

**EVALUATION OF DETERMINANTS OF TOURISM DESTINATIONS
COMPETITIVENESS ON CUSTOMER LOYALTY: A CASE OF KISUMU IMPALA
AND CRESCENT ISLAND GAME SANCTUARIES**

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SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS, DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM AND
HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT, KISII UNIVERSITY**

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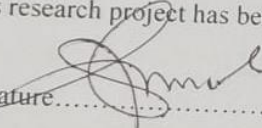
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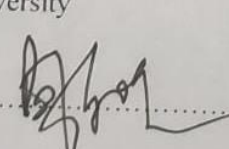
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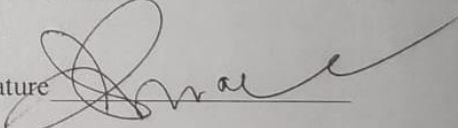
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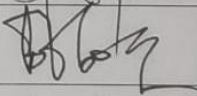
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DEDICATION

I dedicate this research initiative to my parents, Mr. and Mrs. Onserio, and my spouse, Evans, for their encouragement and spiritual support.

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I give thanks to God Almighty for keeping me well during my studies. I also want to express my gratitude to my supervisors, Drs. Yobes Nyaboga and Mongare Omare, for their advice and insights that helped me complete the research project successfully.

ABSTRACT

Destination management is focusing on developing attraction plan within tourism sector. Customer loyalty is increased by factors that determine a tourist destination's competitiveness. The study's objective is to evaluate how elements that influence a tourism destination's competitiveness impact customer loyalty. According to the survey, many Kenyan tourist destinations are silent when it comes to domestic travel because of a lack of customer loyalty. The specific objectives were to evaluate the effects of destination attractiveness, calculate the impact of destination management, identify the moderating role of sanctuary situational conditions, and ascertain the impact of support variables. The study would be useful to the management of tourism destinations. This study made use of Michael Porter's concept of competitive advantage. The study used a descriptive research design. The target population consisted of 466 individuals from the two sanctuaries, Kisumu Impala and Crescent Island. The study's sample size consisted of 233 respondents from well-known tourist destinations. 233 responses from Assistant Warden II, Sergeant Education Warden, Customer Care Officers, Supervisors, Animal Goalkeepers, Tour Guides, Rangers, Cage Attendants, Research Scientists, and Corporal Discipline Officers were chosen using stratified sampling approaches. A structured research questionnaire was used as the data collection instrument. The validity of the research instruments was evaluated using the supervisor's and relevant research experts' viewpoints. The pilot research at the Oserengoni Wildlife Sanctuary employed 23 questionnaires. The reliability of research instruments was evaluated using Cronbach alpha coefficients. Descriptive statistics including percentage, mean, minimum, maximum, and standard deviations, regression, and model summary were used to analyse the data. Figures and tables were used to display the results. The study's conclusions were important to academics, policymakers, tourism destination managers, and researchers who would use them to add pertinent information for future research. According to the study, destination management has an impact on tourism appeal. The marketing of tourist sites should raise consumer awareness during vacations, and destination development should be improved in response to visitor needs. In order to ensure effective communication, planning, and development with an emphasis on the destination's distinctiveness, domestic tourists must be engaged through social networks. In order to improve the performance of Kenyan tourist locations, more research on destination management should be conducted.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

GNP	Gross National Product
GOK	Government of Kenya
KNBS	Kenya National Bureau of Statistics
NACOSTI	National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation
NEMA	National Environmental Management Authority
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
SA	South Africa
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences Statistical Package for Social Sciences
UNICC	United Nations International Chamber of Commerce
UNWTO	United Nations World Tourism Organization
WTTC	World Travel & Tourism Council

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

The phrase "determinants of tourism destinations competitiveness" describes a wide concept that encompasses qualitative factors that affect a destination's appeal, pricing variations coupled with currency rate fluctuations, and the productivity levels of various tourism sector components. The competitiveness of tourists reflects the unique and global nature of better destination management. In Latin America, competitiveness is defined as interactions between price structures and destination competitiveness in tourist visiting gastronomic zones. It includes the science of determining and preparing good food related to culture of the people's traditions and history. Competitiveness includes cultural taste, flavors and eating experience within the social customs (Arici & Mehmet, 2025).

Bernd Fredrick Reitsamer (2026) in the University of Innsbruck, Australia defines destination attractiveness as accessibility, amenities, scenery and local community as mediated on tourist attitudes. Destination attractiveness considers tourism sites as an enterprise executing marketing campaigns to manage destination information focusing on developing management plan. Destination competitiveness is evaluated within tourism industry as it improves or influences travel markets within the economy (Bernd, 2026).

Tourism destination is defined as a place where consumers meet temporarily for various attractions of products and facilities that can be compared. Competitiveness entail the welfare, income, market position and sustainability of a destination. Tourist destination analyses attractiveness within the price demand, visitors and other travellers therefore determining destinations management in countries such as Tunisia and Morocco which have competitive markets where visitors can

contribute to sustainable global tourism within natural and cultural resources (Feridun & Birsan, 2025).

In Kenya, tourism destination management has been implemented practically destination competitors such as community engagement and stakeholders collaboration. Tourism products are mainly required for effective and attractive destination in terms of accessibility , infrastructure and ecological sites. In Kenya destination attractiveness sustainability in terms of competitive advantage and environmental impact as the main determinant of tourism destinations competitiveness. Local development demonstrates destination competitive while achieving sustainable competitive product (Were and Jackson, 2021).

Auxiliary determinant in tourism destination competitiveness are natural and hospitality environment, tourist information, marketing, safety and security in China (Yan *et al.*, 2023). Auxiliary factors in the competitiveness of tourism destinations: tourism sites conceptualise destination competitiveness based on the idea that it is a collection of attractions for tourists, infrastructure, equipment, services, and organisations that collectively determine what a destination has to offer its visitors in Kenya. Additionally, it maintains that what makes a location really competitive is its capacity to boost tourism expenditures by drawing visitors and protecting its natural wealth for future generations (Wu, 2024).

The coordinated management of all the components that make up a tourism destination competition attraction, such as its destination attractions, access, marketing, and pricing, is known as destination management determinants. Destinations use a systematic method to connect disparate tourism organisations to improved destination management. This makes sanctuary marketplaces more competitive, which has also impacted the tourism industry's significance. The

difficulties encountered by visitors and the market supply of tourism deliveries are indicative of this (Hussain, 2026).

Situational conditions these are the relevant external determinants within a setting that influences individual behavior in going to the places of interest. It also encompasses all factors in the broader external tourism environment that have an impact on destination competitiveness. Opportunities and risks are presented to tourism operations by the economic, social, cultural, demographic, environmental, political, legal, governmental, regulatory, technological advancement, competitive trends, and events that impact how tourism businesses and other organisations in the destination conduct business (Camara, 2024).

Customer loyalty is a gauge of how likely customers are to return to travel destination brands. Positive customer happiness, positive customer experiences, and a destination's overall lifetime worth are the outcomes. Customers in Spain are resistant to being swayed by availability or cost when they are devoted to a certain location. As long as customers receive the same high-quality services, they are prepared to spend more, which encourages repeat business. Spending is higher than that of first-time clients. Higher conversion rates from devoted clients increase the competitiveness of the destination. Customer loyalty is crucial regardless of the size of the destination since new consumers are hard to persuade because they have never used the product or service there before (Chotisarn & Phuthong, 2025).

As promised by (Sari, 2022), the Netherlands is a tourist destination thanks to its competitive edge and guarantyd tourist appeal. The management, upkeep, protection, and strengthening of tourist locations is not competitive in the worldwide market. The services provided in the vicinity of the

sanctuaries are challenging since there are several tourism service providers with a variety of attributes and unclear competitive objectives (Goffi et al., 2023).

Uganda's tourism industry is becoming more competitive in a variety of ways depending on the location. This suggests that similar destinations are considered by competitive determinants. It has been demonstrated that competitiveness cannot use comparable methods when assessing a destination. The difficulties are in trying to increase competition for factors that determine tourism locations. In Kenya, tourism is a global assumption both domestically and internationally, but it is not the same in other African nations (Ojonta & Ogbuabor 2024).

The competitiveness of tourism in Kenya has risen from 29.4 to 34.2 percentages in 2015 compared to 2022 in Nairobi tourist locations, and from 43.8% in 2022 to 50.9% in coastal tourism circuits. It is mostly for the competitiveness of domestic tourism destinations. the reasons behind the former's huge revenues. According to research by Mutinda, Ndivo, and Rayvisic (2022), coastal beaches, a few game reserves, and national parks continue to be the only tourist destinations in Kenya that are competitive since domestic travellers frequent these locations. It is crucial to use a bottom-up strategy and look into factors as they relate to certain destinations. To ensure both national and international competitiveness, the development of individual tourist destinations and internal tourism should be prioritised (Ghialy, 2022).

Kisumu Impala Sanctuary and Crescent Game Sanctuary are the sanctuaries being investigated. The sanctuary serves as both a vital grazing area for the hippopotamus population and a threatened haven for the antelope that inhabit the surrounding marshes. Situated in Kisumu County, Kisumu Impala spans less than one kilometre square and is located in Lake Victoria. The refuge was designated as a lakeshore walk with impalas in 2022 after being gazetted in 1992. There are more

than 115 kinds of birds and a wide variety of flora and wildlife in the free-ranging region. With the exception of elephants, it currently offers a tourist circuit that includes all five of the big five. It is a significant location for competing tourism destinations that raise awareness of the endangered Sitatunga antelope. The sanctuary ecological region for wildlife study has become a popular tourist destination due to its natural observation point for boat rides (Mwangi, Zhang, & Wang, 2022).

The Crescent Game Sanctuary was established in 1988 to enable Crescent Island to join the mainland after the lake receded. It is located on the east side of Lake Naivasha. Its level terrain makes it easier for tourists to appreciate. Giraffes, elands, waterbucks, wildebeests, impalas, and zebras are among them. There are many hippos on the island and more than 200 species. Fish eagles, ospreys, lily trotters, and other heron species are among the local birds where hippos reside. Zebras are among the mammals grazing in the refuge. Impala, Buffalo, Giraffe, Kongoni, and Nite Hippos are among them. It is competing with other sanctuaries like Oserengoni and Mwaluganje Conservancy due to its diverse fauna, bird life, and flora (African Spice Safaris, 2019).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Tourism destination competitiveness has remained a major challenge as destinations compete to attract, retain, and increase tourist visits. Although destination attractiveness, auxiliary factors, destination management, and situational conditions have been recognized as important determinants of competitiveness, many wildlife sanctuaries continue to experience unstable performance due to low destination awareness, limited tourist arrivals, inadequate repeat visitation, and weak referral networks. These challenges have affected revenue generation and sustainable tourism development ((Tourism Research Institute, 2025).

Customer loyalty, reflected through repeat visits, positive recommendations, and destination referrals, has become an important measure of tourism competitiveness. Effective destination management, digital marketing, infrastructure development, and quality visitor experiences have been identified as key factors influencing tourist loyalty (Rather, 2020; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2021). However, limited evidence exists on which competitiveness determinants contribute most significantly to customer loyalty in wildlife sanctuary destinations. With foreign visitor numbers climbing from 2.09 million in 2023 to 2.39 million in 2024 and tourism profits reaching Kshs. 452.20 billion in 2024, the tourism industry's recovery has improved (Tourism Research Institute, 2025). However, tourism benefits have remained concentrated in popular destinations such as national parks, game reserves, and coastal attractions, while some sanctuaries continue to experience low visitation and limited market recognition.

Customer loyalty has become an important indicator of destination competitiveness because repeat visits, positive recommendations, and tourist referrals contribute to long-term destination value. In the Lake Victoria Region Tourism Circuit in Kenya, Nguthi (2025) looked at visitor perceptions and destination loyalty. She discovered that visitor views affected destination loyalty, which functioned as a competitiveness indicator. However, the study focused on classified hotels within a tourism circuit and did not examine wildlife sanctuary destinations such as Kisumu Impala and Crescent Island. Despite government initiatives to promote domestic tourism through marketing campaigns, reduced entry fees, and tourism incentives, Kisumu Impala and Crescent Island sanctuaries continued to face challenges related to low tourist arrivals, limited repeat visits, and inadequate referrals. In order to give recommendations for enhancing destination performance and sustainable tourism growth, this study assessed the factors that determine tourist destination

competitiveness and their impact on consumer loyalty in Kisumu Impala and Crescent Island game reserves.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The study assessed how Kisumu Impala and Crescent Island wildlife reserves' competitiveness as tourist destinations affected patron loyalty.

1.3.1 Specific Objectives

The specific objectives were;

- i. To investigate how Kisumu Impala and Crescent Island wildlife sanctuaries' appeal affects patronage
- ii. To look into how auxiliary factors affect patronage at game sanctuaries on Crescent Island and Kisumu Impala
- iii. To evaluate how destination management affects patronage at Crescent Island and Kisumu Impala game sanctuaries
- iv. To determine how situational factors in Kisumu Impala and Crescent Island game sanctuaries moderate the link between factors that determine destination competitiveness and consumer loyalty

1.4 Research Hypotheses

H₀₁: In Kisumu Impala and Crescent Island wildlife sanctuaries, destination attractiveness has no discernible impact on tourist destination competition or patron loyalty.

H₀₂: Customer loyalty at Kisumu Impala and Crescent Island wildlife sanctuaries is not significantly impacted by auxiliary elements of a place.

H03: Customer loyalty at Kisumu Impala and Crescent Island wildlife sanctuaries is not significantly impacted by destination management.

H04: In Kisumu Impala and Crescent Island wildlife sanctuaries, situational factors do not significantly moderate the relationship between destination competitiveness and patron loyalty.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The results of this investigation would be important in several respects. In order to improve tourist destinations' ability to strategically plan to stay relevant in the market and deal with competition, the study first supported Michael Porter's theory of competitive advantage (1990).

Second, the results would be used by the sanctuary administration to develop tactics that would help Kisumu Impala and Crescent Island game sanctuaries stand out from other tourist destinations.

Finally, it is anticipated that the study would advance our understanding of tourist sites and lay the foundation for future scholarly investigations. Above all, it is anticipated that Kenya's tourism industry will greatly benefit from the study's conclusions.

1.6 Scope of the study

The competitiveness of Crescent Island and Kisumu Impala wildlife reserves as travel destinations was the main subject of the study. It concentrated on the factors that influence the competitiveness of tourist sites. The study was conducted between 2017 and 2023. The pilot study was carried out at the Oserengoni Wildlife Sanctuary, which Hans and June Zwagar founded in 1995 to prevent conflicts between humans and wildlife.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

The following restrictions could have an impact on the study's results: first, covering geographical location of both Crescent Island in Naivasha and Kisumu impala was wide. This encountered by use of research assistants.

Second, the researcher informed the respondents about the study's academic goal in case they were unwilling to complete the questionnaire.

Thirdly, understanding the tools of data collection was difficult in terms of language barriers for local community. Thus, respondents were given interpret to help them understand the application of the instruments for effective corporation throughout the study period.

Fourth, in accordance with the study tools used for data collecting, the respondents might not feel prejudiced or free to provide accurate and truthful information. As a result, the researcher informed them that there is no victimisation in scholarly study.

1.8 Assumption of the study

The study assumes that the research instruments used to collect data will receive accurate and genuine information from respondents. The data was analysed quantitatively and applied to various hospitality industries.

1.9 Operational definitions of terms

Attraction: Any item, person, location, or idea that entices individuals to participate in an experience—either physically or by remote electronic means—is referred to.

Customer loyalty It is the favourable interaction between the client and the company.

Destination: is a geographical area that has all the facilities and services required for a particular tourist or tourism segment's stay.

Destination Competitiveness: This study examines destination competitiveness as a notion that takes into account various tourist industry prices. Sanctuary locations' desirability is influenced by qualitative aspects.

Domestic Tourist: refers to locals going to tourist destinations in their own nation.

Tourism: is the short-term, fleeting movement of individuals to locations other than their usual homes and places of work, as well as the things they engage in while there; it encompasses travel for any purpose as well as day trips and excursions.

