects of emotions on purchase intentions (Ladhari, 2007). More recently, findings of Bilgihan *et al.* (2016) bring into consideration the key role of emotions in services and emphasize that in service context, firms need to pay more attention to customer emotions in order to improve customer loyalty.

Considering the conceptual model (Figure 1.1) put forward in the study, the statistical results of the PLS-SEM provides support to the main research questions and the majority of the hypotheses tested in this study. The study model (see Figure 4.1 and Figure 4.2) points to the mediation role of customer emotions between customer experience and purchase behavioural intentions. While these findings support research on customer experience (Berry & Haeckel, 2002; Berry *et al.*, 2006; Berry & Carbone, 2007; Beck, Kim & Cha, 2009; Jin & Byun 2011), it extends on Donnelly (2009) by including the customer emotions variables in influencing purchase behavioural intentions. This study contributes to explain the influence of emotions on the effectiveness of marketing strategies by examining the mediating effect of emotions. This finding complements the existing literature regarding the role of emotions in service settings and offers a new point of view for the linkage among customer emotions, customer experience dimensions and purchase behavioural intentions.

5.2.2. Practical Implications

The findings of this study shed light on several unresolved issues and concerns in hospitality industry management particularly in four and five star hotels in Kenya. Given the changes in customer preferences and demands and the desire to manage and create memorable experiences for their customers, hoteliers need to develop strategies that will keep them at par with their competitors. While most hotels have considered customer experience management as a strategic tool for enhancing their performance (Carbone & Haeckel, 1994; Pullman & Gross, 2004; Bate & Robert 2007; Laderia, Costa & Santini, 2012; Walls *et al.*,

2011; Kim & Brown, 2012; Cetin & Dincer, 2014), firms are challenged to define experience, identify its determinants, make it operational and manage its implementation effectively. This study points to the continued importance of customer experience management in enhancing hotel performance. The study makes several contributions for hotel practitioners;

Firstly, the study provides a road map which organizations can use as a base for designing and improving their customer experiences. The study has identified the critical importance of mindset change in customer experience design and has shown how organizations can go about achieving this. It also suggests that it is important for organizations to define customer experience, manage customer experience elements, measure and communicate the quality of customer experiences throughout the organization, have all departments participate in the design process and track all customers touch points. The study has also pointed out the need for continuous evaluation and reality checks to continue gauging the customer's experience and the importance of involving customers in the change programmes.

Secondly, the study allows managers to understand the primary structure of customer experience. The findings provide an understanding of how their customers evaluate the different dimensions and attributes of their customer experience by linking them to customers' journey. Understanding the customer can be a starting point for most hospitality industries. There are at times where a gap occurs between what customers expect and what management or businesses presume they expect. This often happens because companies overlook or do not fully understand customer's perceptions and expectations. The results suggest that managers need to put great efforts into understanding the process of customer experiences and the various interactions involved.

Thirdly, the study identifies the relationship that exists between customer experience, customer emotions and purchase behavioural intentions variables in Kenyan four- and five-star hotels. Understanding how clients evaluate service experience is crucially important for a company success and determines relationship quality from the customer's perspective. The findings confirm that all the three dimensions of customer experience have a significant

impact on purchase behavioural intentions. In an attempt to help managers in need of looking for ways to create customer experience the current study suggests several antecedents of customer experience and their influence on purchase behavior. The research findings provide some advices for the industry players in drafting various managerial strategies to increase the purchase behavioural intentions, by emphasizing the different perspectives of customer experience. In addition, the research findings provide certain approaches to the industry players on how to modify the customer experience in the strategy planning because there are integrated relationships among humanic clue factor, functional clue factor, mechanic clue factor, customer emotions and purchase behavioural intentions.

