

Research Article

Visitor Satisfaction on Attractions and Attributes at Tarangire National Park

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Abstract

Existing tourist destinations draw an increasing number of visitors as travel and tourism continue to rise. In this scenario, the growth in demand for tourism gives rise to new markets, which means that tourism sites are facing more and more intense competition which makes visitor satisfaction on tourism destination a prerequisite for tourism destination development. It is for this reason this research was undertaken. The study was aimed at assessing visitor satisfaction on attractions and attributes at Tarangire National Park. Questionnaire was used for data collection and a total of 242 visitors (tourists) were sampled. The results showed that visitor satisfaction was highly significant between country of origin and accommodation ($F = (1.359)$, $df = 64$, $p < 0.000$), attraction ($F = (1.469)$, $df = 64$, $p < 0.000$), Game viewing roads ($F = (99.32)$, $df = 64$, $p < 0.003$), and significant for interpretation ($F = (85.745)$, $df = 64$, $p < 0.036$), game viewing ($F = (85.190)$, $df = 64$, $p < 0.040$), and signage ($F = (84.479)$, $df = 64$, $p < 0.044$), highly significant for nature of travel and signage ($F = (22.620)$, $df = 64$, $p < 0.000$), and significant for game viewing ($F = (10.668)$, $df = 64$, $p < 0.005$). Out of 15 attractions which were identified, elephant was considered the best attraction and the least was ostrich. Generally, tourists were satisfied with the attractions, attributes and services provided by Tarangire National Park and offers the best attractions with high number of elephants and diverse wildlife populations which provide a good view that contributes to enjoyment and satisfaction to visitors.

Keywords

Attractions, Attributes, Satisfaction, Tarangire National Park

1. Introduction

Tourism is a vital industrial sector for many countries in the world [11] Tourism activities are becoming much more important today than before. In recent years visitor satisfaction has become a major concern for Sustainable Tourism, thus destination attribute plays an essential role in tourists' assessment of the attractiveness, image, and satisfaction of a

destination [9]. The researchers have come up with tools and models to better measure visitor satisfaction at a destination level. However, there has been a lack of consistency in measurement of satisfaction on attractions in a way that allowed tourism sector to make comparisons or benchmark [15]. A better understanding of satisfaction on visitor attraction

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services, facilities and experiences will allow for improvements to relevant services, facilities and experiences at an individual operator level and also at the destination level.

There is no reservation that attractions are the main motivator for people to travel and perhaps the most essential element in the tourism system. Tourists themselves are an essential factor driving the development of tourism. The number of tourists in a tourist spot is an important indicator and a benchmark for the development level of the tourism industry in the country [1]. Tourist destinations have been regarded as places that contain tourism facilities and attractions [3]. As travel and tourism continues to grow, existing tourist destinations attract more and more visitors. In this situation, the expansion of tourism demand leads to emergence of new markets and thus tourism destinations have increasingly faced intensive struggle. Consequently, for tourism destinations, which are reliant on a single superior tourism facilities is an old-fashioned approach and likely not to cope with today's competitive market [13]. Today and evermore the competitiveness of a destination highly depends on its attractions. Therefore, visitor attractions add valuable additions to an area and inclusion of attractions to the list of available activities is crucial for exceptional holiday/travel experiences [3].

International tourist arrivals reached 80% of pre-pandemic levels in the first quarter of 2023 (20% compared to the same quarter of 2019) boosted by strong results in Europe and the Middle East, compared to a 66% recovery level for the year 2022 overall. International tourism grew by 86% in quarter one of 2023 compared to the same period last year, showing continued strength at the start of the year. An estimated 235 million tourists travelled internationally in the first three months, more than double those in the same period of 2022 [18].

International tourism in Tanzania has been exponentially increasing. During the period of January to February 2023, the number of international visitors increased to 290,896 up from 195,483 visitors arrived in the country during the corresponding period in 2022. The increase was 95,413 visitors; equivalent to 48.8 percent [19]. To date, the tourism industry in Tanzania is relying largely on wildlife resources as the major attraction in most protected areas which amount to 90% of all tourists taking part in wildlife safaris or hunting. Recently, the public and private sectors have recognized the need to expand the industry from wildlife based tourism to other attractions [5]. Expectancy-disconfirmation theory embraces that consumers first form expectations of products or services performance prior to purchase or use of attraction [15]. Subsequently, purchase and use contribute to consumer beliefs about the definite or apparent performance of the product or service. The consumer then compares the perceived performance to prior expectations. Therefore, consumer satisfaction is seen as the outcome of this comparison [10]. This measurement of visitor satisfaction is crucial for monitoring the overall satisfaction of visitors, their intention to repeat visit and recommend an attraction visit to others. However, it is

recognized that the measurement of visitor satisfaction is complex, multi-dimensional and may be influenced by a wide range of factors (including previous experiences, culture, and even mood).