Tourism destination: is a place where at least three well-known tourist destinations are located, none of which are in the same town or city but are also close to one another. In this case, the study will be conducted inside the western tourism circuit.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Review

2.1.1 Porter's theory in tourism destination competitiveness

This is the competitiveness theory of tourism destinations. Porter (1990) established the idea, which defines tourism as the action of drawing people to a location or a group of people travelling to different locations for leisure, sightseeing, or amusement in the United States. Additionally, it states that when a location can enhance its competitive posture in tourism markets with other tourism areas in exchange for competitiveness, tourism businesses become more competitive. Adopting this approach is necessary because the history of tourism began many years ago with water searching, trade, and travel for food or cultural exchange (Purwandini et al., 2025).

The forces of competition are accelerating the growth of tourism. According to this idea, the development of tourism market operations might lead to competitive planning with the provision of tourist environments in various destinations. Consequently, the competitive success of Indian enterprises is dependent on the competitiveness of tourism destinations in the market. When many individuals may use tourist services for travel and leisure, there is a greater competitive benefit due to the customer's bargaining power, buyer concentration to the firm, and new entrance (Purwandini et al., 2025). The success of tourist organisations depends on their ability to compete in both domestic and international markets. The five main factors of the new theory of entry—buyer powers, supplier powers, substitute threats, and competitive rivalry—will be the main focus of the theory (Yauri & Arbulu, 2026).

This theory's limitation is that every tourism activity has a component for competitive forces in addition to competitiveness. As a result, destination conditions are suggested objectively for each tourism site that was selected for this study. According to the report, a certain level of competition is one of the key factors that determine how well tourism performs in the industry.

2.1.2 Theory of comparative advantage in tourism destination competitiveness

This idea, which was dubbed the Heckscher-Ohlin (H-O) theory in 1970, held that travel destinations are somewhat equivalent to international trade when comparing various nations. This theory was predicated on the idea that there are two fundamental tourist destinations with perfect competition returns. Monopolistic comparative advantage is the foundation of tourism destinations, and competition aims to strengthen key tourism positions (Dwyer, 2022).

The theory's drawback is that destination competitiveness varies by nation. This theory holds that different nations have different factor intensities, or the amount of labour and capital used to produce commodities and services. Although there are other resource explanations for comparative advantage, The-O theory emphasises abundance of factors or endowments as the main determinant of comparative advantage. The H-O theory is based on certain simplifying assumptions, but when these assumptions are reduced, the theory is modified yet still works (Salvatore, 2023).

The H-O theory has been validated by a variety of empirical investigations. In one of the earliest studies of this kind, Dimoska and Trimcevb (2022) discovered that, contrary to popular belief, the US should be an importer of labour-intensive goods and an exporter of capital-intensive goods. In the US, the paradox was subsequently verified. Studies based on the nation's tourism industry showed similar findings (Dimoska & Trimcevb, 2022).

Economists searched for other explanations for the H-O hypothesis as a result of the Leontief conundrum. The introduction of variations in human capital as an explanation of the conundrum was the most significant of them (Ferand, 2025). Other hypotheses included the technology gap theories, which include time as a dynamic extension to the fundamental H-O theory, and the product cycle theory (Vernon, 2026).

Beach, wildlife, cultural, sporting events, scenic, adventure, and specialist tourism—which includes visits to slums as well as educational institutions—are Kenya's seven tourism product categories. Tourism has significant and complex social, economic, along with environmental repercussions, partly because of its emphasis on delicate natural and cultural resources. The fourth factor influencing competitiveness is rivalry, firm strategy, and structure (Buzinde, 2023).

Success depends on how destinations are developed, goals are determined, and management is carried out. However, fierce competition at home is also crucial because it puts pressure on innovators to improve their competitiveness. All four of the aforementioned factors that determine competitiveness can be influenced by the government. Local, regional, national, or worldwide government interventions are all possible. Events that are beyond a company's control are known as chance events. They induce discontinuities where some people acquire competitive positions while others lose, which makes them significant (Huertas & Orden-mejia, 2022).

This theory's limitations stemmed from the fact that a significant and expanding portion of trade originated from vast two-way trade in related industries, which was primarily driven by benefits deriving from economies of scale and could not be explained by comparative advantage. The conventional theory of constant returns to scale is no longer a viable explanation for intra-industry trade due to the shifting nature of global trade (Zhao, 2022).

Overall, it concluded that the following reasons made this industry unappealing: Rivalry: With over 5,000 travellers globally, there is a lot of rivalry in the tourist sector. At first, tourism would fight on pricing, but in order to draw in affluent, luxury-seeking customers, travel destinations like the United Arab Emirates have started to provide distinctive amenities like showers. Furthermore, even though Delta is a popular travel destination.

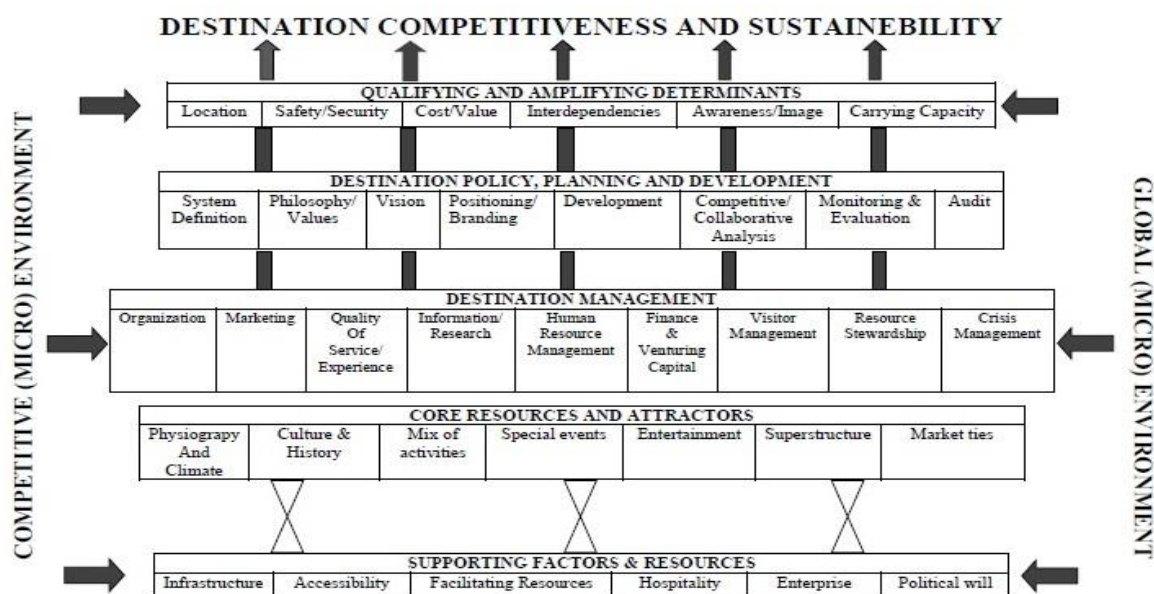
2.1.3 Ritchie and Crouch Model of Destination Competitiveness

The methods to destination competitiveness presented by Ritchie and Crouch (2000) and Dwyer et al. (2004) are based on Porter's (1990) theory of competitive advantage.

Ritchie and Crouch Model of Destination Competitiveness

Figure 1.1:

Ritchie and Crouch Model of Destination Competitiveness (2003)

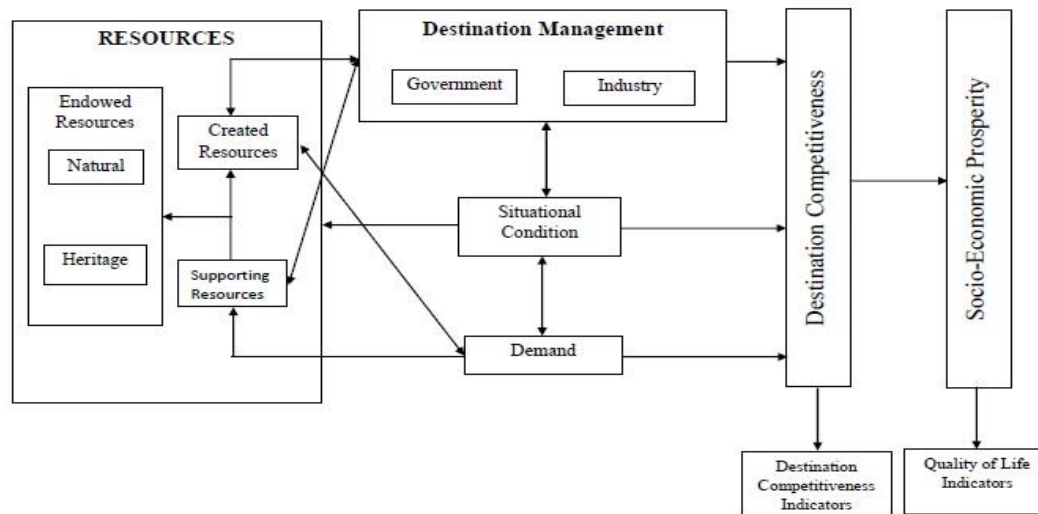


Serruto-Perea (2024) claims that the Ritchie and Crouch model of destination competitiveness shows that their theory is regarded as the most thorough and in-depth research on tourism competitiveness. Researchers have used it as a starting point to create and analyse their own models. Ritchie and Crouch made an effort to compile and arrange all the variables and determinants that affect a destination's ability to compete. They categorised 36 factors into five parts, building on Porter's famous framework of the diamond of national competitiveness (1990): Planning and development, destination management, destination policy, qualifying and amplifying determinants, core resources and attractors, and supporting factors and resources. The key components of destination appeal are among the core resources and attractors that make up the basic component. The model has been criticised for failing to depict a realistic picture due to its inability to depict the connections or interference between the elements.

2.1.4 Integrated Model of Destination Competitiveness

Figure 1.2:

Integrated Model of Destination Competitiveness (Dwyer et. al., 2004)



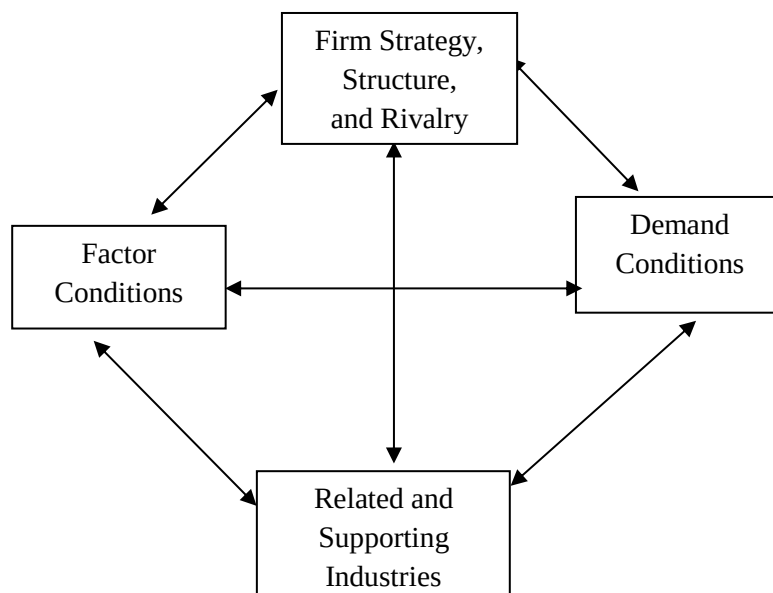
Both Porter's framework of national competitiveness and Crouch and Ritchie's (2003) destination competitiveness features are heavily incorporated into the model. Resources and destination management are its two primary components, which combine the key components of business and national competitiveness into a single overall model (Dwyer et al., 2022). The primary draw for tourists is resources, and destination management shapes an alluring offer for travellers. The approach is similar to a process with two outcomes: socioeconomic success, which is measured by quality of life, and destination competitiveness. The approach aligns with Ritchie and Crouch's (2003) definition of competitiveness, with competitiveness and quality of life as the primary objectives. The model differs significantly from Ritchie and Crouch in that it displays causal relationships (Ransikarbum, 2026). The model's arrows have distinct meanings: two-way arrows

represent the reciprocal effects, while single-direction arrows depict the process. Although the elements determining destination competitiveness are successfully identified by both models, the factors are not separated.

2.1.5 Porter's Diamond of Competitive Advantage

Figure 1.3:

Porter's Diamond of National Advantage (1990)



According to Porter's thesis, the "industry" serves as the fundamental analytical unit for comprehending competition. The competitive edge is gained or lost in the industry. According to Bordas, a cluster is "a collection of tourist attractions, infrastructure, equipment, services, and organisations concentrated in a delimited geographical area." A collection of tourist destinations from the western tourism circuit will serve as the industry in this study.

Factor circumstances, demand conditions, linked and supporting industries, firm strategy, structure, and rivalry are the four main factors that determine a nation's competitiveness, according

to Porter (1990). A destination's infrastructure, human resources, physical resources, and knowledge resources are all considered factor circumstances. In order to overcome low international sales, tourist destinations must invest in new technologies, improve their current resources, and invest in domestic tourism, all of which are represented by demand circumstances (Hancoco, 2022).

Related sectors and supporting industries, such as technological development, production, distribution, and marketing, demonstrate how businesses can coordinate or share operations in the value chain when they are in competition or when they include complementary products. Tourism destination strategy is a competition that encompasses the management and organization of the destination.

Even while these factors affect a country's overall competitive edge, their nature implies that they are more industry-specific than nationally typical. By combining Porter's (1990) theory with Ritchie and Crouch's (2000) approach to destination competitiveness, this study aims to both identify the strategic factors that determine a destination's competitiveness and comprehend the reasons behind a particular domestic tourist destination choice.

2.2 Destination Competitiveness in tourism destination competitiveness

In order to investigate the elements that affect tourist destinations' competitive standing, Ramos (2025) conducted a study on destination competitiveness in tourism. The study examined destination competitiveness as the dependent variable and pricing competitiveness, customer happiness, service quality, and strategic positioning as the independent variables. Information was gathered by reviewing secondary sources, such as published studies and tourism reports, using a descriptive study design. The results showed that locations that maintain high levels of customer satisfaction and provide high-quality services at competitive pricing are more likely to maintain

and grow their market position. The relationship between destination competition and customer loyalty was not empirically established by the study, which mostly offered a conceptual debate. This leaves an empirical gap that has to be filled by future research.

To find out what makes a location competitive, Noorliza (2023) carried out a study titled *Determinants of Market Competitiveness in an Environmentally Sustainable Tourism Industry*. The study looked at destination competitiveness as the dependent variable and resource sustainability, destination management, environmental protection, and value-added tourism products as the independent variables. The study used conceptual modelling and document analysis as its main research tools, and it used a descriptive research methodology. The results demonstrated that combining sustainable resource management with the creation of appealing tourism products gives tourist locations a competitive edge. Despite these results, there is an empirical need for further research because the study did not evaluate if destination competition results in repeat business or consumer loyalty.

Porter (1990) carried out a study titled *The Competitive Advantage of Nations* to explain how countries achieve and sustain competitiveness across different economic sectors. The dependent variable was national competitiveness, while the independent variables were innovation, productivity, demand conditions, factor circumstances, firm strategy, and supporting industries. The study used secondary data from public reports and international economic records and used a comparative research design. The findings demonstrated that innovation and productivity are key drivers of long term competitiveness. Although the study has been widely applied in tourism research, it focused on national competitiveness rather than tourism destinations and did not investigate customer loyalty within the tourism industry, leaving a contextual gap.

Rheeders (2022) undertook a study on Destination Competitiveness: Determinants along with indicators to create a thorough framework for evaluating the competitiveness of tourist destinations. Destination competitiveness was the dependent variable in the study, whereas endowed resources, produced resources, destination management, supporting factors, and situational conditions were the independent variables. Tourism workers and industry experts were given structured questionnaires to complete as part of a survey study design. The findings showed that infrastructure, supporting services, high-quality tourism resources, and efficient destination administration all greatly increase destination competitiveness. However, the study concentrated on measuring competitiveness and did not examine its direct influence on customer loyalty, presenting an empirical gap.