Fourthly, the study identifies the extent to which customer experience dimensions influence customer emotions and purchase behavioural intentions. Customer emotions had the most significant influence on purchase behavioural intentions. Using these findings, practitioners can orchestrate an integrated series of “experience clues” that collectively meet or exceed people’s emotional needs and expectations. Humanic clue factor had the highest influence on customer emotions and purchase behavioural intentions. The understanding of these experience dimensions can be helpful to managers in crafting and executing strategies that have the most effect on purchase behavioural intentions. Consequently, this will allow organizations to manage customer experience properly that ultimately influence emotions and result into repeat purchase, referrals, resistance to competitors’ offerings and positive word-of-mouth.

Fifthly, the study presents the mediating role of customer emotions in the relationship between customer experience and purchase behavioural intentions, this research demonstrate that emotions are intrinsic and vital to the rational decision-making process. Since customers’ emotional responses throughout service delivery are strongly linked to purchase behavioural intentions, hotel managers need to pay emphasize on the emotional component and make sure that the customers experience with the services create an emotional attachment. Customer service employees need to be trained in order to better understand the customers’ emotional responses during the course of service delivery process. Hotel managers need to create meaningful consumption experiences with emotional engagement. This suggest that

hotel industries should not ignore the emotions experienced by consumers and paying attention to consumers' emotions may result in better decision-making process and help managers in devising marketing strategies accordingly.

5.3. Recommendations

5.3.1 Recommendations to Hospitality Practitioners

Based on the preceding of the survey results, the following recommendations regarding hotel customer experience, customer emotions and customer behaviour are suggested:

- a) Managers need to think more like designers in designing and improving customer experiences. They need to take a holistic approach in designing and improving customer experiences. To build a strong customer experience, hotel industries need to focus on creating consistency in the “choreography of the experience” across each customer touch point in a customer journey.

- b) Any efforts towards customer experience improvement in a hotel should focus primarily on aspects of a hotel operation that are equally important to the customer. While acknowledging the importance of all aspects of the hotel operation, managers should recognize the significance of each aspect in enhancing overall customer experience. Thus it is imperative that management channel their resources into updating guest services in accordance with the requirements of their clientele.

- c) A key success strategy for hospitality facilities is to focus on creating memorable experiences as customer experience has a relationship with customer emotions and purchase behavioural intentions. This philosophy must become part of the company culture and must be instilled in all employees by the management. Management of customer experience dimensions should become an important issue for hotel industry in order to enhance customer satisfaction and influence purchase decisions.

- d) Employees who have constant contact with guests play a crucial role in determining the delivery of services and service performance. Managers who wish to place increased emphasis on the importance of their customers should therefore be

committed to effective management of their human resources, particularly their frontline staff. Hotels should train staff on a continuous basis as these will upgrade staff professionalism and consciousness of the task at hand. Issues of courtesy, knowledge and confidence should also be part of the training agenda.

- e) Customer emotions should be continuously monitored during the service delivery process since customers' emotional responses throughout service delivery has a mediational role in the relationship between customer experiences and purchase behavioural intentions. Experiences create emotions, exploring the emotions felt during and after the experience might offer clues on how to design products and services to facilitate positive experiences. For this purpose, customer service employees need to be trained in order to better understand the customers' emotional responses during the course of service delivery process for creating pleasant customer experiences.

5.3.2. Recommendations for future research

For future research it is recommended that data should be collected over different time periods of the year to understand the changing patterns of hotel service attributes in enhancing customer experiences. More geographical regions within Kenya could also be considered to investigate the variations of evaluation of customer experience across cultures. The study further recommends the need to investigate the difference on how individuals of different genders, age groups and with different purpose of visit evaluate service experience. Further research should consider the cross-cultural challenges inherent in translating a customer experience from country to country when applying these principles.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Sample Letter of Introduction



P.O. Box 333- 40105

MASENO, KENYA

Date:

The General Manager

Name of Hotel Selected and Address

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: INTENTION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN YOUR ORGANIZATION