Measuring consumer satisfaction has emphasized the gap between expectations, repeat visit and performance of individual attributes as well as the overall satisfaction and allegiance of consumers [3]. However, satisfaction has been defined in several ways such as follows. First, it has been viewed as a post-consumption evaluation of a chosen alternative cause of action to determine if it meets or exceeds visitor expectations [2]. It has also been defined as an emotional response derived from a consumption experience [13].

Quality of service is undeniably an important aspect to consider while assessing performance of any tourist destination. Visitors who experience service of good quality tend to be satisfied and may remain loyal to the specific destination. [7]. Satisfaction is considered a crucial aspect to expand the viable business in the tourism industry, evaluating tourist satisfaction is necessary to successful destination marketing since it is directly connected to destination choice, consumption of products and services [9].

Tourist satisfaction is important to successful destination marketing because it influences the choice of destination, the consumption of products and services, and the decision to return [15]. Tourism in Tanzania is mainly concentrated in the Northern Circuit and has improved gradually over the last three decades, but the country has experienced a loss of market share to South Africa [4]. A study by [8]. found that over 11 years to 2018/19, number of visitors rose by 66.9 percent and earnings (gate fees) by 289.5% making the circuit the backbone of tourism in the country.

The study investigated on visitor satisfaction on attractions and attributes in Tarangire National Park with the aim of understanding on how the qualities of attractions and attributes influence visitations in the park. This could aid the National Park on the improvements and upholding the highest standards of attractions, attributes and services provided at the park to ensure sustenance of visitors.

2. Material and Methods

2.1. Study Site

Tarangire National Park covers an area of about 2600 km², and it was established as a National Park in 1970 located in Manyara Region between the plains of the Maasai steppe to the South east and the Lake of the Great Rift Valley to the North and West while on the Northern part it cut across by Tarangire River and is adjacent to Manyara swamps, which attract a high concentration of wildlife to Tarangire National Park, especially during the dry season. During the wet season, wildlife in Tarangire National Park disperses into the Simanjiro plains, which are traditional Maasai lands [2]. In the dry season, between June and October, large herds of animals are

attracted to the Tarangire River. During this time, the elephant numbers is high and they are considered the main attraction in the park concentrated around Tarangire River. As a result, Tarangire National Park is a superb and worth visiting during

dry season than in wet season and this is the time when Elephants have been recorded with up to a population of 3,000 in the park.

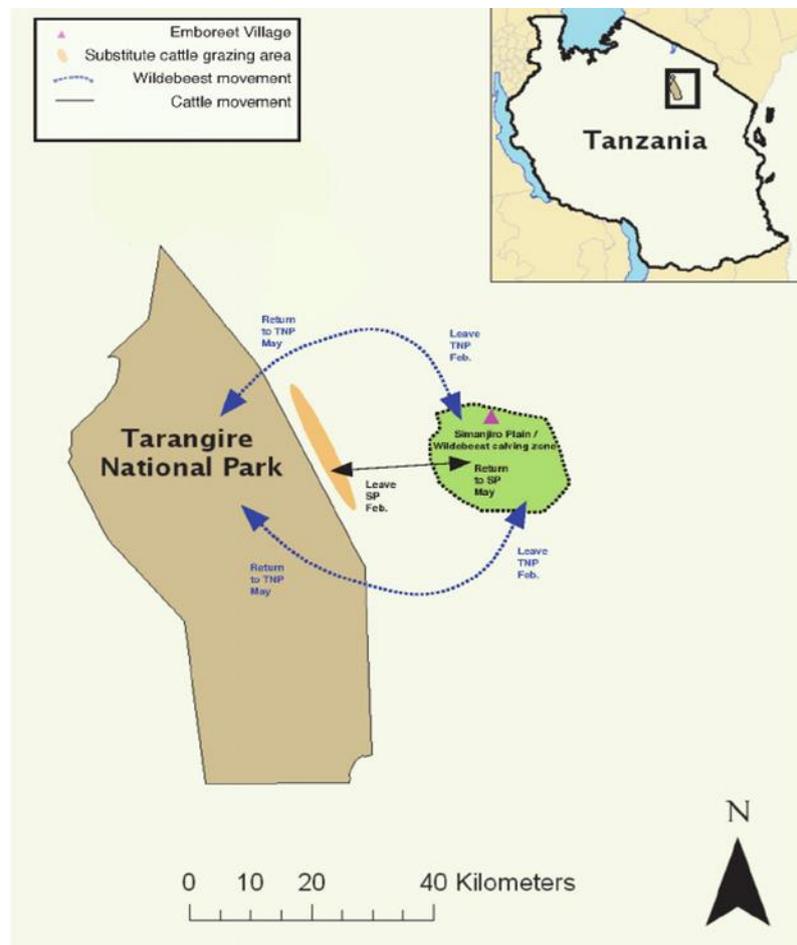


Figure 1. Map showing the location of Tarangire National Park [17].