In order to assess the competitiveness of tourist sites, Moradi (2023) carried out a study on competitive destination analysis in China. Destination competitiveness was the dependent variable in the study, whereas destination attractions, tourism infrastructure, accessibility, destination image, and supporting services were the independent variables. Using destination performance indicators and structured questionnaires, the researcher collected data using a descriptive research approach. The findings showed that competitive destination analysis enables tourism managers to identify destination strengths and weaknesses, thereby supporting informed strategic planning. Nevertheless, the study focused on evaluating destination performance and did not investigate how destination competitiveness influences customer loyalty or tourists' intention to revisit a destination, leaving an empirical gap.

In order to investigate what makes tourism locations more competitive, Sandhya (2023) conducted a study on destination competitiveness and sustainable tourism development in Kenya. The independent variables included tourism attractions, infrastructure, tourism services, destination

organization, and environmental conservation, while destination competitiveness was the dependent variable. Using structured questionnaires given to tourist stakeholders, the study used a descriptive survey research approach to gather primary data. The findings revealed that destinations with well developed attractions, quality infrastructure, efficient tourism services, and sustainable resource management are better positioned to attract visitors and increase tourism expenditure. The current study aims to close the contextual and empirical vacuum left by the study's failure to determine if destination competitiveness influences hotel guests' customer loyalty.

2.3 Empirical Literature

2.3.1 Destination attractiveness in tourism destination competitiveness

In order to determine the elements influencing tourist destination competitiveness, Crouch (2011) studied destination management and destination attractiveness in China. The study looked at destination competitiveness and attractiveness as dependent variables and destination management, physiographic characteristics, and climate as independent variables. The study used a descriptive research approach, and tourism specialists were given standardised questionnaires to complete in order to gather data. The results showed that the most significant factors influencing destination competitiveness were thought to be natural elements, especially physiographic traits and climate. However, there is an empirical vacuum because the study mostly relied on expert judgements and did not look at how destination attractiveness affected hotel customers' customer loyalty.

In order to investigate the role that cultural and environmental resources play in destination performance, Mihalic (2011) studied Slovenia's tourism destination competitiveness. The study looked at destination performance, cultural resources, and environmental resources as independent

variables, with destination competitiveness serving as the dependent variable. The researcher used a descriptive research approach and gathered information from tourist stakeholders using destination performance indicators and structured questionnaires. The findings revealed that environmental resources significantly enhanced destination competitiveness, while cultural resources performed below stakeholder expectations. The study recommended greater investment in natural and cultural attractions to strengthen destination competitiveness. However, the study did not examine the influence of destination attractiveness on customer loyalty, leaving an empirical gap.

Balkaran (2022) conducted a study on destination attractiveness to determine the factors that made tourism destinations competitive. The study looked at destination competitiveness as the dependent variable and natural attractions, tourist resources, and destination appeal as the independent variables. Stakeholders in the tourism industry were given structured questionnaires to complete as part of the study's descriptive survey research approach. The findings indicated that destinations endowed with unique natural attractions enjoyed a stronger competitive position because they attracted more visitors than competing destinations. However, the study focused on destination competitiveness and did not establish whether destination attractiveness influenced customer loyalty, leaving a contextual gap.

In order to investigate the relationship between destination attractiveness and competitive advantage, Dwyer & Forsyth (2011) conducted a study on tourist destination competitiveness. The study looked at competitive advantage as the dependent variable and natural scenery, cultural heritage, tourism experiences, and destination image as independent variables. The researchers adopted a descriptive research design and utilized secondary data obtained from tourism reports and published studies. The findings showed that destinations possessing superior natural beauty,

cultural attractions, and memorable visitor experiences achieved stronger competitive positions than alternative destinations. Nevertheless, there is an empirical gap because the study did not look at the connection between customer loyalty and destination appeal.

In order to determine the elements influencing travellers' destination selections, Krešić and Prebežac (2011) conducted a study on tourism destination attractiveness. The study looked at tourist destination choice as the dependent variable and tourism attractions, destination features, accessibility, and tourism amenities as the independent variables. The researchers used structured questionnaires to obtain data from travellers using a descriptive survey study approach. The results demonstrated that tourism attractions and destination characteristics had a major impact on travellers' choices to visit specific locations. However, the study did not examine whether destination attractiveness influenced customer loyalty after the visit, leaving an empirical gap.

Broadbent and Broadbent (2022) conducted a study on destination competitiveness in Ethiopia to assess the contribution of cultural and natural resources to tourism development. The study examined cultural heritage, natural attractions, and tourism resources as the independent variables, while destination competitiveness was the dependent variable. The researchers adopted a descriptive research design and relied on document analysis and tourism reports as the primary research instruments. The findings revealed that Ethiopia's rich cultural heritage and natural attractions provided a strong competitive advantage within the African tourism market. However, the study emphasized destination competitiveness without examining its influence on customer loyalty, creating both a contextual and empirical gap.

Pietsch & Ringbeck (2022) conducted a study on destination attractiveness and destination management to determine their contribution to tourism competitiveness. Destination

competitiveness served as the dependent variable in the study, which also looked at destination management and cultural resources. Using secondary tourism data and structured questionnaires, the researchers employed a descriptive research approach to gather data. The findings revealed that effective destination management and well-preserved cultural resources significantly enhanced destination competitiveness by improving the overall attractiveness of tourism destinations. However, the study did not examine whether destination attractiveness influenced customer loyalty in the hotel industry, leaving an empirical gap that the current study sought to address.

2.3.2 Auxiliary factors in tourism destination competitiveness

A Framework for Island Destination Competitiveness: Perspectives from the Island of Malta is a research by Azzopardi & Nash (2015) that looks at how supporting variables might improve the competitiveness of tourism destinations. The study looked at the competitiveness of tourist destinations as the dependent variable and public infrastructure, transit services, and supporting amenities as the independent factors. The researchers used structured questionnaires to gather data from tourism stakeholders using a descriptive research approach. The results showed that by increasing the effectiveness, calibre, and accessibility of tourism goods and services, dependable infrastructure, effective transportation networks, and high-quality public services improved tourism competitiveness. However, there is a contextual and empirical gap because the study concentrated on island destinations and did not look at the impact of auxiliary factors on patron loyalty in category hotels.

In a study titled Supporting Factors as well as Tourism Destination Competitiveness in Italy, Wang, Hsu, & Swanson (2012) investigated how facilitating resources affect tourism competitiveness. The study's dependent variable was the competitiveness of tourism destinations,

whereas its independent factors were infrastructure, facilitating resources, accessibility, and tourism firms. The researchers used structured questionnaires to gather data from tourism stakeholders using a descriptive survey study approach. The results demonstrated that destination competitiveness was greatly increased by well-developed infrastructure, sufficient supporting resources, increased accessibility, and effective tourism businesses. However, there is an empirical vacuum because the study concentrated on destination competition rather than examining if auxiliary factors affected consumer loyalty.

In order to ascertain the role that infrastructure plays in the growth of tourism, Tězsér (2022) studied the relationship between tourism infrastructure and destination appeal. The study looked at destination attractiveness as the dependent variable and transportation infrastructure, accessibility, and tourism amenities as the independent variables. The researcher used structured questionnaires and secondary tourism records to gather data using a descriptive research design. The results showed that efficient access to tourist destinations and high-quality infrastructure greatly increased destination desirability. However, the study emphasized destination attractiveness and did not examine its influence on customer loyalty, creating an empirical gap.

Crouch (2011) conducted a study on destination competitiveness to examine the contribution of supporting factors to tourism development in Egypt. Tourism destination competitiveness was the dependent variable in the study, which also looked at supporting infrastructure, enabling resources, destination planning, and destination management as independent variables. To gather information, the researcher used secondary tourism reports and structured questionnaires in a descriptive research methodology. The findings revealed that destinations with abundant tourism resources but inadequate infrastructure experienced difficulties in achieving sustainable tourism growth. The study further established that well-developed and properly maintained infrastructure

formed the foundation for effective destination competitiveness. However, the study did not investigate the relationship between supporting factors and customer loyalty, leaving an empirical gap.

Buhalis & Law (2008) conducted a study on information and communication technology in tourism to examine its contribution to destination competitiveness. Destination competitiveness was the dependent variable in the study, which also looked at information and communication technology infrastructure, technical innovation, and electronic tourist services as independent variables. In addition to using structured surveys and secondary data from travel agencies, the researchers used a descriptive research methodology. The findings revealed that destinations with advanced information and communication technology infrastructure were better positioned to satisfy changing tourist expectations, improve service delivery, and strengthen destination competitiveness. The current study aimed to fill the empirical gap left by the study's focus on technological competitiveness rather than whether information and communication technologies improved customer loyalty in the hotel sector.

2.3.3 Destination management in tourism destination competitiveness

In order to determine how destination management techniques affect the competitiveness of tourism destinations, Buhalis, Pansiri, & Courvisanos (2022) studied destination management strategies in Canada. The study's dependent variable was tourist destination competitiveness, while its independent variables were sustainable development, destination marketing, tourism planning, strategic alliances, destination networks, and policy implementation. The researchers used structured questionnaires and secondary policy papers to gather data in their descriptive study design. The findings revealed that effective destination management, supported by well-formulated tourism policies and strategic planning, significantly enhanced destination

competitiveness by improving resource utilization and responding to changing market conditions. There is an empirical gap because the study concentrated on destination competition rather than destination management's impact on patron loyalty in category hotels.

Pansiri (2022) conducted a study on destination management and tourism competitiveness in Botswana to examine tourists' perceptions of destination competitiveness. The study looked at destination competitiveness as the dependent variable and destination management, developed resources, safety, cultural heritage, planned excursions, and cleanliness as the independent variables. Using structured questionnaires given to foreign visitors, the researcher used a descriptive survey research strategy to gather data. The findings revealed that Botswana's destination competitiveness remained moderate and required improvements in destination management, tourism resources, safety, and service quality to meet international tourists' expectations. However, the study did not examine whether improved destination management enhanced customer loyalty, leaving an empirical gap.

To investigate the contribution of destination management initiatives to enhancing tourism performance, Loureiro & Ferreira (2015) carried out a study on destination management and tourist competitiveness. The study looked at destination competitiveness as the dependent variable and destination policy, planning, branding, monitoring, evaluation, and tourist development as the independent variables. Using structured surveys and document analysis, the researchers gathered data using a descriptive study methodology. The results showed that by enhancing tourism planning, destination branding, policy execution, and resource management, efficient destination management increased destination appeal. An integrated destination management system improved sustainability and competitiveness, according to the study. However, there is an

empirical gap because the study did not look at the connection between destination management and consumer loyalty.

To find out how marketing affects destination competitiveness, Barbosa (2022) studied destination marketing and tourism competitiveness. Tourism destination competitiveness was the dependent variable in the study, which also looked at destination positioning, competitor analysis, and destination marketing as independent variables. Using structured questionnaires given to tourist stakeholders, the researcher used a descriptive research approach to gather data. The findings revealed that effective destination marketing enabled tourism destinations to communicate their unique attractions, identify competitive advantages, and strengthen their market position. However, the study focused on destination competitiveness without examining whether destination marketing enhanced customer loyalty, leaving a contextual and empirical gap.

In order to investigate the impact of the external environment on tourist development, Těžsér (2022) carried out a study on tourism destination management. The study examined macroeconomic conditions, destination management activities, and tourism development strategies as the independent variables, while tourism destination competitiveness was the dependent variable. The researcher adopted a descriptive research design and collected data through document analysis and secondary tourism reports. The findings revealed that changes in the macroeconomic environment significantly influenced destination management decisions and tourism development. The study recommended continuous monitoring of external environmental changes to improve destination competitiveness. However, the study did not assess the influence of destination management on customer loyalty, leaving an empirical gap.

In order to determine the essential components of successful destination management, Wang (2012) studied destination management and tourism destination competitiveness in China. The study looked at destination competitiveness as the dependent variable and destination marketing, human resource development, destination management organisations, information management, and crisis management as the independent variables. The researcher used structured questionnaires to gather data from tourism businesses using a descriptive survey research approach. The results showed that disaster readiness, efficient information management, staff training, and destination marketing greatly increased the competitiveness of tourism destinations. To improve destination performance, the study suggested integrated marketing communication, ongoing staff development, and efficient crisis management. The current study aimed to fill the empirical gap left by the study's failure to investigate whether destination management affected hotel guests' customer loyalty.

2.3.4 Situational conditions in tourism destination competitiveness

Feroz (2010) conducted a study on tourists' destination preferences and travel intentions in Arabian countries to examine the factors influencing tourists' destination selection. The study examined security, destination image, travel cost, and tourist preferences as the independent variables, while tourists' destination selection intention was the dependent variable. Using standardised questionnaires given to tourists, the researcher gathered primary data using both exploratory and descriptive research methodologies. The data was analysed using multiple regression analysis. The results showed that tourists' intentions to choose a tourist site were strongly influenced by security, with destinations deemed safe drawing more travellers than those deemed unsafe. However, the study focused on destination selection rather than customer loyalty, leaving an empirical gap.

In order to investigate the impact of pricing on destination choice, Dwyer & Forsyth (2011) studied price competitiveness and tourism destination competitiveness in Poland. The study looked at tourism destination competitiveness as the dependent variable and price competitiveness, cost of living, travel expenses, and replacement destination pricing as the independent variables. The researchers adopted a descriptive research design and utilized secondary tourism data together with economic indicators. The findings revealed that tourists were highly sensitive to destination prices and frequently compared the costs of alternative destinations before making travel decisions. The study further established that an increase in tourism prices reduced visitor arrivals as tourists shifted to more affordable destinations. However, the study did not investigate whether price competitiveness influenced customer loyalty after the destination had been visited, leaving an empirical gap.

In order to investigate the situational elements influencing tourism development, Loureiro and Ferreira (2015) studied the competitiveness of tourism destinations in São Tomé and Príncipe. The study's dependent variable was the competitiveness of tourism destinations, while its independent factors were peace and security, social circumstances, environmental conditions, and economic conditions. Using structured surveys and document analysis, the researchers gathered data using a descriptive study methodology. Because travellers took into account a number of competing destinations before deciding where to go, the results showed that peace and safety were among the most significant factors influencing destination competitiveness. The study also discovered that the growth of tourism was constrained by social, environmental, and economic factors. The current study aimed to fill the empirical gap left by the study's focus on destination competitiveness rather than situational factors' impact on consumer loyalty.

2.4 Research Gap

Prior research has used various conceptualisations and measuring techniques to investigate tourist destination competitiveness at the national, regional, and international levels. Although the literature consistently indicated that destination competitiveness influences tourism performance, most studies focused on destination competitiveness as the dependent variable rather than examining its effect on customer loyalty within the hospitality industry. Furthermore, many studies investigated destination competitiveness from the perspective of international tourists, with limited attention given to domestic tourists or hotel guests. This has created inconsistencies in understanding the factors that influence customer loyalty in different tourism contexts.

Existing empirical studies also concentrated on individual dimensions of destination competitiveness. For instance, Pietsch & Ringbeck (2022) established that destination management significantly enhanced tourism destination competitiveness but did not examine whether effective destination management translated into customer loyalty among hotel guests. Similarly, Azzopardi & Nash (2015) reported that auxiliary factors such as public infrastructure, accessibility, reliability, safety, and service efficiency strengthened tourism destination competitiveness. However, their study did not determine whether these supporting factors influenced customer loyalty.

Studies by Crouch (2011), Mihalic (2011), Balkaran (2022), Dwyer & Forsyth (2011), and Krešić and Prebežac (2011) primarily focused on destination attractiveness as a determinant of destination competitiveness without examining its influence on customer loyalty. Likewise, studies by Feroz (2010) and Loureiro and Ferreira (2015) emphasized situational conditions such as security, pricing, peace, and economic conditions as determinants of destination competitiveness but did not establish their relationship with customer loyalty.

Methodologically, many of the reviewed studies were conducted in countries such as China, Botswana, Malta, Poland, Egypt, Slovenia, Italy, Canada, Ethiopia, São Tomé and Príncipe, and Arabian countries. Due to variations in tourism markets, client preferences, and operating circumstances, their findings might not be immediately applicable to the Kenyan hospitality sector. Moreover, most studies assessed destination competitiveness from the perspective of tourists or tourism experts rather than hotel guests.