I am a postgraduate student conducting a research on customer experience. The main objective of the study is to **assess customer experience and its relative effects on customer emotions and purchase behavioural intentions in four and five star hotels in Kenya**. The study will assist me in completing my PhD degree in Hospitality Management at Maseno University. Your organization has been selected to be part of the study since you are a key player in the hospitality and tourism industry. I hope to administer self-administered questionnaires to guests staying in your hotel over a period of one month. This will be followed by conducting a semi-structured interview with the Marketing manager from your hotel. The interview will take about 30-45 Minutes. The information provided will be treated with the highest level confidentiality, and the data collected will only be used in preparation of my doctorate dissertation, again without identification of individuals. Please find enclosed copies of research questionnaire intended to be used and research authorization letter from Maseno University Ethics Review Committee. I would greatly appreciate your grant of permission to conduct research in your organization. For any inquiries, contact the lead researcher through Cell Phone: 0721440747, or by e-mail at btetio86@gmail.com. Thank you in advance.

Yours faithfully,

BEATRICE CHEPNGETICH,

Postgraduate Student, Department of ECOHIM

Enc. Copy of Research Questionnaire

MUERC Research Authorization Letter

Appendix B: Sample Informed Consent Form for Research Participants



MASENO UNIVERSITY

INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR MARKETING MANAGERS

This informed consent form is for hotel managers who we are inviting to participate in a research titled “**Assessment of Customer Experience and its relative effects on Customer Emotions and Purchase Behavioural Intentions in Four and Five Star Hotels**”.

Name of Researcher: *Beatrice Chepngetich*

Name of Organisation: *Maseno University*

Name of Project and Version: *PhD Research*

This Informed Consent Form has two parts:

- I. Information Sheet (to share information about the study with you)
- II. Certificate of Consent (for signatures if you choose to participate)

You will be given a copy of the full Informed Consent Form

Part I: INFORMATION SHEET

I am a PhD student in the Department of Eco-tourism, Hotel and Institution Management, Maseno University. As part of my PhD degree in Hospitality Management, I am carrying out a study that is concerned with assessing of Customer Experience and its relative effects on Customer Emotions and Purchase Behaviour in Kenyan Hotels. This study is to be conducted in luxury hotels in Kenya. In this study, we want to examine items defining structure of customer experience, investigate extent to which customer experience influence purchase behavior; investigate how hotels design and improve customer experiences; establish relationship among customer experience, emotions and purchase behavior and establish mediating role of customer emotions in the relationship between customer experience and purchase behaviour.

CONSENT FORM FOR GUESTS

Dear Respondent,

My name is **Beatrice Chepngetich** and I am a student at Maseno University department of Ecotourism, Hotel and Institution Management. I am conducting a study on “**Assessment of customer experience and its relative effects on customer emotions and purchase behavioural intentions in Kenyan hotels**” as part of fulfillment for the requirements of a PhD degree in Hospitality Management. You have been identified as an informant in this study since you have been staying in the hotel and can give your views and insights in relation to your hotel stay and experience. The information you give is purely for academic purposes and will not be used for any other purpose. However, you have the choice to either accept or decline to participate. If you decide to participate you will be asked questions regarding your experience in the hotel. This will take you about 30 minutes. Since the study involves you as a guest, you may feel emotionally affected when questions about your hotel experiences are asked. However, caution will be taken to minimize emotional harm to you by providing a friendly environment and being sensitive to your feelings. In case you feel uncomfortable answering questions or you don't want to go on, you have a right to discontinue with the study. Your withdrawal from the study will not result in any penalty and will not affect your relationship with the hotel or the researcher. Kindly fill part A of the questionnaire on arrival and the other parts on departure. Once completed please place and seal the questionnaire in the envelope provided and drop it at the reception desk on check out.