2.2. Questionnaire's Survey

Data was collected using questionnaire survey to gather information from tourist entering and leaving the park gate with focus on the country of origin, satisfaction on reception, washrooms, interpretation, game viewing, accommodation, security on roads, and reasons for visiting Tarangire National Park, perceived attraction, signage and game viewing. A total of 242 tourist responded to the questionnaires. The questionnaire was administered to a small number of people before it was administered to visitors. The pilot survey was crucial because it tested the validity of questions before it was administered to visitors.

2.3. Data Analysis

Quantitative data derived from visitor satisfaction ques-

tionnaire surveys were coded and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 16.0 (SPSS, 2010). Descriptive statistics such as frequency tables and percentages were used to identify the attractions and attributes which contribute to visitor satisfaction (reception, game viewing, washroom, security, game viewing roads, best attractions just to mention a few). One-way Anova and Pearson Chi-Square was used to determine visitor's satisfaction on attractions and attributes in relation to countries of origin and travel behavior characteristics.

3. Results

A total of 15 attractions were identified in Tarangire National Park. The main attractions identified were elephants representing (48.8%), followed by variety of animals (19.8%), the least represented attractions were Ostrich and River Tarangire (4%) (Table 1).

Table 1. Shows the attractions which were identified in Tarangire National Park.

Identified attractions	Frequency	Percent
Variety of Animals	48	19.8
Baobab Trees	11	4.5
Birds	6	2.5
Bridge	1	.4
Cheetah	2	.8
Elephants	118	48.8
Giraffe	5	2.1
Landscape	8	3.3
Leopard	2	.8
Lions	10	4.1
Nature	13	5.4
None	11	4.5
Ostrich	1	.4
River Tarangire	1	.4
Swamp	1	.4
Zebra	4	1.7
Total	242	100.0

Source: Field data, June 2016

Identified level of contributions to visitor satisfaction on attributes

The attributes which contribute to visitor's satisfaction were identified by assigning variables such as poor, good and excellent. The analysis showed that all attributes contributed to visitor satisfaction. A total of 242 tourist responded to the questionnaire. Out of these, 128 (52.9%) represented reception at the entrance gate, 183 (75.6 %) for game viewing, 31 (12.8%) game viewing roads and the least was accommodation with 3 respondents constituting (1.2%) (Table 2)

Table 2. Identified attributes which contribute to visitor's satisfaction.

Identified Attributes	Categories	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Reception at the entrance	Poor	12	5
	Good	90	37.2

Identified Attributes	Categories	Frequency	Percentage (%)
	Excellent	140	57.9
	Poor	10	4.1
Washroom	Good	72	29.8
	Excellent	160	66.1
	Poor	6	2.5
	Good	76	31.4
Interpretations	Excellent	160	66.1
	Poor	31	12.8
game viewing roads	Good	83	34.3
	Excellent	128	52.9
Accommodation	Poor	3	1.2
	Good	73	30.2
	Excellent	166	68.6
	Poor	5	2.1
Security	Good	58	24
	Excellent	179	74
	Poor	8	3.3
	Good	73	30.2
Signage/sign post	Excellent	161	66.5
	Poor	7	2.9
Game viewing	Good	52	21.5
	Excellent	183	75.6

Source: Field data, June 2016

3.1. Satisfaction on Attractions and Attributes

The results showed that visitor satisfaction was highly significant between country of origin and accommodation ($F = (1.359)$, $df = 64$, $p < 0.000$), attraction ($F = (1.469)$, $df = 64$, $p < 0.000$), Game viewing roads ($F = (99.32)$, $df = 64$, $p < 0.003$), and significant for interpretation ($F = (85.745)$, $df = 64$, $p < 0.036$), game viewing ($F = (85.190)$, $df = 64$, $p < 0.040$), and signage ($F = (84.479)$, $df = 64$, $p < 0.044$). Again, was highly significant for nature of travel and signage ($F = (22.620)$, $df = 64$, $p < 0.000$) and significant for game viewing ($F = (10.668)$, $df = 64$, $p < 0.005$), (Table 3).