By investigating the effects of destination competitiveness dimensions—that is, destination competitiveness, destination attractiveness, auxiliary factors, destination management, and situational conditions—on customer loyalty among visitors in Kenyan classified hotels, the current study aimed to close these conceptual, contextual, and empirical gaps. This approach provided empirical evidence on how destination competitiveness contributes to customer loyalty within the Kenyan hospitality sector

2.5 Conceptual Framework

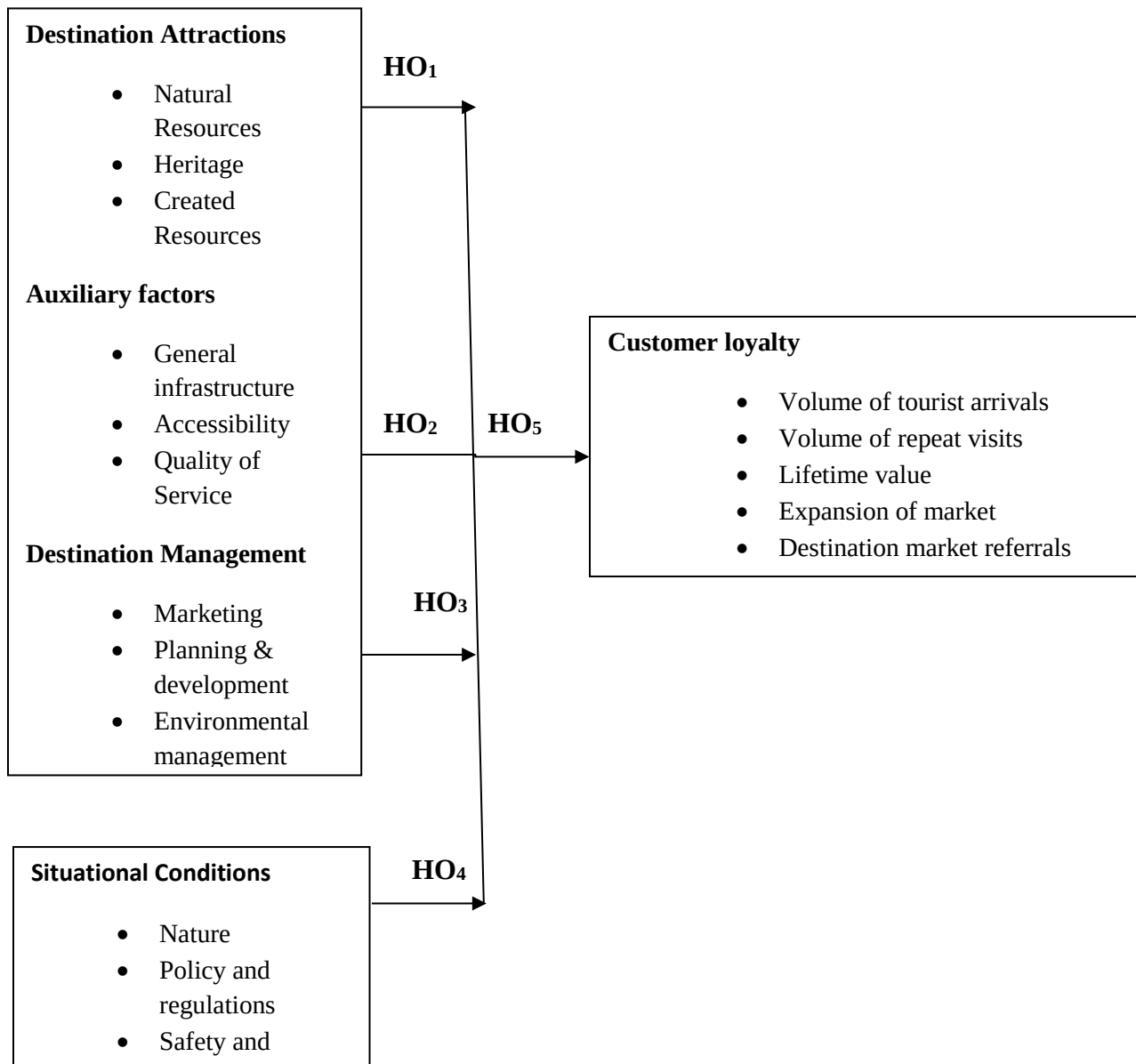
Figure 2.1

Conceptual framework

Independent Variable

Dependent variable

Determinants of Tourism Destination Competitiveness



Source: Researcher, (2026)

The study's independent variable was the factors that affect how competitive a tourist location is. The variable was measured using three dimensions, namely destination attractiveness determinants, auxiliary factors, and destination management. Destination attractiveness assessed the attributes that enhanced the appeal of tourism destinations, including natural resources, cultural attractions, environmental quality, and tourism experiences. Auxiliary factors examined supporting elements such as infrastructure, accessibility, service delivery, technology, and information systems that facilitated tourism activities. Destination management evaluated practices related to tourism planning, marketing, stakeholder involvement, sustainability, and development of tourism resources. Prior research by Dwyer & Kim (2003), Guo & Cao (2004), Li, Yang, & Zeng (2017), Enright & Newton (2004, 2015), Ritchie & Crouch (2000), and Wang, Hsu, & Swanson (2012) served as the basis for the measuring items.

To make sure the measuring items accurately reflected the distinct domains of tourism destination competitiveness, face validity was used. The items' applicability, clarity, and capacity to gauge the desired structures were assessed. This procedure made sure that the research tool had relevant, quantifiable elements that represented the study variables' dimensions.

The study's dependent variable, the competitiveness of tourism destinations, was operationalised using customer loyalty measures. New investment prospects, resident support for tourism development, the number of return visits, the number of tourist arrivals, the growth of tourism services, and destination awareness were among the measurement criteria. These metrics, which were modified from Omerzel (2006), were employed to evaluate the degree to which tourism destinations attained competitiveness through enhanced destination recognition, market expansion, stakeholder support, and visitor retention.

The study also examined situational conditions as factors influencing destination competitiveness. Situational conditions were measured using indicators such as safety and security and price competitiveness. These characteristics evaluated the ability of tourist locations to stay competitive as well as external factors that affected travellers' selections of destinations. A more comprehensive evaluation of the elements influencing the competitiveness of tourist destinations was made possible by the addition of situational conditions.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The research design used in the study was descriptive. Because it allowed the researcher to gather and examine data on respondents' perceptions, attitudes, opinions, and experiences about the competitiveness of tourism destinations and consumer loyalty, the design was deemed adequate. According to Orodho (2003), descriptive research design was suitable for examining social phenomena by providing detailed information about the characteristics, views, and behaviors of a population under investigation.

In order to gain a better understanding of the factors that determine the competitiveness of tourist destinations and how they affect customer loyalty, the study used a descriptive research design. The design made it possible for the researcher to characterise the current state of tourism destinations and identify trends related to situational conditions, auxiliary factors, destination management, and destination appeal. As a result, the strategy was deemed appropriate for accomplishing the study's goals and producing accurate data from participants.

3.2 Area of study

The research was carried out in Kisumu Impala. Crescent Island Game Sanctuary is located in Naivasha Nakuru County in Kenya's Rift Valley, while Kisumu Impala is located in Kisumu County. The island was formed in 1988 after Lake Naivasha water level dropped significantly allowing crescent to be part the main land. The terrain of the highland is plain allowing for easy hiking where game viewing is pretty easy for variety of wildlife such as Giraffes, zebra, elands, will beast, and impalas. There are also several avian species and aquatic habitat, some of the birdlife includes fish eagle, black crakes and lily-trotters.

Accessibility to the sanctuary is 15 minutes boat trip from the main land and it can be accessed by road through horse riding. The sanctuary is rich by its biodiversity and renowned for its species of avian creatures, wildlife, and fresh aquatic habitat. This is has made an ideal for conducting this study.

Situated on the shores of Lake Victoria, the biggest freshwater lake in Africa, is Kisumu Impala Sanctuary. The park is 0.34 square kilometres in size and 1,149 meters above sea level. In 1992, it was gazetted. It was dubbed "Lake Shore Walk with Impalas" in March 2010. There is a wide variety of plants and animals, and more than 115 species of birds have been identified. With the exception of elephants, the sanctuary currently has all five of the big five. For visitors to tourist destinations, there are several nature path circuits.

It has several keys and is hot and muggy. During the planning process, they used indigenous wisdom to create a unique building that has never been seen before. Wildlife and a dense native forest can be found there (Nyamweno et al., 2026).

The pilot study area was Oserengoni wildlife sanctuary which was started in 1995 to conserve wildlife in the area and to manage human wildlife conflict on local community. It has two luxury properties Chui lodge and Kiangazi house with short drive of an hour from Nairobi. It is perfect safari escape with selection of two properties two lakes, and private 18000 acre wildlife sanctuary. With projects that concentrate on restoring and safeguarding the natural ecosystem, it aims to maintain and conserve endangered animal species. It also makes a strong effort to guarantee responsible management, which contributes to the preservation of wildlife in Kenya.

3.3 Target Population

The target population of the study comprised 466 respondents drawn from domestic tourists visiting the sanctuaries and employees working within the tourism facilities. Assistant Wardens II, Sergeant Education Wardens, animal goalkeepers, tour guides, rangers, cage attendants, research scientists, supervisors, and corporal disciplinary officers were among the employees in this category.

The selected population was considered appropriate because the respondents possessed relevant knowledge and experiences regarding tourism activities, destination management practices, visitor experiences, and factors influencing tourism destination competitiveness. Domestic tourists provided information based on their perceptions and experiences, while employees provided perceptions regarding the management, operations, and service delivery aspects of the tourism destinations. As a result, the target demographic offered a thorough foundation for evaluating the factors that determine a tourist destination's competitiveness and how they affect patron loyalty.

The population also included domestic tourists visiting the sanctuaries. These respondents were important because they represented the consumers of tourism products and services. Their views provided information on destination attractiveness, accessibility, quality of services, visitor experiences, satisfaction, and factors influencing repeat visits and loyalty.

According to records obtained from Kisumu Impala and Crescent Island sanctuaries in January 2025, Kisumu Impala Sanctuary contributed 254 respondents, while Crescent Island contributed 212 respondents, resulting in a combined target population of 466 respondents. Kisumu Impala Sanctuary had a higher representation due to the larger number of employees and visitors recorded during the period under study.

The population's distribution showed that the study included both supply and demand viewpoints on the competitiveness of tourist destinations. Employees represented the service providers responsible for managing and improving tourism experiences, while domestic tourists represented the visitors whose perceptions determined the effectiveness and competitiveness of the destinations.

Table 3.1

Target Population

Respondent categories	Kisumu impala	Crescent Island	Target population	Sample size
Assistant warden II,	2	1	3	3
Sergeant education warden	9	5	14	14
Customer care,	10	9	19	19
Supervisors	3	1	4	4
Tour guiders,	13	16	29	29
Rangers	15	13	28	28
Cage attendants,	21	18	39	39
Research scientist	2	2	4	4
Corporal discipline officers	7	8	15	15
Animal keepers	13	9	22	22
Drivers	5	6	11	11
Tourists	27	18	45	45
County employees	127	106	233	3
Total	254	212	466	233

Source: Records from Kisumu Impala and Crescent Sanctuaries (January, 2025)

3.4 Sample size and sampling procedure

The target population of 466 respondents, which included domestic visitors and staff from Kisumu Impala and Crescent Island sanctuaries, was used to calculate the study's sample size. 233 respondents, or 50% of the target group, were chosen as the sample size. Because it offered a manageable number of responses while guaranteeing enough representation of the various categories within the study population, the sample size was deemed adequate.

To choose respondents, the study used proportionate and stratified sampling techniques. The target demographic was stratified by classifying respondents according to their roles and participation in tourism-related activities. The categories included tourism management staff, service providers, conservation personnel, administrative employees, and domestic tourists. This approach ensured that all important stakeholder groups were represented in the study.

The number of respondents chosen from each category was determined via proportionate sampling after the strata were established. Each stratum's proportion to the overall population determined how many responders were chosen from it. This ensured that categories with larger populations received appropriate representation while smaller groups were also included in the sample.

The sampling procedure enhanced the reliability of the study by incorporating views from both tourism service providers and tourists. Employees provided information regarding destination management practices, supporting facilities, and operational factors affecting tourism competitiveness, while tourists provided information regarding destination attractiveness, service experiences, and loyalty. The combination of these perspectives enabled the study to obtain comprehensive information on determinants of tourism destination competitiveness.

3.4.1 Sample size

Okombo and Kombo (2002) were used to determine the sample size.

$$n_1 = \frac{N}{1 + (N \times e^2)}$$

Where; N = the population size

e^2 = Tolerance at desired level of confidence at 95% confidence level = 0.05

n_1 = Sample size

233 respondents from tourism destinations made up the study's sample. 233 respondents (assistant warden II, sergent education warden, customer service, supervisors, animal goalkeepers, tour guides, rangers, cage attendants, research scientists, and corporal discipline officers) were chosen using stratified sampling techniques.

$$n_1 = \frac{466}{1 + (466 \times 0.05 \times 0.05)}$$

$$n_1 = 233$$

Stratum sample calculation formulas

$$\text{Stratum sample} = \frac{\text{Number of individuals in the stratum} \times \text{Sample size}}{\text{Total Population}}$$

Example:

$$\text{Stratum sample} = \frac{3 \times 233}{466}$$

= 233

Table 3.2

Sample size

Respondent categories	Target population	Sample size
Assistant warden II,	3	3
Sergeant education warden	14	11
Customer care	19	19
Supervisors	4	4
Tour guiders,	29	29
Rangers	28	28
Cage attendants,	39	39
Research scientist	4	4
Corporal discipline officers	15	15
Animal keepers	22	22
Drivers	11	11
Tourists	45	45
County employees	233	3
Total	466	233

Source: Researcher, (2025)

3.4.2 Sampling Procedure

The respondents were chosen by stratified random selection. Assistant warden II, Sergeant education warden, customer service, supervisors, animal goalkeepers, tour guides, rangers, cage attendants, research scientists, and corporal punishment officers were the four strata into which the sample size was split. In order to gather high-quality data, the researcher selected participants who fit the study's competence, knowledge, experience, conceptual, and informational requirements in terms of their capacity to express their experiences, opinions, disposition, and willingness to share their experiences. To find domestic visitors who took part in the study, stratified sampling was used. Every item in the population had an equal probability of being included in the sample thanks to this sampling technique.

The records of Assistant Warden II, Sergeant Education Warden, customer service, supervisors, tour guides, animal goalkeepers, rangers, cage attendants, research scientists, and corporal discipline officers provided the sample frame. A representative sample of domestic visitors to these tourist destinations was included in the study's sample frame.

3.5 Instrumentation

A questionnaire was employed in the investigation. This was discussed in a variety of themes pertaining to the several academic areas. The distribution of the questionnaires was based on the ratio of visitors to the location to available staff. Respondents were given the opportunity to express their opinions on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

3.5.1 Validity of the research instrument

The accuracy with which the instrument answers the study questionnaire is known as validity. This was tested through pre-test; the questionnaire was given to 23 respondents who share common characteristics of the total sample size in study area. It should be done in a similar area and done in intervals if they give the same results then the instrument accurate.

Both concept validity and content validity were applied. To make sure the questions addressed every area of the research purpose, content validity was employed. To determine whether the instruments could produce the same findings, the questionnaire was pre-tested.

3.5.2 Reliability of the research instrument

By calculating Cronbach's alpha, which aided in measuring the factors influencing tourism destination competitiveness, the instrument's dependability was verified. If the alpha value is more than 0.75, the measures of independent, dependent, and intervening variables are confirmed to be internally consistent (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

3.6 Data Collection

The study used primary data, which was collected directly from respondents at Kisumu Impala and Crescent Island sanctuaries. The primary data was obtained from tourism employees and domestic tourists because they possessed relevant information and experiences concerning tourism destination competitiveness and customer loyalty.

