

**DRIVERS OF WORD OF MOUTH BEHAVIOR AMONG CUSTOMERS OF
ATURUKAN HOTEL IN KITALE, KENYA**

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HPM-4-2308-17**

**A RESEARCH PROJECT REPORT SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF
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DECLARATION

Declaration by the Candidate

This research project report is my original work and has not been presented for award of a degree or for any similar purpose in any other institution.

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DEDICATION

To my family for always being there for me emotionally, socially, and financially.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

HR – Human Resource

WOM – World of Mouth

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

The following key terms are defined as follows:

Drivers: factors influencing word of mouth behaviour

Food quality: quality characteristics of food that is acceptable to customers. This includes external factors as appearance (size, shape, color, gloss, and consistency).

Perceived value: refers to customers' evaluation of the benefits of purchasing the hotel services and its ability to meet their needs and expectations, especially in comparison with other hotels.

Personal interaction quality: refers to a customer's experience as a result of the interaction with the human element of the service organization

Physical environment quality: the quality of the hotel servicescape/service area in terms of decoration, lighting, ambience, and the background music.

Word of mouth behavior: refers to what the customers say about the hotel services and products to their friends and to people close to them.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to establish the drivers of word of mouth behavior among customers of Aturukan hotel in Kitale, Kenya. In particular, the study sought to establish whether food quality, personal interaction quality, physical environment quality, and perceived value are drivers of word of mouth behavior among customers of Aturukan hotel in Kitale, Kenya. A descriptive cross-sectional study of 100 customers through self-administered questionnaires was conducted. The study used convenience sampling technique to select customers dining in the hotel for inclusion in the study sample. All variables were measured using constructs derived from literature. The content validity technique was used to assess the validity of the questionnaire whereas Chronbach's alpha method was used to assess the reliability of the constructs. Descriptive statistics (means, mean rankings, percentage scores, and standard deviations) were used to summarize quantitative data. Pearson correlation technique was used to establish interrelationships between the study variables and as such was used as a basis for testing the study hypotheses. The results of the study revealed that the four drivers (food quality, personal interaction quality, physical environment quality, and perceived value) have positive statistically significant associations with word of mouth behavior. However, food quality was found to have a relatively stronger positive and statistically significant relationship with customers word of mouth behavior. The study recommends management of hotels in Kitale need to focus on ensuring quality of the foods served to customers as this variable has a strong positive statistically significant relationship with word of mouth behavior.

Keywords: Drivers, Food Quality, Personal Interaction Quality, Physical Environment Quality, Perceived Value, Word of Mouth Behavior

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Word of mouth (WOM) is a conversation between individuals who have had an experience of an organization's products/services (M. R. Jalilvand, Salimipour, Elyasi, & Mohammadi, 2017). The conversation is usually casual and is based on individuals' evaluations of how well a product or service addressed their needs and expectations. By definition, WOM refers to sharing opinion from one consumer to another, and the conclusive stage in the consumer decision that convinces people to use the products or services and enter deep into the target audience, delivering reliable messages that are proven to change behaviors and attitudes, in offices, homes, schools, on social media platforms, wherever consumers naturally talk (Hawkins, Best, & Coney, 2004). Marketers argue that WOM is the most effective and influential form of marketing and advertising that is solely dependent on the capability of an organization to deliver on all its promises to customers.

1.2 Statement of Research Problem

The use of word-of-mouth marketing assists in building positive feelings about an organization's products and services, and that helps build the organization's brand. Previous research sought to understand the effects of WOM on customer behaviors. For instance, Jalilvand and Samiei (2012) found that WOM can have positive influence on tourists' decisions for travelling to a specific destination. This demonstrates paucity of research to identify the key factors influencing WOM about hotels. The hotel industry is very competitive—and this has even been compounded by advancements in technology and globalization. In order for hotels to survive in such an environment, then hoteliers ought to have customers' needs in the core of any service. Advertising

works best to manufacturing firms and is obviously very expensive. In the hotel industry—which is a service industry, WOM is the best and least expensive form of marketing that any hotelier ought to ensure happen in any marketing of the organization. However, there is scarcity of research in the hotel industry related to what influences WOM, although with exceptions of research carried out in developed nations.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to investigate the drivers of word of mouth behavior among customers of Aturukan hotel in Kitale, Kenya.