From this research, we can't guarantee that you will personally experience benefits from participating in this study. Others may benefit in the future from the information we gain from you. All the information gained from you will be treated confidentially. Your name will not be included in the study and the data files will be kept in lockable cabinets and once it is processed, the data will be secured by a password. At all times, I assure you of complete confidentiality in all your responses. In case you have concerns or questions, please feel free to contact Maseno University Ethics and Review Committee (MUERC) P.O. BOX Private Bag, Maseno. Telephone Numbers: 057 351 622 EXT. 3050. I agree to take part in this study having understood the information above

Signature _____ **Date** _____

Witness:

Signature _____ **Date** _____

Appendix C: Questionnaire for Guests

Section A: Personal Information Questions

Please tick or write where applicable

1. Gender

- 1) Male 2) Female

2. Nationality

- Kenyan Foreigner

3. Purpose of visit

- Business Vacation Honey moon Conference
 Others (please specify).....

4. Age

- Below 20 years 20-35 years 36-50 years Over 50 years

5. How long do you plan to stay in this hotel?

- 1 day 2 days 3 days 4days More than 4 days

6. How many times have you previously stayed in this hotel?

- Once Twice Thrice More than 4 times

Section B: Scale Rating Questions

Part A: The following set of statements relate to your feelings about your perceptions based on experiences of the hotel. For each statement, please tick the extent to which you agree with each of the statements.

Scores: Strongly agree (5), Agree (4), Neutral (3), Disagree (2), Strongly Disagree (1)

Dimensions of customer experience		Level of Agreement				
Humanic Clues		5	4	3	2	1
1	Employees of the hotel are courteous					
2	Employees are neat and well dressed					
3	Employees behavior instills confidence in guests					
4	Hotel employees are friendly					
5	Employees treat their guests with respect					
6	Hotel employees shows interest in solving guests problems					
7	Employees of the hotel understand guests' specific needs					
8	Individual attention is given by the hotel staff					
9	Hotel staff care about their customers					
10	Hotel staff has guests' interests at heart					
11	Employees of the hotel are always willing to help					
12	The employees of the hotel deliver services promptly					
13	Hotel employees make you feel safe during your hotel stay					
14	Employees have the knowledge to answer guests' questions					
Mechanic Clues		5	4	3	2	1
15	The hotel is kept clean					
16	The television in the guestroom is in proper working condition					
17	The exterior appearance of the hotel is visually appealing					
18	The layout of the hotel makes it easy to get around					
19	The arrangement of hotel furnishings is done right					
20	The physical layout of the furniture and furnishings in the hotel are comfortable					

21	The ambient conditions such as temperature, ventilation, noise and odor of the hotel are good					
22	The hotel lighting is pleasant					
23	The background music is pleasing					
24	The overall hotel facility is visually appealing					
	Functional Clues	5	4	3	2	1
25	The hotel is flexible in meeting customer needs					
26	The hotel delivers its services on time					
27	The hotel has standardized product delivery process					
28	The additional wi-fi services provided by the hotel are valuable to you					
29	The hotel gives prompt responses for your queries					
30	The food & drink offered in the restaurant is delicious					
31	The food presentation is visually attractive					
32	The hotel has great lobby facilities					
33	The hotel has excellent guest rooms					
34	The hotel offers variety of food and beverage					
35	The hotel offers variety of recreation facilities					

Part B: Below is a list of statements that relate to how you feel or think about the overall hotel experience. Please read each of the statements and indicate your level of agreement.

Scores: Strongly agree (5), Agree (4), Neutral (3), Disagree (2), Strongly Disagree (1)

	Customer Emotions	5	4	3	2	1
1	My current hotel stay experience makes me feel happy					
2	I am pleased with my current hotel experience					
3	I am amazed with my current hotel experience					
4	My current hotel stay experience makes me feel relaxed					
5	My current hotel stay experience makes me feel contented					
6	My current hotel stay experience makes me feel excited					
7	My current hotel stay experience makes me feel lonely					

Purchase Behavioural Intentions						
1	I am willing to visit this hotel again					
2	I will resist the offers of other hotels					
3	I will always recommend this hotel whenever anyone seeks my advice					
4	I would say positive things about this hotel to others					

PART C: Customer Suggestions

a) Apart from the above customer experience aspects, comment on other factors that may have influenced your purchase behavioural intentions?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!