Data was collected from staff members, including management personnel, service providers, conservation officers, and other employees involved in tourism operations. These respondents provided information regarding destination management practices, supporting facilities, service delivery, and operational factors influencing tourism destination competitiveness. Domestic

tourists also participated in the study by providing their perceptions regarding destination attractiveness, accessibility, visitor experiences, satisfaction, and factors influencing their loyalty to the tourism destinations.

By using primary data, the researcher was able to get up-to-date, context-specific information straight from the main players in tourism. By recording real experiences and perspectives of the factors that determine the competitiveness of tourism destinations, this method improved the findings' accuracy and applicability. The information gathered served as the foundation for examining the connection between customer loyalty and destination competitiveness factors.

3.7 Data Analysis and Presentations

The collected data was analysed in the study using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques were used in data analysis to generate meaningful interpretations and establish links between the research variables. The study variables along with respondent characteristics were summarised and characterised using descriptive statistics, such as frequencies, percentages, averages, as well as standard deviations.

Numerical data from the surveys was analysed using quantitative analysis to assess the correlation between factors influencing the competitiveness of tourist destinations and patronage. To ascertain whether the results from the sample could be extrapolated to the target population, inferential statistics were utilised. To determine the type and degree of connections between customer loyalty and destination competitiveness aspects, correlation analysis was performed. The study hypotheses were tested using multiple regression analysis, which also revealed the degree to which situational conditions, destination management, auxiliary factors, and destination attractiveness impacted customer loyalty. The regression analysis was conducted based on statistical summaries to enhance

interpretation and facilitate conclusions regarding the determinants of tourism destination competitiveness

3.8 Ethical Considerations

Throughout the research procedure, the study adhered to ethical guidelines to safeguard the respondents' welfare, rights, and privacy. The research was conducted at Kisumu Impala Sanctuary, where domestic tourists and employees were treated with respect and dignity during data collection. The researcher made sure that respondents were not under any kind of coercion or duress and that their participation in the study was entirely voluntary.

The National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI) and other pertinent agencies granted permission for the study before it was carried out. Before distributing the surveys, the researcher told each respondent of the study's aim, goals, and importance and obtained their informed consent. Respondents were told that the data they submitted would only be utilised for academic research.

The researcher ensured confidentiality and anonymity by protecting the identity of respondents and using the collected information only for the intended research objectives. Respondents were also informed of their right to decline participation or withdraw from the study at any stage without any consequences.

The application of these ethical considerations enhanced trust between the researcher and respondents, which encouraged participants to provide accurate, honest, and reliable information. As a result, the study's validity, reliability, and credibility were all enhanced by adherence to ethical principles.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

4.1 Response rate

233 questionnaires were given out by the study to the chosen participants. A response rate of 86.7% was obtained from the 202 completed and returned questionnaires. The final analysis did not include the remaining 31 questionnaires, or 13.3%, because they were either incomplete or not returned. Because the achieved response rate was higher than the minimum threshold advised for survey research, it was deemed sufficient for statistical analysis. As a result, there was enough information from the completed surveys to analyse and interpret the study's findings.

Table 4.1

Response Rate

Response Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Returned questionnaires	202	86.7
Not returned/Incomplete questionnaires	31	13.3
Total questionnaires distributed	233	100.0

The response rate of 86.7% demonstrated a high level of participation by the respondents, indicating that the study generated adequate data for meaningful statistical analysis. Because the responses are more likely to reflect the intended demographic, a high response rate lowers the risk of non-response bias and increases the validity of the study's conclusions. Respondents' willingness to fill out and return the questionnaires further indicated that the data collection methods were successful and that the research issue was pertinent to the participants.

The results supported Mugenda and Mugenda's (2003) conclusion that a response rate of 70% or above is sufficient for data analysis in survey research. In a similar vein, Babbie (2026) noted that

by reducing sample errors related to non-response, better response rates improve the validity of survey results. As a result, the response rate attained in this study was deemed adequate and offered a solid foundation for doing statistical analyses that were both descriptive and inferential.

4.2 Demographic characteristics

In order to ascertain the respondents' backgrounds and if they sufficiently represented the target community, demographic characteristics included sampled respondents. Depending on the study's goals and the data gathered via the questionnaire, the demographic factors included gender, age, and educational attainment. Understanding the profiles of the respondents and interpreting the study's results were made easier by the examination of these traits.

The demographic data was summarised using descriptive statistics, such as percentages and frequencies. The results were discussed and displayed in tables to show how respondents were distributed among the chosen demographic groups. Understanding the demographic characteristics was important because respondents with different backgrounds could have varying perceptions of destination competitiveness and customer loyalty.

The researcher was also able to evaluate the sample's representativeness and provide an explanation for the differences in respondents' opinions thanks to the demographic characteristics study. The following subsections present and discuss the findings.

4.2.1 Gender of respondents

The study analyzed gender of the respondents. Table 4.2 presents the results.

Table 4.2*Gender of the respondents*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	120	59.4	59.4	59.4
	female	82	40.6	40.6	100.0
	Total	202	100.0	100.0	

Out of the 233 questionnaires that were distributed, 202 were returned, and 31 were not. According to the survey, 82 respondents (40.6%) were female and 120 respondents (59.4%) were male. This demonstrated that men made up the bulk of the responders.

4.2.2 Age of the respondents

To ascertain if the sample included people from various age groups, the study examined the respondents' age distribution. Due to its potential to affect travel choices, perceptions of destination competition, and consumer loyalty, age was regarded as a crucial demographic factor. Table 4.3 presents the results.

The findings demonstrated that the responses were from a variety of age groups, suggesting that the study included opinions from a wide range of hotel visitors. The distribution of respondents among the different age categories indicated that both younger and older patrons of classified hotels were fairly represented in the sample. This diversity enhanced the representativeness of the study and provided a broader understanding of customer perceptions regarding destination competitiveness.

Table 4.3*Age of the respondents*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	20-25	51	25.2	25.2	25.2
	26-30	80	39.6	39.6	64.9
	31 -35	54	26.7	26.7	91.6
	32- 40	11	5.4	5.4	97.0
	41-45	6	3.0	3.0	100.0
	Total	202	100.0	100.0	

According to the results, the largest age group was 80 (39.6%) of the respondents, who were between the ages of 26 and 30. Of the respondents, 51 (25.2%) were between the ages of 20 and 25, while 54 (26.7%) were between the ages of 31 and 35. Furthermore, only 6 (3.0%) of the respondents were between the ages of 41 and 45, while 11 (5.4%) were between the ages of 36 and 40.

The findings showed that 91.5% of all respondents were young people between the ages of 20 and 35. This implied that young, economically active people who were more likely to travel for social, recreational, or business reasons were drawn to classified hotels. The presence of respondents from all age categories enhanced the representativeness of the sample by capturing diverse perspectives on destination competitiveness and customer loyalty.

These findings further implied that age could influence tourists' expectations, travel experiences, and evaluation of tourism destinations. Younger guests might place greater emphasis on modern facilities, technology, entertainment, and accessibility, whereas older guests might prioritize safety, comfort, and service quality. Therefore, the diverse age composition of the respondents provided a comprehensive basis for assessing how destination competitiveness influenced customer loyalty among guests in classified hotels.

4.2.3 Highest level of education

The study analyzed level of education and the results were presented in table 4.4.

Table 4.4

Highest level of education

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Primary	40	19.8	19.8	19.8
	Secondary	62	30.7	30.7	50.5
	College	39	19.3	19.3	69.8
	Undergraduate	41	20.3	20.3	90.1
	Postgraduate	20	9.9	9.9	100.0
	Total	202	100.0	100.0	

According to the findings, 62 respondents (30.7%) had secondary education, 41 respondents (20.3%) had undergraduate education, 40 respondents (19.8%) had primary data, 39 respondents (19.3%) had postgraduate education, and 20 respondents (9.9%) had postgraduate education.

The results showed that secondary education was the largest educational group, with 62 (30.7%) of the respondents having completed it. Of the respondents, 40 (19.8%) had completed primary school, and 41 (20.3%) had completed an undergraduate degree. Furthermore, 20 respondents (9.9%) had completed postgraduate studies, while 39 respondents (19.3%) had only completed their diploma.

The results indicated that the respondents possessed varying levels of education, suggesting that the study captured opinions from individuals with diverse educational backgrounds. The relatively high proportion of respondents with secondary, diploma, and undergraduate education implied that

most participants were sufficiently educated to understand and respond accurately to the questionnaire. This enhanced the credibility and reliability of the data collected.

The findings further suggested that educational attainment could influence customers' perceptions of destination competitiveness and loyalty. Respondents with higher levels of education may have greater exposure to tourism services and may evaluate destination attributes using different criteria compared with those having lower levels of education. Consequently, the inclusion of respondents with diverse educational backgrounds enriched the study by providing a broad range of perspectives on destination competitiveness and customer loyalty

4.2.4 Work experience

The study analyzed work experience with years worked in the tourism sector and the results were presented by Table 4.5.

Table 4.5

Work experience

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 year	54	26.7	26.7	26.7
	2-5	64	31.7	31.7	58.4
	6-10	36	17.8	17.8	76.2
	11-15	28	13.9	13.9	90.1
	Above 15 years	20	9.9	9.9	100.0
	Total	202	100.0	100.0	

The results showed that the highest percentage of the sample, 64 (31.7%), had worked for two to five years. Of the respondents, 54 (26.7%) had been employed for a year, and 36 (17.8%) had been

employed for six to ten years. Furthermore, 20 (9.9%) of the respondents had worked for more than 15 years, while 28 (13.9%) had worked for between 11 and 15 years.

The results indicated that the respondents possessed varying levels of work experience, with the majority having worked for five years or less. This suggested that the study captured views from both relatively new and experienced employees, thereby providing diverse perspectives on destination competitiveness and customer loyalty. While respondents with fewer years of experience offered insights based on current industry practices, those with longer work experience were probably more knowledgeable about hotel operations and consumer expectations.

The study's representativeness and the dependability of its conclusions were improved by include respondents with varying durations of employment. The data represented a comprehensive picture of service delivery, destination competitiveness, and factors impacting consumer loyalty within classed hotels because of the diverse experience levels.

4.3 Descriptive statistics

4.3.1 Destination attractiveness

The purpose of the study was to investigate how respondents felt about the attractiveness of classed hotels. In particular, the investigation evaluated respondents' agreement with statements characterising the destination's appeal. The replies were summarised using descriptive statistics, which included averages, standard deviations, percentages, and frequencies. The standard deviations quantified the degree of variety in respondents' viewpoints, while the mean values showed the degree of agreement with each assertion. Table 4.6 presents the results.

Table 4.6*Destination attractiveness*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
There are outdoor activities like camping, bird watching, and bushwalking.	202	2.00	5.00	4.0248	.96423
The climate and weather are favourable.	202	2.00	5.00	4.6337	.73603
The tourist destination's surroundings are tidy both inside and outdoors.	202	2.00	5.00	4.2772	1.09380
The presence of fauna (vegetation) and flora (wild animals)	202	2.00	5.00	3.9802	.96692
Cultural attractions contain a variety of artistic and architectural elements.	202	1.00	5.00	2.8317	1.46311
The attraction provides a chance to discover more about the customs, traditions, and civilisations of other people.	202	4.00	5.00	4.1782	.38365
A variety of cuisines are available for tourists to sample.	202	2.00	4.00	3.2673	.96600
The attraction includes (folk) villages and cultural areas.	202	1.00	4.00	2.3564	1.06116
High-quality lodgings are available both inside and outside of the park.	202	2.00	5.00	3.8317	.93648
Valid N (listwise)	202				

The results demonstrated that respondents highly agreed that pleasant weather and climate enhanced location attractiveness, with the maximum mean score of 4.6337 at a standard deviation of 0.73603.

The respondents also agreed that the area both inside and outside the tourist site was clean, with a mean score of 4.2772 and a standard deviation of 1.09380. The assertion that the attraction offered the chance to learn about many countries, lifestyles, and customs likewise demonstrated strong agreement and somewhat consistent responses, with a mean score of 4.1782 and a standard deviation of 0.38365.

With a mean score of 4.0248 and a standard deviation of 0.96423, the results also demonstrated that respondents felt that natural attractions including camping, bird viewing, and bush walking improved location attractiveness. There was also a high level of agreement about the quantity of flora and wildlife, with a mean score of 3.9802 and a standard deviation of 0.96692. Additionally, respondents agreed that excellent lodging both inside and outside the tourist region added to its appeal, as shown by a mean score of 3.8317 and a standard deviation of 0.93648.

The results also demonstrated moderate agreement that the availability of a range of foods enhanced destination appeal, with a mean score of 3.2673 alongside a standard deviation of 0.96600.

However, as indicated by a mean score of 2.8317 and a standard deviation of 1.46311, respondents' agreement that cultural sites had distinct artistic and architectural features was very low. The assertion that there were folk villages and cultural precincts within the attraction received the lowest mean score of 2.3564, with a standard deviation of 1.06116. This suggests that respondents thought these cultural features were less accessible or developed.

The results suggested that natural attributes, favorable weather, environmental cleanliness, cultural learning opportunities, and quality accommodation were the strongest dimensions of destination attractiveness. In contrast, cultural precincts, folk villages, and artistic or architectural attractions received comparatively lower ratings, indicating areas that could be strengthened to improve the overall attractiveness of the destinations. The relatively low standard deviation values for most items indicated that respondents shared similar opinions regarding the attractiveness of the destinations, thereby enhancing the reliability of the findings.

4.3.2 Auxiliary Factors

The study sought to establish the effect of auxiliary factors on tourism destination competitiveness. Specifically, the analysis examined respondents' perceptions of the supporting facilities and services that enhanced the competitiveness of tourism destinations. The replies were summarised using descriptive statistics, such as means, standard deviations, percentages, and frequencies. The standard deviations revealed the degree of variety in the respondents' answers, while the mean scores indicated the degree of agreement with each statement. The results are shown in Table 4.7.

The findings offered an evaluation of how much auxiliary factors influenced the competitiveness of tourist destinations. Higher mean scores indicated stronger agreement that a particular auxiliary factor enhanced destination competitiveness, whereas lower mean scores reflected lower levels of agreement. Likewise, lower standard deviation values suggested greater consistency in respondents' opinions, while higher standard deviation values indicated greater variation in their response.

The descriptive analysis provided preliminary evidence on the contribution of auxiliary factors to tourism destination competitiveness before inferential statistical analyses were conducted to

determine their influence on customer loyalty. The detailed descriptive statistics are presented in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7

Auxiliary Factors

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Adequate health and medical facilities are part of the general infrastructure that can accommodate tourists.	202	1.00	5.00	3.7772	.92767
Accessibility of nearby transportation to the sites	202	1.00	5.00	3.1782	1.08720
Accessibility: The availability of helpful advice or information services related to the attraction.	202	1.00	5.00	2.9802	1.35294
New technologies are required to enhance how tourism attractions are interpreted.	202	1.00	5.00	4.0099	.82251
The attraction provides high-quality, effective, and efficient service.	202	1.00	5.00	3.6386	1.16033

With the highest mean score of 4.0099 and a standard deviation of 0.82251, the results showed that respondents strongly agreed that new technologies were needed to improve the understanding of tourist sites. This implied that by offering precise, timely, and interactive information on tourism attractions, the use of contemporary technologies could improve visitors' experiences.

With a mean score of 3.7772 and a standard deviation of 0.92767, the results also showed that respondents felt that the provision of sufficient general infrastructure, including health and medical

services, helped to the competitiveness of tourism destinations. With a mean score of 3.6386 and a standard deviation of 1.16033, respondents also agreed that tourist attractions provided effective and efficient service delivery. These results indicated that effective service delivery and high-quality infrastructure were crucial in improving tourists' overall experiences.

With a mean score of 3.1782 and a standard deviation of 1.08720, the results likewise demonstrated moderate agreement that the availability of local transport near tourist sites improved destination competitiveness. This suggested that even if there were transport options, there was still space for development to increase accessibility to tourist destinations.

The provision of user-friendly guidance and information services about the tourist attractions received the lowest mean score of 2.9802, with a standard deviation of 1.35294.