1.4 Objective of the Study

1.4.1 General Objective

The main objective of this study is to investigate drivers of word of mouth behavior among customers of Aturukan hotel in Kitale, Kenya.

1.4.2 Specific Objectives

- (i) To identify the influence of food quality on word of mouth behavior among customers of Atutukan hotel in Kitale, Kenya.
- (ii) To determine the influence of personal interaction quality on word of mouth behavior among customers of Aturukan hotel in Kitale, Kenya.
- (iii) To investigate the influence of physical environment quality on word of mouth behavior among customers of Aturukan hotel in Kitale, Kenya.
- (iv) To examine the relationship between perceived value and word of mouth behavior among customers of Aturukan hotel in Kitale, Kenya.

1.5 Study Hypotheses

- (i) H_{01} : There is no statistically significant relationship between food quality and word of mouth behavior among customers of Aturukan hotel in Kitale, Kenya.

(ii) H₀₂: There is no statistically significant relationship between personal interaction quality and word of mouth behavior among customers of Aturukan hotel in Kitale, Kenya.

(iii) H₀₃: There is no statistically significant relationship between physical environment quality and word of mouth behavior among customers of Aturukan hotel in Kitale, Kenya.

(iv) H₀₄: There is no statistically significant relationship between perceived value and word of mouth behavior among customers of Aturukan hotel in Kitale, Kenya.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The study findings will make specific contributions to the management of Aturukan hotel. The findings of the study will provide the hotel management with the required knowledge to more effectively serve customers at the same time ensuring they encourage positive word of mouth behavior as this is the cheapest way of marketing the hotel. The study sought to establish the influence the food quality, personal interaction quality, physical interaction quality, and perceived value on word of mouth behavior among customers of the hotel, thus, managers will draw important insights from the study findings when developing strategies and standards specifically addressing areas concerned with customers' positive word of mouth behavior. To future related studies in the hospitality and tourism industry, findings of the present study will be useful to researchers.

1.7 Scope of the Study

The study examined the influence of the four drivers—food quality, personal interaction quality, physical environment quality, and perceived value, on word of mouth behavior among customers of Aturukan hotel in Kitale, Kenya. Only customers

dining in the hotel’s restaurants were considered as study unit of analysis. Data were collected from customers using a questionnaire.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

The study has the following limitations. First, the study is limited to the constructs that will be investigated. Data will be collected using a questionnaire and convenience sampling method will be used to select customers to participate in the study, and as so, the sample may not be treated as representative of customers in the hotel. Therefore, the generalizability of the findings will be limited.

1.9 Study Conceptual Framework

Figure 1.1 is the proposed conceptual framework for the study.