Table 3. Shows the relationship between attractions and attributes in relation to the country of origin, nature of travel and status of visit.

Tourist's country of origin and travel behavior characteristics									
Attractions and attributes	Country of origin			Nature of travel			Status of visit		
	F	Df	P-value	F	Df	P-value	F	Df	p-value
Reception at entrance	53.230	64	0.8209	1.249	2	0.536	0.532	2	0.766
Washroom	45.423	64	0.962	3.818	2	0.148	0.974	2	0.614
Interpretation	85.745	64	0.036*	5.608	2	0.061	1.276	2	0.528
Game viewing roads	99.322	64	0.003	4.031	2	0.133	0.832	2	0.660
Accommodation	1.359	64	0.000***	2.178	2	0.336	0.366	2	0.833
Security	80.223	64	0.083	3.668	2	0.160	0.646	2	0.724
Signage	84.479	64	0.044*	22.620	2	0.000***	0.808	2	0.405
Game viewing	85.190	64	0.040*	10.668	2	0.005**	0.180	2	0.914
Attraction	34.706	64	0.000***	4.393	2	0.369	1.469	2	0.8.32

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$, **** $p < 0.000$ (Source: Field data, June 2016)

3.2. Overall Satisfaction on Attraction

The overall satisfaction on attraction showed to be highly significant to all attributes such as interpretation ($\chi^2 = 53.522$, $df = 8$, $p < 0.000$), security ($\chi^2 = 58.387$, $df = 8$,

$p < 0.000$), signage/sign post ($\chi^2 = 31.469$, $df = 8$, $p < 0.000$), game viewing ($\chi^2 = 1.133$, $df = 12$, $p < 0.000$), Game viewing roads ($\chi^2 = 30.952$, $df = 8$, $p < 0.000$), washrooms ($\chi^2 = 25.71$, $df = 8$, $p < 0.001$) and reception at the entrance ($\chi^2 = 34.706$, $df = 8$, $p < 0.000$), accommodation was significant ($\chi^2 = 15.977$, $df = 8$, $p < 0.043$), (Table 4).

Table 4. Relationship between attributes and the overall satisfaction.

Attributes		Attractions Rating					χ^2	Df	P-value
		Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent			
Interpretation	Poor	0	1	1	2	2	55.552	8	0.000***
	Good	0	3	28	33	12			
	Excellent	1	2	9	71	77			
Accommodation	Poor	0	1	1	0	1	15.977	8	0.043*
	Good	0	3	12	32	26			
	Excellent	1	2	25	74	64			
Security	Poor	0	2	1	1	1	58.387	8	0.000***
	Good	0	3	18	29	8			
	Excellent	1	1	19	76	82			
Signage/sign post	Poor	0	0	3	3	2	31.469	8	0.000***
	Good	1	4	17	40	11			
	Excellent	0	2	18	63	78			
Game viewing	Poor	1	1	1	3	1	1.133	12	0.000***

Attributes	Attractions Rating						χ^2	Df	P-value
	Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent				
	Good	0	4	25	19	3			
	Excellent	0	1	12	84	86			
	Poor	0	3	8	13	7			
Game viewing roads	Good	1	3	19	39	21	30.952	8	0.000***
	Excellent	0	0	11	54	63			
	Poor	0	0	2	6	2			
Washrooms	Good	0	4	21	31	16	25.710	8	0.000***
	Excellent	1	2	15	69	73			
	Poor	0	1	3	6	2			
Reception at the entrance	Good	0	4	26	39	21	34.706	8	0.000***
	Excellent	1	1	9	61	68			

* p< 0.05, ** p< 0.01, *** p< 0.001, **** p< 0.000, Source: Field data

4. Discussion

4.1. Attractions

This study showed that elephants were the highest ranked attraction in the Tarangire National Park when compared with other species found in the park. This is because of their encounter and close proximity for viewing the species. Also, they are in higher concentration along the river when compared to other National Parks in Tanzania. This finding is in line with the study by [6] in Addo Elephant National Park (AENP) who asserted that charismatic species such as elephants were highly ranked as tourist attractions. Similarly for self-guided tourists in AENP listed elephants as an important attraction to visit the park. In Tarangire National Park lion was rated low by visitors visiting the park, although it was noted that visitors took more time to view them during their travel [6]. This strongly suggests that even if tourists have preference but other attractions also have a role to play in visitor satisfaction.