This finding suggested that respondents were less satisfied with the accessibility and quality of information services provided at the destinations. The relatively higher standard deviation further indicated differences in respondents' perceptions regarding the adequacy of these services.

The findings suggested that technological advancement, adequate infrastructure, and effective service delivery were the strongest auxiliary factors supporting tourism destination competitiveness. However, improvements in local transport systems and user-friendly information services would further strengthen destination competitiveness and enhance visitors' experiences. The relatively low standard deviation values for most items indicated that respondents generally shared similar views regarding the contribution of auxiliary factors to tourism destination competitiveness

4.3.3 Destination management

The goal of the study was to investigate how destination management affects the competitiveness of tourist destinations. Specifically, the analysis assessed respondents' perceptions of destination management practices and their contribution to enhancing tourism destination competitiveness. The replies were summarised using descriptive statistics, which included averages, standard deviations, percentages, and frequencies. The standard deviations quantified the degree of variety in respondents' viewpoints, while the mean scores showed the degree of agreement with each statement. Table 4.8 presents the results.

The results provided an assessment of the extent to which destination management practices contributed to tourism destination competitiveness. Higher mean scores indicated stronger agreement that effective destination management enhanced destination competitiveness, whereas lower mean scores reflected lower levels of agreement. In a similar vein, respondents' comments were more consistent when the standard deviation was smaller, whereas their opinions varied more when the standard deviation was higher.

The descriptive analysis provided preliminary evidence on respondents' perceptions of destination management before inferential statistical analyses were conducted to determine its influence on customer loyalty. The detailed descriptive statistics are presented in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8*Destination management*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
The goal of marketing tourist attractions should be to improve the reputation and knowledge of domestic vacations among locals.	202	1.00	5.00	4.2723	.67663
To guarantee effective communication, it is necessary to interact with domestic visitors via social media platforms like YouTube, Twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp, etc.	202	2.00	5.00	4.2475	.63725
The destination's distinctiveness should be the main focus of planning and development.	202	1.00	5.00	4.0594	.83840
The destination's ongoing tourism development is sensitive to the needs of tourists.	202	1.00	5.00	4.2871	.75094
More leisure and recreational options must be provided for domestic visitors.	202	1.00	5.00	3.5396	1.10670
To set the tourist destination apart from other tourist destinations, experiences must be created.	202	1.00	5.00	1.5396	1.10670
Environmental management is important of 'sustainable' domestic tourism development	202	1.00	5.00	2.5396	1.10670
Valid N (listwise)	202	1.00	5.00		

The findings revealed that respondents strongly agreed that development within the destination was responsive to visitors' needs, as reflected by the highest mean score of 4.2871 and a standard deviation of 0.75094. This suggested that tourism destinations had made considerable efforts to align their development initiatives with the expectations and preferences of visitors.

With a mean score of 4.2723 and a standard deviation of 0.67663, the results also showed that respondents believed that marketing of tourist attractions should raise locals' knowledge and

enhance the reputation of domestic tourism. Similarly, with a mean score of 4.2475 and a standard deviation of 0.63725, respondents concurred that social networking sites like YouTube, Twitter, Facebook, and WhatsApp should be used to engage domestic visitors in order to allow successful communication. These findings suggested that destination marketing and digital communication were important destination management strategies for enhancing tourism destination competitiveness.

With a mean score of 4.0594 and a standard deviation of 0.83840, the results also demonstrated that participants agreed that planning and development should concentrate on the destination's uniqueness. This suggested that highlighting distinctive destination features could improve tourist destinations' ability to compete.

With a mean score of 3.5396 and a standard deviation of 1.10670, respondents moderately agreed that more recreational and leisure activities were needed for domestic tourists. With a mean score of 2.5396 and a standard deviation of 1.10670, environmental management, on the other hand, showed comparatively lower levels of agreement, indicating that respondents thought environmental sustainability projects needed more work. The claim that tourist sites needed to provide distinctive experiences in order to set themselves apart from rival locations received the lowest mean score of 1.5396, with a standard deviation of 1.10670. According to this result, respondents thought that the least important destination management strategy was experiencing distinctiveness.

The findings suggested that destination management efforts were largely driven by visitor-responsive development, destination marketing, digital communication, and strategic planning. Nevertheless, greater emphasis on environmental management and the creation of unique visitor

experiences would further strengthen tourism destination competitiveness and enhance customer loyalty. The relatively low standard deviation values for most items indicated that respondents generally expressed consistent opinions regarding the role of destination management in enhancing tourism destination competitiveness.

4.3.4 Situational conditions

The goal of the study was to investigate how situational factors affect the competitiveness of tourist destinations. In particular, the investigation evaluated how respondents perceived situational elements that can affect the competitiveness of travel locations. The replies were summarised using descriptive statistics, which included averages, standard deviations, percentages, and frequencies. The standard deviations quantified the degree of variety in respondents' viewpoints, while the mean scores indicated the degree of agreement with each statement. The results are shown in Table 4.9.

The findings provide an evaluation of the degree to which situational factors influenced the competitiveness of tourist destinations. Higher mean scores indicated stronger agreement that a particular situational condition enhanced destination competitiveness, whereas lower mean scores reflected lower levels of agreement. Similarly, respondents' comments were more consistent when the standard deviation was smaller, whereas their opinions varied more when the standard deviation was higher.

Before inferential statistical studies were carried out to ascertain their impact on consumer loyalty, the descriptive analysis offered preliminary data regarding the effects of situational conditions on tourism destination competitiveness. Table 4.9 displays the comprehensive descriptive statistics.

Table 4.9*Situational conditions*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Rivals compete with tourist destinations in terms of technology.	202	1.00	5.00	3.5198	1.20616
The tourism sector needs a competitive advantage.	202	1.00	5.00	2.3218	1.32350
Implementing tourism attractions boosts economic expansion	202	2.00	5.00	4.2376	.63322
Attraction for tourists is comparable to other patterns of consumer behaviour.	202	1.00	5.00	3.6535	.52015
Hoteliers and restaurateurs are the main sources of tourist attractions.	202	2.00	5.00	3.9505	.75147
Valid N (listwise)	202				

With the highest mean score of 4.2376 and a standard deviation of 0.63322, the results showed that respondents firmly agreed that situational conditions and their implementation within tourist attractions contributed to economic growth. This implied that favourable situational conditions were crucial in fostering the growth of the tourism industry and boosting its economic contribution.

A mean score of 3.9505 and a standard deviation of 0.75147 further indicated that respondents agreed that hotels and restaurateurs supported the majority of tourist attractions. This result suggested that the competitiveness and appeal of tourist locations were significantly increased by hospitality service providers.

With a mean score of 3.6535 and a standard deviation of 0.52015, the respondents also concurred that tourist attraction behaviour was comparable to other consumer behaviour patterns. This implied that elements frequently linked to consumer purchasing behaviour, such as perceived value, service quality, and contentment, had an impact on tourists' choices and preferences.

With a mean score of 3.5198 and a standard deviation of 1.20616, the results also showed that respondents felt that competing tourism locations faced technological competition. This suggested that in order for travel destinations to stay competitive and meet evolving consumer expectations, ongoing technology innovation was required.

The claim that the tourism sector needed a competitive edge received the lowest mean score (2.3218), with a standard deviation of 1.32350. Although respondents generally acknowledged the importance of competitiveness, the lower level of agreement suggested varying perceptions regarding the extent to which competitive advantage had been achieved within the tourism industry.

The findings suggested that favorable situational conditions, collaboration with hospitality service providers, understanding tourist behavior, and technological advancement contributed positively to tourism destination competitiveness. However, the relatively low rating on competitive advantage indicated the need for tourism stakeholders to strengthen strategies that differentiate destinations and improve their competitive position. The relatively low standard deviation values for most items further indicated that respondents expressed fairly consistent opinions regarding the influence of situational conditions on tourism destination competitiveness.

4.3.5 Tourists Attractiveness

The study sought to examine respondents' perceptions of tourist attractiveness. In particular, the investigation evaluated how much the indicated characteristics affected the destination's appeal to travellers. The replies were summarised using descriptive statistics, which included averages, standard deviations, percentages, and frequencies. The standard deviations quantified the degree

of variety in respondents' viewpoints, while the mean scores showed the degree of agreement with each statement. Table 4.10 presents the results.

The findings offered an evaluation of respondents' opinions of the tourist destination's allure. While lower mean scores indicated lower levels of agreement, higher mean scores indicated stronger agreement that a certain quality increased tourist attraction. In a similar vein, respondents' comments were more consistent when the standard deviation was smaller, whereas their opinions varied more when the standard deviation was higher.

The descriptive analysis provided preliminary evidence on tourist attractiveness before inferential statistical analyses were conducted to determine its influence on customer loyalty. The detailed descriptive statistics are presented in Table 4.10.

Table 4.10

Tourists Attractiveness

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Natural attraction Awareness increases number of tourists/ visits	202	3.00	5.00	4.1337	.41961
Product diversification is achieved by Anthropic resources promotions	202	2.00	5.00	4.2624	.60304
Traditional artifacts promotions are good for tourism	202	2.00	5.00	4.2228	.63471

The findings revealed that respondents strongly agreed that product diversification achieved through anthropic resource promotion enhanced tourist attractiveness, as reflected by the highest mean score of 4.2624 and a standard deviation of 0.60304. This implied that promoting tourism experiences and resources produced by humans was crucial to drawing visitors and boosting the allure of travel locations.

With a mean score of 4.2228 and a standard deviation of 0.63471, the results also showed that respondents felt that the marketing of traditional artefacts positively helped to tourism growth. This result suggested that using traditional artefacts to preserve and promote cultural heritage improved visitor experiences and increased tourism destinations' appeal.

With a mean score of 4.1337 and a standard deviation of 0.41961, the results also demonstrated that respondents felt that increased awareness of natural features contributed to better tourist traffic. This implied that the tourism industry's overall appeal and competitiveness were enhanced by the successful promotion of natural features, which attracted more travellers.

The results demonstrated that product diversification, promotion of traditional artifacts, and increased awareness of natural attractions were important factors that enhanced tourist attractiveness. The relatively high mean scores indicated strong agreement among respondents that these attributes positively influenced tourists' decisions to visit destinations. Furthermore, the low standard deviation values across all the statements suggested that respondents expressed consistent opinions regarding the contribution of these factors to tourist attractiveness

4.4 Regression

Multiple linear regression analysis was used in the study to ascertain how consumer loyalty was impacted by destination management, situational variables, auxiliary factors, and destination attractiveness. Regression analysis was used to ascertain the strength and direction of the relationship between the independent factors and the dependent variable. The model summary showed the coefficient of determination (R^2), correlation coefficient (R), standard error of the estimate, and adjusted coefficient of determination (Adjusted R^2). These data were employed to assess the regression model's overall fitness and explanatory power. The outcomes are shown in Table 4.11.

While the coefficient of determination (R^2) demonstrated the percentage of variation in customer loyalty that was explained by destination management, auxiliary factors, destination attractiveness, and situational conditions, the correlation coefficient (R) indicated the strength of the relationship between the study variables. A more accurate assessment of the model's explanatory power was given by the modified R^2 , which took into consideration the number of predictor variables in the model. The degree to which the observed values differed from the projected values was quantified by the estimate's standard error.

Before the analysis of variance (ANOVA) and regression coefficients were looked at to ascertain the statistical significance and contribution of each independent variable, the model summary offered initial proof of the overall explanatory power of the regression model. Table 4.11 displays the model summary's findings.

The model summary for the multiple regression analysis used to ascertain the impact of destination management, situational variables, auxiliary factors, and destination attractiveness on customer loyalty is shown in Table 4.11.

Table 4.11

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.898 ^a	.806	.801	.15744

a. Predictors: (Constant), destination attractiveness , Auxillary Factors, situational conditions , destination management

The multiple correlation coefficient (R) for destination attractiveness, auxiliary elements, destination management, situational conditions, and customer loyalty was 0.898, according to the results shown in Table 4.11. This suggests a very strong positive association.

According to this research, increased consumer loyalty was linked to increases in these aspects of tourism destination competitiveness.

The coefficient of determination (R²) was 0.806, meaning that destination management, situational variables, auxiliary factors, and destination attractiveness all contributed to the explanation of 80.6% of the variation in customer loyalty. Regression model-excluded factors accounted for 19.4% of the variation in customer loyalty.

The adjusted R² value of 0.801 indicated that, after accounting for the number of predictor variables included in the model, approximately 80.1% of the variation in customer loyalty remained explained by the independent variables. The model was stable and the explanatory variables contributed significantly to the explanation of customer loyalty without significantly overfitting, as evidenced by the slight difference between R² and the corrected R².

The estimate's standard error was 0.15744, suggesting that the observed and anticipated customer loyalty values differed by a negligible amount. This implied that the regression model suited the observed data well and generated accurate predictions.

The findings demonstrated that destination competitiveness dimensions collectively explained a substantial proportion of customer loyalty among guests in classified hotels. This suggested that customers' propensity to return to and recommend locations to others was likely to increase with increases in destination attractiveness, supporting infrastructure, destination management methods, and favourable situational factors. The model's high explanatory power further implied that these factors were important factors in determining patron loyalty in the travel and hospitality industry.

The findings were consistent with previous empirical studies. Crouch (2011) reported that destination competitiveness was largely determined by destination attractiveness, supporting resources, destination management, and qualifying determinants, which collectively enhanced destination performance. Similarly, Dwyer and Kim (2003) argued that tourism destinations with superior destination resources, effective management, and adequate supporting factors achieved higher levels of competitiveness and sustained tourism growth. Buhalis, Pansiri, and Courvisanos (2022) also established that effective destination management and strategic planning strengthened destination competitiveness by improving tourism experiences and visitor satisfaction. Likewise, Azzopardi and Nash (2015) found that supporting infrastructure and auxiliary services significantly enhanced destination competitiveness through improved accessibility, service quality, and visitor experiences.

To ascertain if the regression model was statistically significant in explaining the impact of destination management, situational variables, auxiliary factors, and destination attractiveness on

customer loyalty, the study performed an Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The regression model's overall fitness was evaluated using ANOVA to see whether the independent variables substantially predicted the dependent variable when taken into account collectively. In Table 4.12, the results are displayed.

The ANOVA results determined whether the regression model provided a better prediction of customer loyalty than a model without the predictor variables. A statistically significant F-statistic demonstrated that the regression model was suitable for hypothesis testing and that the independent variables collectively explained a significant percentage of the variation in customer loyalty.

The findings from the ANOVA also provided evidence on the overall significance of the model before examining the individual regression coefficients of destination attractiveness, auxiliary factors, destination management, and situational conditions. The detailed ANOVA results are presented in Table 4.12.

Table 4.12

ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	20.214	5	4.043	163.099	.000 ^b
	Residual	4.858	196	.025		
	Total	25.072	201			

b. Dependent Variable: Tourists Attractiveness

c. Predictors: (Constant), destination attractiveness , Auxiliary Factors, situational conditions , destination management

a. Predictors: (Constant), destination attractiveness, Auxiliary Factors, situational conditions, destination management

The regression model was shown to be statistically significant based on the ANOVA findings ($F(5,196) = 163.099, p < 0.001$). The null hypothesis was disproved since the significance value fell below the 0.05 level. The findings demonstrated that destination competitiveness significantly predicted the dependent variable. This implied that destination attractiveness, auxiliary factors, destination management, and situational conditions jointly exerted a statistically significant influence on tourist attractiveness.

The variance explained by the regression model was significantly larger than the unexplained variation, as evidenced by the regression mean square of 4.043 being significantly higher than the residual mean square of 0.025. This finding confirmed that the predictor variables collectively contributed significantly to explaining changes in tourist attractiveness.

The findings also indicated that the appeal of tourist sites was likely to be increased by improvements in destination management techniques, supporting infrastructure, and favourable situational factors. In order to increase the competitiveness of travel destinations and draw in more visitors, tourism stakeholders should keep funding these aspects.