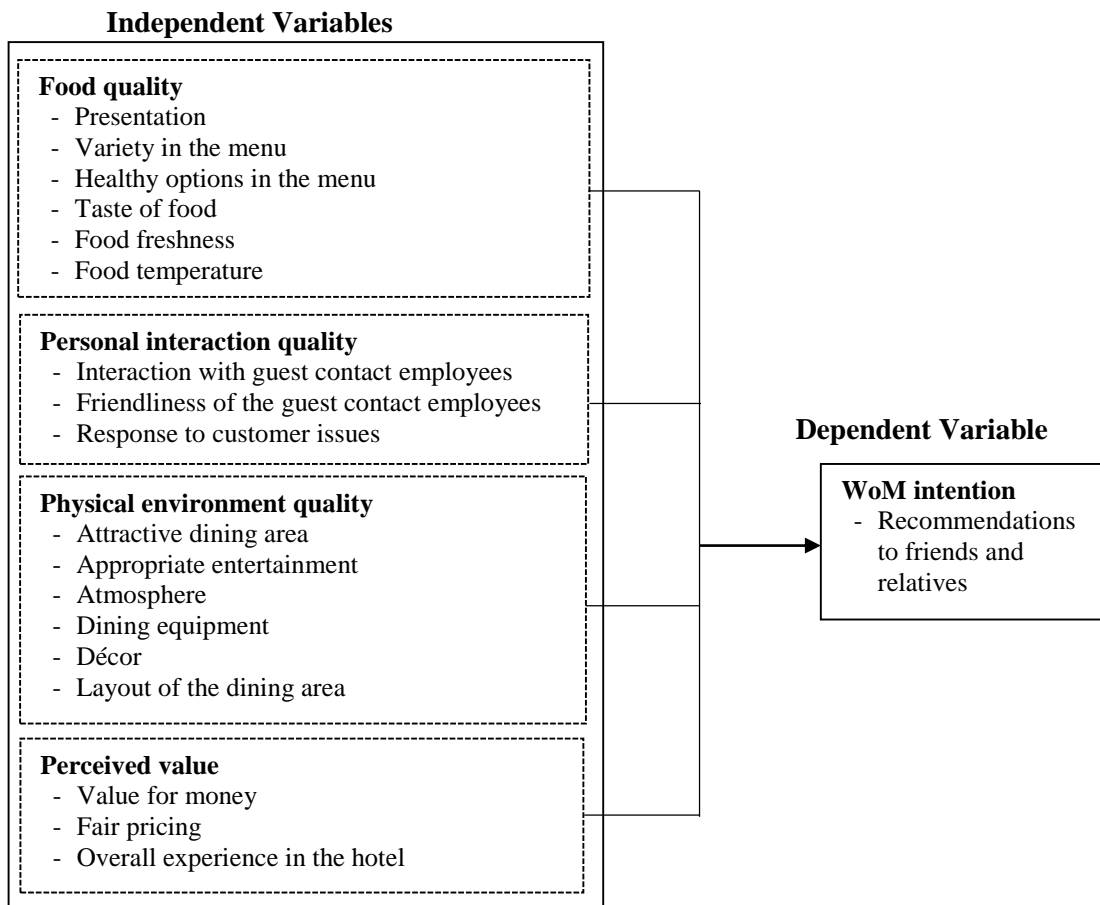


Figure 1. 1. Conceptual framework for examining the drivers of word of mouth behavior among customers of Aturukan hotel in Kitale, Kenya

Source: Adapted and modified from Namkung and Jang (2007) food quality, Meng and Elliott (2008) physical environment quality, Vesel and Zabkar (2009) personal interaction quality, (Chen, 2012) perceived value, and Jalilvand, Samiei, Dini, and Yaghoubi (2012) WoM constructs

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

The chapter discusses review of literature based on the following sub headings: The concept of word of mouth, food quality, personal interaction quality, physical environment quality, and perceived value.

2.1 The Concept of Word of Mouth

The concept of WoM has become universal in both manufacturing and service industries and especially so in the face of global and stiff competition. Word of mouth is sometimes taken to mean recommendations and endorsements made by a person with regard to a particular brand. According to Rand (2013), a brand is never what organizations tell the customers/consumers, but rather what the consumer/customer tell each other it is.

WOM is communication about services and products between individuals who are perceived as independent of the organization providing the service or product in a medium perceived to be independent of the organization (Silverman, 2001). It is worth noting that, WOM is an effective means of disseminating an opinion because it is usually given one-on-one in when family individuals are in a conversation (Jalilvand et al., 2017). In their study, Jalilvand and Samiei (2012) pose a question is who can forget a negative review of a restaurant or a positive one that include an individual rolling his or her eyes upwards in remembrance of how good service was or fantasizing of how he or she was served in a restaurant. WOM really matter in today's businesses as conversations determines what an individual should buy or not. By nature, people talk about products and services as a part of their conversations with one another. Research indicate that, 15 percent of individual conversations have products and

services related content (Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012). There is no doubt that all businesses—no matter what their size, can become recommended. But, the bigger the organization, the more its moving parts need to become aligned.