When you have finished this questionnaire, please seal the questionnaire and drop it at the front desk on check out.

Appendix D: Key Informant Interview Guide

Greetings

My name is Beatrice Chepngetich. I am a post graduate student in the department of Eco-tourism Hotel and Institution Management, Maseno University. I am here to interview you on assessment of customer experience and its relative effects on customer emotions and purchase behavior in Kenyan hotels. I had sought audience with you earlier about this interview. First I want to take this opportunity to thank you for your participation in my previous survey through filling of the questionnaire. Your response and contribution towards this study is highly appreciated. I would really appreciate if you would answer a few questions again. I promise not to take much of your time I should take about 20 – 30 minutes. Once again I would like to assure you that responses given are for the research purpose only.

Proceed after getting the consent from the interviewee

Questions

1. What elements come to mind when you hear of the term customer experience?
2. Comment on the business unit(s) or department(s) in your company responsible for designing and managing the customer experience?
3. How do you manage customer experience from an everyday operations perspective?
4. How do you manage customer experience from a more strategic perspective?
5. How do you know when your customer experience is "just right?" How can you determine when it is "off?"
6. What research or customer feedback methods do you use to determine whether a customer has had positive experience in their entire hotel stay?
7. Many companies talk about attention to detail when it comes to the customer experience. What are your thoughts on this?
8. Do you think customer experience affect repeat purchase?

Appendix E: Qualitative Analysis Results

Table 4.15. Coding system for designing, improving and Managing Customer Experiences

Interview Questions:

- Q1. What elements come to mind when you hear of the term customer experience?
 Q3. How do you manage customer experience from an everyday operations perspective?
 Q4. How do you manage customer experience from a more strategic perspective?
 Q7. Many companies talk about attention to detail when it comes to the customer experience. What are your thoughts on this?

Themes	Sub-Themes	Sample text excerpts relating to the theme	Underlying Codes
Meaning of customer experience	Expectations versus company interactions Moments of contact with the hotel Set of interactions between hotel and customer Touchpoints Moments of truth What entails customer Journey	“...customer experience is an evaluation that depends on the comparison between customer expectations and actual service performance” (Interview participant 1). “customer experience originates from a set of interactions with the hotels touchpoints...” (Interview participant 7).	Matching customer expectations
Customer Experience Elements	Employees Interpersonal Skills Expertise Employees Knowledge to answer questions Professionalism	“Most customers looks at employees performance during a service as this can measure their experience...” (Interview participant 6) “.....employee expertise and professionalism can make customers have memorable experiences.....as well as their relationships with guests” (Interview participant 14)	Employee performance
	Service environment Physical Environment Aesthetics Hotel Layout Cleanliness Atmosphere	“.....the surrounding guests environment determines the experience....” (Interview participant 7) “Hotel Cleanliness and general outlook of the hotel matters in measurement of experiences..” (Interview participant 13)	Physical environment