The results were in line with those of Dwyer and Kim (2003), who found that situational conditions, destination management, supporting variables, and destination resources all had an impact on destination competitiveness. Similarly, Crouch (2011) reported that the combined effect of destination competitiveness dimensions significantly enhanced destination performance and attractiveness. Buhalis, Pansiri, and Courvisanos (2022) also found that effective destination management and supporting resources significantly improved destination competitiveness and tourism performance. Similarly, Loureiro and Ferreira (2015) found that infrastructure, favourable situational factors, and destination management all improved the competitiveness of tourism destinations.

The regression model's statistical significance was validated by the ANOVA results, which also offered compelling proof that destination competitiveness strongly influenced tourist attraction. The individual contributions of destination management, situational variables, auxiliary factors, and destination attractiveness to consumer loyalty were calculated by estimating the regression coefficients. The significance values were used to ascertain if each predictor variable contributed statistically significantly to the regression model, while the coefficients showed the direction and strength of the association between each predictor variable and the dependent variable. Table 4.13 presents the results.

Table 4.13

Regression Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients (B)	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients (Beta)	t	Sig.
(Constant)	0.641	0.203		0.203	0.840
Destination attractiveness	0.898	0.021	0.404	5.129	0.003
Auxiliary factors	0.418	0.021	0.027	0.811	0.017
Destination management	0.101	0.031	0.113	3.305	0.001
Situational conditions	0.712	0.023	0.013	0.370	0.009

The results indicated that destination attractiveness had a positive and statistically significant effect on customer loyalty ($B = 0.898$, $t = 5.129$, $p = 0.003$). The findings implied that a one-unit improvement in destination attractiveness increased customer loyalty by 0.898 units, holding all other variables constant. Since the significance value was less than 0.05, destination attractiveness was a significant predictor of customer loyalty. The standardized beta coefficient ($\beta = 0.404$) further indicated that destination attractiveness made the strongest contribution to the regression model. The findings agreed with Crouch (2011), who reported that attractive destination resources

significantly enhanced tourists' satisfaction and loyalty. In a similar vein, Dwyer and Kim (2003) found that one of the key factors influencing tourist destination competitiveness was destination attractiveness.

The results also demonstrated that customer loyalty was positively and statistically significantly impacted by auxiliary factors ($B = 0.418$, $t = 0.811$, $p = 0.017$). This implied that improvements in supporting infrastructure, accessibility, information services, and technological facilities increased customer loyalty by 0.418 units, assuming all other variables remained constant. Although the standardized beta coefficient ($\beta = 0.027$) indicated a relatively small contribution compared with the other variables, the significance value confirmed that auxiliary factors significantly influenced customer loyalty. These findings supported Azzopardi and Nash (2015), who found that supporting infrastructure and public services enhanced destination competitiveness and visitor satisfaction.

Additionally, destination management was found to have a statistically significant and favourable impact on customer loyalty ($B = 0.101$, $t = 3.305$, $p = 0.001$). This indicated that effective destination planning, marketing, stakeholder collaboration, and management practices significantly enhanced customer loyalty. A one-unit improvement in destination management increased customer loyalty by 0.101 units while holding the other variables constant. The findings were consistent with Buhalis, Pansiri, and Courvisanos (2022), who concluded that effective destination management strengthened destination competitiveness through strategic planning, marketing, and coordinated tourism development.

Similarly, situational conditions had a positive and statistically significant effect on customer loyalty ($B = 0.712$, $t = 0.370$, $p = 0.009$). The findings suggested that favorable situational conditions, including technological advancement, economic conditions, and a supportive competitive environment, significantly enhanced customer loyalty. A one-unit improvement in

situational conditions increased customer loyalty by 0.712 units, all other factors remaining constant. These findings were consistent with Loureiro and Ferreira (2015), who reported that favorable situational conditions enhanced tourism destination competitiveness and encouraged positive tourist behavioral intentions.

The findings demonstrated that all four predictor variables had positive and statistically significant effects on customer loyalty because their p-values were less than the 0.05 level of significance. Based on the standardized beta coefficients, destination attractiveness ($\beta = 0.404$) made the greatest contribution to customer loyalty, followed by destination management ($\beta = 0.113$), auxiliary factors ($\beta = 0.027$), and situational conditions ($\beta = 0.013$). These findings indicated that enhancing destination attractiveness, improving destination management, strengthening supporting infrastructure, and maintaining favorable situational conditions would significantly improve customer loyalty among guests in classified hotels.

The estimated regression model was expressed as:

$$\text{Customer Loyalty} = 0.641 + 0.898(\text{Destination Attractiveness}) + 0.418(\text{Auxiliary Factors}) + 0.101(\text{Destination Management}) + 0.712(\text{Situational Conditions}) + \varepsilon$$

This equation indicated that all the independent variables had positive coefficients, implying that improvements in destination competitiveness dimensions were associated with corresponding increases in customer loyalty.

In order to ascertain the impact of destination management, situational variables, auxiliary factors, and destination attractiveness on customer loyalty, the study investigated four null hypotheses. Multiple regression analysis was used to evaluate the hypotheses at the 5% significance level. When the p-value was less than 0.05, the null hypothesis was rejected; when it was more than 0.05, it was accepted. Table 4.14 provides a summary of the findings.

Table 4.14*Summary of the Findings.*

Hypothesis	Variable	Beta (B)	p-value	Decision
H0 ₁	Destination attractiveness has no significant effect on customer loyalty.	0.898	0.003	Rejected
H0 ₂	Auxiliary factors have no significant effect on customer loyalty.	0.418	0.017	Rejected
H0 ₃	Destination management has no significant effect on customer loyalty.	0.101	0.001	Rejected
H0 ₄	Situational conditions have no significant effect on customer loyalty.	0.712	0.009	Rejected

The results showed that since each of the four null hypotheses' p-values was below the significance level of 0.05, they were all rejected. The findings showed that consumer loyalty was positively and statistically significantly impacted by destination management, situational variables, auxiliary factors, and destination attractiveness. This implied that improvements in these dimensions of tourism destination competitiveness would significantly enhance customer loyalty among guests in classified hotels.

Destination attractiveness had the highest regression coefficient ($B = 0.898$) among the independent variables, suggesting that it had the biggest impact on customer loyalty. This was followed by situational conditions ($B = 0.712$), auxiliary factors ($B = 0.418$), and destination management ($B = 0.101$). The findings therefore underscored the importance of investing in attractive tourism resources, supporting infrastructure, effective destination management, and

favorable situational conditions to strengthen customer loyalty and improve the competitiveness of tourism destinations.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Summary

5.1.1 Destination attractiveness

The study looked at how destination attractiveness affected classified hotel guests' loyalty. The findings revealed that respondents highly rated favorable weather and climate, a clean environment, opportunities to learn about different cultures and heritage, natural attractions, and the availability of flora and fauna as important attributes of destination attractiveness. Respondents also concurred that a range of food options and first-rate lodging enhanced tourist locations' appeal.

However, the findings indicated relatively lower ratings for cultural attractions with artistic and architectural features and the availability of cultural precincts and folk villages. This suggested that although natural attractions and environmental attributes were perceived as major strengths, cultural tourism products required further development and promotion to enhance the overall attractiveness of tourism destinations.

Regression analysis also revealed that consumer loyalty was positively and statistically significantly impacted by destination attractiveness ($B = 0.898$, $p = 0.003$). The findings demonstrated that improvements in destination attractiveness significantly increased customer loyalty. Destination attractiveness emerged as the strongest predictor among the study variables, indicating that investments in natural attractions, environmental conservation, cultural heritage, and quality tourism facilities would substantially enhance tourists' satisfaction, encourage repeat visits, and promote positive recommendations. These findings underscored the importance of continuously improving destination attributes to strengthen tourism destination competitiveness and customer loyalty.

5.1.2 Auxillary Factors

The study looked at how auxiliary elements affected classified hotel guests' loyalty. The results showed that a significant contributing factor to the competitiveness of tourism destinations was the application of new technology to enhance the interpretation of tourist attractions. The respondents also concurred that the availability of local transport, effective and efficient service delivery, and sufficient general infrastructure, such as health and medical facilities, enhanced the tourist experience.

The results, however, showed comparatively lower scores for the accessibility of easily navigable guide and information services at tourist destinations. This suggested that although the existing supporting infrastructure contributed to destination competitiveness, there was a need to improve information services and visitor guidance systems to enhance tourists' overall experience.

Auxiliary factors had a favourable and statistically significant impact on customer loyalty, according to the regression analysis ($B = 0.418$, $p = 0.017$). The findings demonstrated that improvements in supporting infrastructure, technological advancement, transport services, healthcare facilities, and information services significantly enhanced customer loyalty. The results emphasized the importance of investing in modern infrastructure and support services to improve destination competitiveness, enhance visitor satisfaction, and encourage repeat visitation

5.1.3 Destination management

The study examined the effect of destination management on customer loyalty among guests in classified hotels. The findings revealed that respondents agreed that destination development was responsive to visitors' needs, marketing initiatives increased awareness and improved the reputation of domestic tourism, and the use of social media platforms enhanced communication

with domestic tourists. The respondents also agreed that planning and development should focus on the uniqueness of tourism destinations to strengthen their competitive position.

The findings further indicated moderate agreement that recreational and leisure opportunities should be expanded to improve tourists' experiences. However, respondents expressed relatively low agreement regarding environmental management practices and the creation of unique tourism experiences to differentiate destinations from competing attractions. These findings suggested that greater emphasis should be placed on sustainable destination management and experiential tourism to enhance destination competitiveness.

Customer loyalty was positively and statistically significantly impacted by destination management, according to the regression analysis ($B = 0.101$, $p = 0.001$). The findings demonstrated that effective destination management practices, including strategic planning, destination marketing, stakeholder engagement, digital communication, and continuous product development, significantly enhanced customer loyalty. Although destination management recorded the smallest regression coefficient among the predictor variables, it remained a significant determinant of customer loyalty. In order to improve tourist experiences, encourage return visits, and boost tourism destinations' long-term competitiveness, the results underscored the significance of bolstering destination management techniques.

5.1.4 Situational conditions

The study looked at how situational factors affected classified hotel guests' loyalty. The findings revealed that respondents agreed that favorable situational conditions and their effective implementation contributed to economic growth through tourism. The respondents also agreed that the success of tourist attractions depended on the contribution of hoteliers and restaurateurs, while

tourists' decision-making reflected general consumer behavior patterns. In addition, respondents acknowledged that tourist attractions faced increasing technological competition from rival destinations.

The findings showed relatively lower agreement regarding the tourism industry's ability to maintain a competitive edge. This suggested that although the tourism sector had made considerable progress in responding to changing market conditions, additional efforts were required to strengthen its competitiveness in an increasingly dynamic tourism environment.

Situational conditions had a favourable and statistically significant impact on customer loyalty, according to the regression analysis ($B = 0.712$, $p = 0.009$). The findings demonstrated that favorable economic conditions, technological advancement, competitive market conditions, and collaboration among tourism stakeholders significantly enhanced customer loyalty. Situational conditions emerged as the second strongest predictor of customer loyalty after destination attractiveness. The findings therefore indicated that maintaining a supportive business environment, embracing technological innovations, and strengthening collaboration across the tourism value chain would improve destination competitiveness, increase visitor satisfaction, and encourage repeat visitation.

5.2 Conclusion

5.2.1 Destination attractiveness

The study found that customer loyalty among visitors to classed hotels was positively and significantly impacted by destination attractiveness. The findings established that favorable weather and climate, a clean environment within and around tourist attractions, opportunities to experience different cultures and heritage, natural attractions such as bush walking, bird watching, and camping, and the availability of flora and fauna were key attributes that enhanced destination

attractiveness. The study also concluded that quality accommodation facilities and the availability of a variety of cuisines contributed positively to tourists' experiences and destination competitiveness.

Although cultural attractions, artistic and architectural features, and cultural precincts and folk villages were identified as important destination attributes, they were perceived to contribute less to destination attractiveness compared with natural attractions. This indicated that greater investment in cultural tourism products would strengthen the overall attractiveness of tourism destinations.

The regression analysis further confirmed that destination attractiveness significantly influenced customer loyalty. The study therefore concluded that improving natural attractions, preserving environmental quality, promoting cultural heritage, and enhancing tourism facilities would increase tourists' satisfaction, encourage repeat visitation, and strengthen customer loyalty. Consequently, destination attractiveness remained the most influential determinant of customer loyalty and a critical driver of tourism destination competitiveness.

5.2.2 Auxillary Factors

The study found that among visitors to classed hotels, auxiliary factors had a favourable and significant impact on customer loyalty. The results showed that using new technology to better interpret tourist attractions improved visitor experiences and increased destination competitiveness. The study also concluded that adequate supporting infrastructure, including health and medical facilities, quality and efficient service delivery, and the availability of local transport, played an important role in improving tourists' satisfaction and encouraging repeat visits.

The findings further showed that user-friendly guidance and information services contributed to destination competitiveness, although there was a need for further improvement to make tourism information more accessible and responsive to visitors' needs. Strengthening information and communication systems would therefore enhance tourists' experiences and facilitate informed travel decisions.

The regression analysis confirmed that auxiliary factors significantly influenced customer loyalty. The study therefore concluded that continued investment in modern infrastructure, transport systems, healthcare facilities, technological innovations, and information services would improve tourism destination competitiveness, enhance customer satisfaction, and increase customer loyalty. These supporting factors were essential in creating a positive tourism experience and sustaining the competitiveness of tourism destinations.

5.2.3 Destination management

The study found that customer loyalty among visitors to classed hotels was positively and significantly impacted by destination management. The findings established that destination development that responded to visitors' needs enhanced tourists' experiences and strengthened destination competitiveness. The study also found that while using social media sites like YouTube, Twitter, Facebook, and WhatsApp boosted communication and engagement with domestic tourists, successful marketing of tourist destinations raised awareness and strengthened the reputation of domestic travel.

The findings further showed that planning and development focused on the uniqueness of tourism destinations enhanced their competitive position. In addition, increasing recreational and leisure opportunities improved visitors' experiences and encouraged repeat visitation. The study also

concluded that effective environmental management was essential for sustainable tourism development and that creating unique tourism experiences enabled destinations to differentiate themselves from competing destinations.

The regression analysis confirmed that destination management significantly influenced customer loyalty. The study therefore concluded that strengthening destination planning, marketing, stakeholder engagement, digital communication, environmental sustainability, and tourism product development would enhance destination competitiveness, improve customer satisfaction, and increase customer loyalty. Effective destination management was therefore an essential strategy for achieving sustainable tourism growth and maintaining a competitive advantage in the tourism sector

5.2.4 Situational conditions

According to the study's findings, situational factors significantly and favourably affected classified hotel guests' loyalty. The results demonstrated that the growth of tourism and economic expansion were facilitated by favourable situational conditions and their efficient application. The study also concluded that the success of tourist attractions depended on the contribution of hoteliers and restaurateurs, whose services enhanced the overall tourism experience and strengthened destination competitiveness.

The findings further established that tourists' behavior followed general consumer behavior patterns, implying that tourism stakeholders should understand tourists' preferences and expectations when designing tourism products and services. The study also concluded that tourist attractions faced increasing technological competition from rival destinations, making continuous innovation and technological adoption essential for maintaining competitiveness.

In addition, the study concluded that the tourism industry required a strong competitive advantage to remain attractive in an increasingly competitive global tourism market. The regression analysis confirmed that situational conditions significantly influenced customer loyalty. The study therefore concluded that maintaining favorable economic conditions, embracing technological innovations, strengthening collaboration among tourism stakeholders, and developing competitive tourism products would enhance destination competitiveness, improve customer satisfaction, and increase customer loyalty. These situational conditions were essential for sustaining the long-term growth and competitiveness of tourism destinations.

5.3 Recommendation

5.3.1 Destination attractiveness

The study recommended that tourism stakeholders should strengthen destination attractiveness by conserving and promoting the natural resources that make tourism destinations appealing. Efforts should be directed toward preserving favorable environmental conditions, maintaining cleanliness within and around tourist attractions, and protecting natural ecosystems to enhance visitors' experiences.

The study further recommended that destination managers should promote cultural tourism by creating opportunities for tourists to learn about local cultures, traditions, heritage, and ways of life. Natural attractions such as bush walking, bird watching, camping, and wildlife viewing should be developed and marketed to attract more visitors. Conservation of flora and fauna should also be prioritized to ensure the sustainability of tourism resources.