The varieties of wildlife species encountered during a game drive in the park have also influenced the level of satisfaction to tourist. Apart from wildlife species, tourists were also attracted to nature; baobab trees and river Tarangire, in one way or the other. Wildlife interaction with nature contributed in influencing the tourist preferences and enriched their satisfaction. The fewer encounters of some species might have been the reason for visitors to rate them low and such species included ostrich, cheetah, leopard and giraffe but they played an important role in attracting tourists' attention and satisfaction. This was in line with findings by [6]. who noted that rare

species or species that were less frequently encountered were found to be more valuable than common species.

Visitor Satisfaction on attraction and attributes with regard to country of origin and travel behavior characteristics

The majority of visitors who recorded the highest number came from the United States and they were well satisfied with the attractions (Appendix I).

The best attractions proved to have direct effect on tourist satisfaction, it is therefore understood that satisfaction of tourists are caused by different dimensions; thus pre-expectation of the tourist before the travel and justification of the tourist on the delivered services after the travel is based on the real experiences [16]. The study has revealed that 33% of visitors expected to see variety of animals, 18.2% expected to see elephant while others have shown their preferences varying from one species to the other (Appendix II). This goes to several dimensions related to their expectations and perception which were conditioned to the image that they will get in Tarangire National Park. However, visitors have shown satisfaction to the attractions with no regard to their country of origin. Satisfaction was achieved through emotional connections with the attractions they found and the true reflection of what is offered in Tarangire National Park. A positive emotional connection is based on a complex mix of both negative and positive emotional interactions with attractions, facilities, and services in the course of the travel [12].

The visitors visiting the park for the first time were highly satisfied with the attractions. It is generally accepted that pull factors are measured via lists of destination attributes that represent place perceptions, a critical relationship between push/pull motivation and destination in terms of revisit intention and recommendation has been underlined by [14]. As

satisfaction is created by the comparison of the customer's expectation before and after consumption. Therefore, if the performance of the service or product cannot fulfill the expectation, dissatisfaction will appear. Specifically, tourist satisfaction is created by the comparison of pre-travel expectations and post-travel experiences [6]. When experiences of a tourist compared to the expectation results in feeling of gratification, the satisfaction is created, it is therefore understood that satisfaction of tourists are caused by two different dimensions; satisfied tourist would like to visit the place again and also encourage other tourists to visit it while on the other hand dissatisfied tourist may not have the will to return and advertise the destination to others [16]. The quality of the attractions offered in Tarangire National Park was able to hold the attention of the visitors implying that there is no direct relationship between tourist satisfaction on attractions, attributes and services with the country of origin.

4.2. Overall Satisfaction

The study showed that visitors were satisfied with attractions and attributes in Tarangire National Park. This was due to the nature and variety of attractions and services. This has painted a positive image to the park and has strong determinants on the overall satisfaction of visitors, the attributes and service standards. The attributes have no direct influence on satisfaction but they have attachments to nature and create a good and positive image of visitor experience about the park. It has shown that the attractions, services, and facilities provided in Tarangire National Park are of high-quality standard and they increase the quality of the visitor's tour, and therefore automatically enhanced the perceived value of the destination and lead to visitor's satisfaction. Tarangire National Park has the convincing attractions which are able to hold tourists and satisfy their needs. The findings are thus considered important to Tarangire National Park management to recognize the image tourists have about the attractions and attributes which is necessary for them to identify their strengths and weaknesses. This will allow for maintaining the service standards to influence positive expectations and attractiveness from the service standards for unique and appealing image of the park.

5. Conclusion

The study considered the visitor satisfaction as a key element in tourism industry and has tried to assess the relationship between the attractions, attributes and the origin of the visitors. If visitors are satisfied, they will not only want to re-visit but also will recommend it to others. On the other hand, visitor satisfaction will not be achieved, unless the tourists feel that the quality received has enriched their expectations.

6. Recommendations

It is important for Tarangire National Park to know performance of the attractions surrounding their environment and pay attention to the attributes and service delivery in order to meet the needs of visitors and match the real happenings in the park. Tourist attractions must be supported by a high standard of performance of service which include reception and game viewing. A larger number of visitors sought information from tour operators and recommendation from friends. There was very little information obtained from the website and the media, however, this does not have any harm only if the park will maintain the status quos. This is because if tourists are satisfied, they will advertise the park, the cheaper way which does not add any cost to the management and promote the park so that more visitors can continue to experience the unique natural heritage in Tarangire. The management of Tarangire should maintain their service standards and the quality of the attractions to enhance the visitors experience and satisfaction. better understanding of the visitors' attractions and attributes which contribute to their satisfaction and establish what makes the difference in tourist satisfaction as tourist have different origins and cultures differences.

Abbreviations

AENP Addo Elephant National Park

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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