		Facilities Food quality and presentation Process Ease Functionality Convenience retention Service Recovery Flexibility	<p>“...To customers important elements of customer experience include hotels facilities, food taste, presentation, variety, freshness, temperature, healthiness, and any food quality-related clues...” Respondent no. 5.</p> <p>“.....and functionality of hotel facilities are among the elements of experience.....” Respondent No. 14.</p> <p>“ Customers assess customer experience by looking at a number of items.....and visual clues such as color, lighting, space, personal artifacts, layout and design ;” Respondent No. 24</p>	Functional clues
Managing Experience	Customer	Understanding customer needs Know customer needs Understanding details Define experience Clue Consciousness	<p>“...Customer experience improvement must start with knowing what the customer needs.....to achieve this we speak to the customers” (Interview participant 9)</p>	Know your customer
		Have direction Know guiding principles Set your goals Set targets	<p>“...in managing customer experience it is important to set your goals as it gives directions on what to do....” (Interview participant 3)</p> <p>“.....always know your guiding principles to be able to manage customer experiences” (Interview participant 22)</p>	Purpose
		Understand how customers perceive your brand Perception of value Know your position in the market Know your brand Perception	<p>“...employees should believe in the organizations brand and what it stands for....” (Interview: Participant 6)</p> <p>“...as a marketing manager it is important to know the hotels position in the market...” (Interview Participant 18)</p> <p>“...the perception of value (concept), its position in the market (context) and consumption and use (experience) are essential to</p>	Living your Brand

	<i>create and manage a powerful brand” (Interview Participant 1)</i>	
Joint efforts	<i>“...we put emphasis on cross-functional collaboration for instance the marketing and sales team and service team are in line across the whole customer experience; they know and deliver a consistent value scheme...” Interview: Participant 5)</i>	Cross Collaboration
Structure your efforts		
Cross collaboration		
Teamwork		
Coordination		
Employees to own the issue	<i>“...we let our employees actively own the issue and we give them the power to solve customer problems without having to pass onto management...” (Interview: Participant 2)</i>	Align to organization
Bring employee into mix		
Train employees to deliver		
Find out what employees want		

Table 4.17. Coding system for departments responsible in designing, improving and Managing Customer Experiences and customer feedback methods used to determine customer experience

Interview Questions:			
Q6. What research or customer feedback methods do you use to determine whether a customer has had positive experience in their entire hotel stay?			
Q5. How do you know when your customer experience is "just right?" How can you determine when it is "off?"			
Themes	Sub-Themes	Sample text excerpts relating to the theme	Codes
Departments involved in managing customer experiences	Cross functional integration	<i>“.....no single department can be tasked in improving and managing experiences, it is a cross functional task...” (Interview Participant 11)</i>	Cross functional integration
	Integrations of systems		
	All functional departments		
	Coordination of all departments		
	Internal integration		
	Internal and external aspects of organisation	<i>“ It is a responsibility of all departments (revenue generating and support departments) to ensure effective delivery of customer experiences....” (Interview Participant 19)</i>	
Customer feedback methods	Guest comments	<i>“.....guests comments, number of complaints and compliments can be used to evaluate customer experience ”(Interview Participant 4)</i>	Guest Comments
	Comment Cards		
	Spoken complaints		
	Number of complaints		
	Guest Compliments		
		<i>“We always ensure that we get customer feedbacks through comment cards, looking at the number of guest</i>	Number of Complaints
			Questionnaires Interviews

Video taping
 Digital Photography
 In-depth Interviews
 Guest questionnaires
 Service involvement
 Face to face guest interactions

complaints and face to face interactions with guests”
 (Interview Participant 18)
*“.....online surveys and face to face guest interactions
 has assisted us get customer feedbacks”* (Interview
 Participant 21)

Coding system for effect of customer experience on repeat purchase

Interview Questions:

Q8. Do you think customer experience affect repeat purchase?

Themes

Effect of customer experience on repeat purchase

Sub-Themes

Customer experience impact repeat purchase
 Positive experience increases chances of coming back
 Yes, experience influence repeat purchase
 Good customer experience increases hotel business and purchases
 Negative experience results to defection

Sample text excerpts relating to the theme

“...customer experience has a dramatic impact on the buying behaviours among customers. Good customer service experience results in increased personal and business purchases while bad customer service drives customers to find alternatives...”
 (Interview: Participant 23).
“.....negative customer experiences results in defection to other competitors” (Interview: Participant 9).