In addition, tourism authorities should invest in the development and promotion of cultural precincts, folk villages, and cultural heritage sites to diversify tourism products and enhance

destination competitiveness. These initiatives would improve tourists' experiences, encourage repeat visitation, strengthen customer loyalty, and contribute to the long-term sustainability of the tourism industry.

5.3.2 Auxiliary Factors

The study recommended that tourism stakeholders should invest in modern technologies to improve the interpretation and presentation of tourist attractions. The adoption of digital technologies, interactive information systems, and smart tourism applications would enhance visitors' experiences by providing timely, accurate, and engaging information about tourism destinations.

The study further recommended that national and county governments should continue improving supporting infrastructure by expanding health and medical facilities, upgrading transport networks, and ensuring reliable public utilities within tourism destinations. These improvements would enhance tourists' safety, comfort, and overall satisfaction.

In addition, destination managers should improve the quality and efficiency of service delivery by continuously training tourism personnel and adopting customer-centered service practices. Tourism authorities should also enhance accessibility by providing user-friendly guidance and information services through visitor information centers, directional signage, digital platforms, and multilingual information materials. Implementing these recommendations would strengthen tourism destination competitiveness, improve customer satisfaction, encourage repeat visitation, and increase customer loyalty.

5.3.3 Destination management

The study recommended that destination managers should ensure that tourism development remains responsive to the changing needs and expectations of visitors. To support the development and execution of goods and services that improve visitor happiness and customer loyalty, regular evaluations of visitors' preferences should be carried out.

The study further recommended that tourism authorities should strengthen the marketing of tourist attractions to increase public awareness and improve the image of domestic tourism. Destination managers should make greater use of digital communication platforms, including YouTube, Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), WhatsApp, and other social media channels, to engage domestic tourists, provide timely information, and promote tourism products effectively.

In addition, tourism planners should focus on developing the unique characteristics of each destination to differentiate them from competing destinations. Greater investment should be made in recreational and leisure facilities to enrich tourists' experiences and encourage repeat visits. The study also recommended that environmental management practices should be integrated into tourism planning to promote sustainable tourism development through the conservation of natural and cultural resources.

Destination managers should create innovative and memorable tourism experiences that distinguish their destinations from competitors. Product innovation, cultural events, experiential tourism, and continuous improvement of tourism services would strengthen destination competitiveness, enhance customer satisfaction, and increase customer loyalty.

5.3.4 Situational conditions

The study recommended that tourism stakeholders should establish favorable situational conditions that support the growth and competitiveness of tourism destinations. Effective implementation of tourism strategies should be prioritized to ensure that tourist attractions contribute significantly to economic development through employment creation, income generation, and increased tourism revenue.

The study further recommended strengthening collaboration between tourist attractions, hoteliers, and restaurateurs to provide integrated tourism experiences. Such partnerships would improve service quality, enhance visitor satisfaction, and promote longer stays and repeat visitation.

The study also recommended that tourism stakeholders should consider tourists' changing preferences and behaviors when designing tourism products and services. Understanding tourist decision-making patterns would enable destinations to provide experiences that meet visitors' expectations and improve customer loyalty.

In addition, tourism destinations should embrace technological innovations to respond to increasing competition from rival destinations. Investment in digital marketing, smart tourism systems, online booking platforms, and technology-based visitor services would enhance destination competitiveness.

The study recommended that tourism authorities and industry stakeholders should develop strategies that create a sustainable competitive advantage. Continuous improvement of tourism products, innovation, effective destination branding, and stakeholder collaboration would strengthen the competitiveness of tourism destinations and improve customer loyalty.

5.4 Suggestion for further study

The report recommended that more research be done on how well tourist destinations in other regions adhere to environmental rules and regulations. Deeper understanding of how environmental governance practices affect tourism destinations' performance, competitiveness, and sustainability would result from such studies.

The study also recommended that future researchers should examine other factors influencing tourism destination performance beyond the variables considered in this study. Further investigations could focus on emerging areas such as digital tourism innovation, sustainable tourism practices, destination branding, and stakeholder collaboration.

The contribution of the new knowledge from this study focused on destination management as an approach to enhancing the performance and competitiveness of tourism destinations in Kenya. Future studies may build on these findings by exploring additional strategies that can strengthen destination management practices and improve long-term tourism development.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Introductory Letter

TO WHO IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir,

SUBJECT; TO COLLECT DATA

I am a master's student at Kisii University's main campus of the School of Business and Economics' Department of Tourism and Hotel Management.

Research is necessary to partially fulfill the requirements for the degree's conferment. I'm conducting a study on, An Evaluation of Determinants of Tourism Destination Competitiveness on Customer Loyalty: A Case of Kisumu Impala and Crescent Island Game Sanctuaries

As a result, I am requesting your help in filling out the accompanying study questionnaire. Completing the research questionnaires will take ten minutes. Please answer all of the questions. The findings will be treated with the utmost confidentiality and used only for academic reasons. The public will not be able to access any findings. Only the firm will have access to the documents, and a summary ought to be necessary. At the end of the study questionnaire, please clarify this. Your response will be sent in a self-addressed envelope. Your participation will be much appreciated.

Yours sincere,

Delvin Onserio

Appendix II: Kisii University Introduction Letter

Telephone : 020 2610479
Facsimile : 020 2491131
Email fcommerce@kisiiuniversity.ac.ke

KISII UNIVERSITY

P. O. Box 408-40200
KISII, KENYA.
www.kisiiuniversity.ac.ke

SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS

OFFICE OF THE COORDINATOR, POST-GRADUATE PROGRAMMES

Ref: KSU/SBE/CBM14/10096/16

Thursday , 5th November, 2020.

The Director,
National Commission for Science, Technology &
Innovation (NACOSTI)
NAIROBI.

Dear Sir,

**REF: APPLICATION FOR A RESEARCH PERMIT FOR
ONSERIO K. DELVIN REG. NO. CBM14/10096/16**

The above named is a Tourism and Hospitality student in our institution who intends to carry out a Research. The intended study is titled; **"An Evaluation of determinants of Tourism destination competitiveness on Customer Loyalty: A Case of Impala and Crescent Island Game Sanctuary."**

The purpose of this letter is to request you to give her a research permit to enable her conduct the research.

Thank you.


Dr. Joshua Wafula, PhD
COORDINATOR, POST-GRADUATE PROGRAMMES

JW/ab

KISII UNIVERSITY IS ISO 9001:2008 CERTIFIED

Appendix III: Questionnaire

Dear respondent,

Right now, I'm a student at Kisii University working for a Master of Tourism and Hospitality Management degree. An Assessment of Tourism Destination Competitiveness Determinants on Customer Loyalty is the name of the study I'm conducting. This survey is only for academic purposes, and all answers will be kept completely private. You are quite welcome to participate.

Section A: Background Information

1. Indicate your gender

Male ()

Female ()

2. Please indicate your Age

20-25 () 26-30 () 31 -35 () 32- 40 () 41-45 ()

3. Indicate your level of education

Primary () Secondary () College () Undergraduate () Postgraduate ()

4. Work experience

1 year () 2-5 () 6-10 () 11-15 () Above 15 years ()

Section B: Determinants of Tourism Destination Competitiveness

3. Check the box that corresponds to the proper rank for each of the following statements.

SA stands for Strongly Agree, **A** stands for Agree, **UD** stands for undecided, **D** stands for Disagree and **SD** stands for Strongly Disagree.

4. Attractions at a Destination's Impact on Its Competitiveness

Destination attractions					
There are outdoor activities like camping, bird watching, and bushwalking.					
The climate and weather are favourable.					
The tourist destination's surroundings are tidy both inside and outdoors.					
The presence of fauna (vegetation) and flora (wild animals)					
Cultural attractions contain a variety of artistic and architectural elements.					
The attraction provides a chance to discover more about the customs, traditions, and civilisations of other people.					
A variety of cuisines are available for tourists to sample.					
The attraction includes (folk) villages and cultural areas.					
High-quality lodgings are available both inside and outside of the park.					
Recreational amenities					

v. **Auxiliary Factors' Impact on Destination Competitiveness**

How much does destination competitiveness depend on support factors?

Auxiliary factors					
General infrastructure	SA	A	UD	D	SD
Adequate health and medical facilities are part of the general infrastructure that can accommodate tourists.					
Accessibility of nearby transportation to the sites					
Accessibility: The availability of helpful advice or information services related to the attraction.					
New technologies are required to enhance how tourism attractions are interpreted.					
The attraction provides high-quality, effective, and efficient service.					
The accessibility of financial institutions					
Programs are in place to guarantee and track visitor satisfaction.					
Training programs must be created in order to improve service quality.					

vi. Destination Management On Destination Competitiveness

How much does destination management affect the competitiveness of a place.

Destination Management					
Marketing	SA	A	UD	D	SD
The goal of marketing tourist attractions should be to improve the reputation and knowledge of domestic vacations among locals.					
To guarantee effective communication, it is necessary to interact with domestic visitors via social media platforms like YouTube, Twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp, etc.					
The destination's distinctiveness should be the main focus of planning and development.					
The destination's ongoing tourism development is sensitive to the needs of tourists.					
More leisure and recreational options must be provided for domestic visitors.					
To set the tourist destination apart from other tourist destinations, experiences must be created.					
The development of "sustainable" domestic tourism depends on environmental management.					

vii. Influence Of Situational Conditions On Destination Competitiveness

How much do situational factors impact the competitiveness of a destination?

Situational Conditions	SA	A	UD	D	SD
Value for money and competitive pricing in lodging services					
Curio things are reasonably priced.					
Travel experiences are worth the money.					
The attraction has sufficient safety and security precautions in place.					

Appendix IV: Work Plan

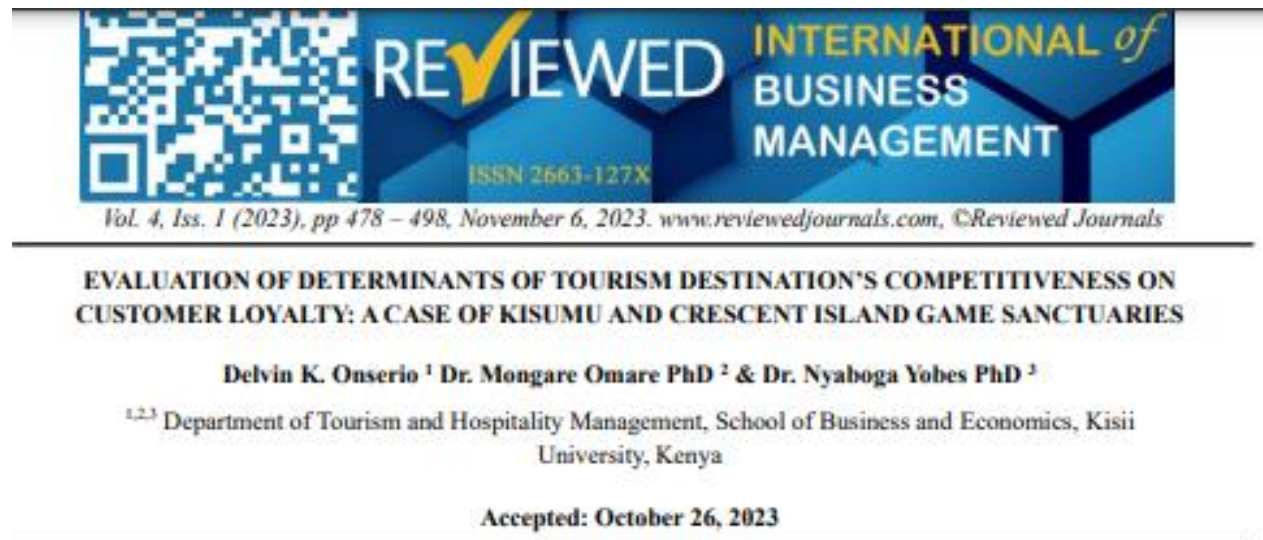
Work Description	Time frame
Project development	June 2017,– October, 2017
School-level project defence, additional revision, and consultation	
Submission of the project and authorisation to gather data in the field	October – November, 2018
Gathering, modifying, entering, and analysing data	January, 2018– March, 2019
Writing the thesis while consulting supervisors; submitting the thesis	December, 2023

Appendix V: Budget

Activity	Unit Cost (KES.)	Quantity/Days	Amount (KES)
“Printing Project:	10	51 pages	510
Photocopying Project:	2	6 copies of 51 pages	612
Project Binding	50	6 copies	300
Airtime: - Internet bundles (Chapter Two) - Telephone communication with the C.E.O	3,000	-	3,000
Printing Questionnaire:	10	3 pages	30
Data Analysis	2,000	10 days	20,000
Photocopying Questionnaires:	2	306 copies of 3paged questionnaires	1,836
Travel, Food & Accommodation during data collection:	3000	10 days	30,000
Thesis printing	10	6 copies of 120 pages	7,200
Thesis Binding	500	6 copies	3,000
Consumables			
Printing Papers	2 Reams	650	1,300
Biro Pens	1 Packet.	15	450
Pencils	5 Pcs.	10	50
Eraser	2 Pcs.	10	20
Personnel and Other Costs			
One research Assistant (Accommodation & food for 7 days		3,000	21,000
Airtime: Internet bundles for Chapter two Telephone communication with the C.E.O and Human Resource Manager			3,000
Contingencies: 10% of total			9,230
Total			101,538

Funding: Self”

Appendix VI: Publication



ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study sought to evaluate the influence of determinants of tourism destination competitiveness on customer loyalty. The study evaluated by the fact many tourism destinations competitiveness in Kenya are silent to domestic tourism due to lack of customer loyalty. The specific objective was to evaluate the effects of destination attractiveness, to establish the effect of auxiliary factors, to determine the influence of destination management and to establish the moderating role of situational condition in sanctuaries. The study would of significance to the management of tourism destinations. The study adopted Michael porter theory of competitive advantage. The study used descriptive research design. The study used a sample size of 233 respondents from tourist destinations. The target population was 466 respondents from the two sanctuaries. Stratified sampling techniques were used to select 233 respondents from Assistant warden ii, sergeant education warden, customer care officers, supervisors, animal keepers, tour guides, rangers, cage attendants, research scientist, and corporal discipline officers. The tool for data collection was research questionnaire. Validity of research instruments were measured by supervisor's opinion and relevant research experts. Reliability of research instruments were determined by use of Crobach alpha coefficients. The data collected was analyzed by use of descriptive statistics involving percentage, mean, and standard deviations. The results were presented by use of charts, figures, graphs and tables. The findings from the study were of significance to the management of tourism destinations, policy makers, academicians and researchers who would use relevant knowledge to do further research. The destination management affects attractiveness. Development in the destination should be responsive to visitor needs, Marketing of Tourist attractions should seek to increase resident awareness and reputation of domestic holidays, There's need to engage domestic tourists through social networks such as you tube, twitter, facebook, whatsapp, etc to ensure efficient communication, Planning and development should focus on the uniqueness of the destination.

Key: Destination Attractiveness, Destination Management, Situational Conditions, Auxillary Factors, Customer Loyalty

Appendix VII: Research Permit

 REPUBLIC OF KENYA	 NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION
Ref No: 512415	Date of Issue: 17/November/2020
RESEARCH LICENSE	
	
This is to Certify that Ms. Delvin kemuma onserio of Kisii University, has been licensed to conduct research in Kisii on the topic: EVALUATION OF DETERMINANT OF TOURISM DESTINATIONS COMPETITIVENESS ON CUSTOMER LOYALTY: A CASE OF KISUMU AND CRESCENT ISLAND GAME SANCTUARIES for the period ending : 17/November/2021.	
License No: BAHAMAS ABS/P/20/7705	
	

112



Appendix IX: Plagiarism Report



Page 1 of 146 - Cover Page

Submission ID: tmoid::13632896145

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EVALUATION OF DETERMINANTS OF TOURISM DESTINATIONS COMPETITIVENESS ON CUSTOMER LOYALTY: A CASE OF KISUMU IMPALA ...



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