Codes

Customer experience influence repeat purchase

Appendix F: Research Schedule

DATE	ACTIVITY
SEPT-OCT 2014	Develop first draft of research proposal
DECEMBER 2014	Hand in copy of first draft of research proposal to supervisors
JAN-MARCH 2015	Correct first draft of research proposal
APRIL 2015	Revise second draft of research proposal
MAY 2015	Hand in copy of second draft of research proposal to supervisors
JUNE 2015	Revise second draft of research proposal
JULY 2015	Present research proposal at the School
AUGUST 2015	Hand in research proposal to School of Graduate Studies
AUGUST 2015	Hand in research proposal to MUERC for review
JULY 2015	Instrument pretesting
SEPT-NOV 2015	Administer research questionnaires
DEC 2015	Collect administered questionnaires
JAN-MARCH 2016	Analyze questionnaire findings
APRIL 2016	Administer in-depth interviews
MAY 2016	Analyze interview findings
JUNE-MAY 2017	Write up research thesis
JULY 2017	Hand in first copy of research thesis to supervisors
AUG-DEC 2017	Effect corrections given by supervisors
JAN 2018	Present research thesis at the department
MARCH 2018	Hand in copy of research thesis to School of Graduate Studies
MAY 2018	Defend research thesis
JULY 2018	Hand in final copy of research thesis to School of Graduate Studies

Appendix G: Research Budget

Description	Expenditure
Payment for 6 research assistants	30,000
Printing and photocopying questionnaires	7,000
Envelopes for questionnaires	2, 250
Fare for 4 trips to Mombasa and back	16,000
Fare for 4 trips to Nairobi and back	8,000
Fare for 3 trips to Kisumu and back	2,000
Stationary	5,000
Respondents drinks while administering in-depth interviews	12,000
Air time for follow up	3,000
Binding	8,000
Emergency cash	25,000
Publication	30,000
Internet services	4, 000
Total	201,250

Appendix H: MUERC Letter

Appendix H: MUERC Letter



MASENO UNIVERSITY ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Tel: +254 057 351 622 Ext: 3050
Fax: +254 057 351 221

Private Bag – 40105, Maseno, Kenya
Email: muerc-secretariate@maseno.ac.ke

FROM: Secretary - MUERC

DATE: 22nd January, 2018

TO: Beatrice Chepngetich
PG/PHD/SC/00080/2014
Department of Eco-Tourism, Hotel and Institutional Management
School of Biological and Physical Sciences
P. O. Box, Private Bag, Maseno, Kenya

REF:MSU/DRPI/MUERC/00453/17

RE: Assessment of Customer Experience and its Relative Effects on Customer Emotions and Purchase Behaviour in Kenyan Hotels. Proposal Reference Number MSU/DRPI/MUERC/00453/17

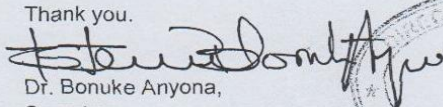
This is to inform you that the Maseno University Ethics Review Committee (MUERC) determined that the ethics issues raised at the initial review were adequately addressed in the revised proposal. Consequently, the study is granted approval for implementation effective this 22nd day of January, 2018 for a period of one (1) year.

Please note that authorization to conduct this study will automatically expire on 21st January, 2019. If you plan to continue with the study beyond this date, please submit an application for continuation approval to the MUERC Secretariat by 15th December, 2018.

Approval for continuation of the study will be subject to successful submission of an annual progress report that is to reach the MUERC Secretariat by 15th December, 2018.

Please note that any unanticipated problems resulting from the conduct of this study must be reported to MUERC. You are required to submit any proposed changes to this study to MUERC for review and approval prior to initiation. Please advise MUERC when the study is completed or discontinued.

Thank you.


Dr. Bonuke Anyona,
Secretary,
Maseno University Ethics Review Committee



Cc: Chairman,
Maseno University Ethics Review Committee.

MASENO UNIVERSITY IS ISO 9001:2008 CERTIFIED

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