2.2 Food Quality and WOM

Eating out has become the norm of many individuals and families—every person is in one way or another eating out. As this is the case, customers desire new flavors, comfortable ambience, and pleasant memories (Jalilvand et al., 2017). Food quality is a key attribute of satisfaction of people eating out in hotels and restaurants (Namkung & Jang, 2007). Therefore, food quality is a key contributor of how and what individuals tell each other when having a conversation about brands—and will always be used as key factors when it comes to evaluating these brands.

Liu and Jang (2009) suggested that food quality, cleanliness of the environment, and reliability of service were three fundamental aspects of Chinese restaurants' success. This indicates that food quality was a prerequisite when customer chose a Chinese restaurant. Along similar lines, Liu and Jang (2009) showed that service and food quality have positive and significant influence on customer satisfaction and the resultant positive word of mouth. Similar results were reported by Mattilla (2001) who showed that food was important factor than price, cleanliness, value, and convenience.

2.3 Personal Interaction Quality

Interactions between customers and guest contact employees define the service environment. In this vein, Harker and Egan (2006) posit that the core of the relationship marketing is the interpersonal interactions between the service provider and the customer/consumer. In fact, the overall aim of marketing is to ensure that long-lasting relationships are created and maintained for the success of the business. In the

hospitality industry, research has shown that tourists enjoy personal interactions with employees in hotels and other facilities (Scanlan & McPhail, 2000). This interaction, in turn, have a positive influence on the relationship building and positive word of mouth. The ability of a service provider to interact with customers in a service environment enhances believability, trust and positive word of mouth recommendations (Parsons, 2002).

2.4. Physical Environment Quality

Selnes (1993) argued that performance quality influences a general evaluation of the brand. Similarly, in the investigation of airline service, Ostrowski, O'Brien, and Gordon, (1993) posit that “constructive experience over time following several good experiences will eventually bring positive image” (p. 23). In the restaurant industry, a consumer’s perception of a restaurant’s image is likely to fully reflect customer’s cumulative consumption experiences. Baker, Grewal, and Parasuraman (1994) also demonstrate the role of the physical environment of service firms on improving a brand image and stimulating purchase behaviors. Bitner (1990) proposed that the physical environment may significantly affect customer’s ultimate satisfaction.

2.5 Perceived Value

By definition, perceived value refers to a customer’s opinion of a product’s value to him or her and may have little or nothing to do with the product’s market price, and depends on the products ability to meet the needs of the customer (Ryu et al., 2007). In recent research, scholars have acknowledged that tourist behavior is better understood when observed through value perceptions (Gallarza, Saura, & Moreno, 2013). In the background of the hospitality industry, perceived value is seen as a measure of a service provider’s output (Baker & Crompton, 2000). Many people have used price as a surrogate for the value of a service or product, indicating that the higher the price, the

perception of value is also higher. From this perspective, perceived value should be seen as the aggregate of cognitive evaluations of time and money invested in the purchase of a product/service (Jalilvand et al., 2017).

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the research design, study area, target population, sampling techniques, sample size, instruments, validity and reliability, pre-testing, data collection procedures, analysis techniques, and data presentation. Additionally, ethical considerations are discussed lastly.

3.1 Research Design

According to studies carried out by Hair, Anderson, Tatham, and Black (1995), research design provides a fundamental direction for conducting the study. In line with this statement, the study used a descriptive cross-sectional survey design in order to describe the relationships between the study independent variables and the dependent variable.

3.2 Study Area

The study was carried out in Aturukan Hotel in Kitale town. From Moi International Airport in Eldoret the hotel is just 45 minutes' drive. The hotel is situated in a prestigious uniquely designed building located along Kapenguria Road.

3.3 Target Population

The study target population was Aturukan hotel in Kitale. The unit of analysis was customers dining in the hotel.

3.4 Sampling Techniques

The study used convenience sampling method in order to select the participants for inclusion in the study. This method was used to select customers for inclusion into the study sample at the time of data collection. The technique is easy to execute with reduced cost and time thus enabled the researcher to achieve the sample size relatively fast and in an inexpensive way (Bryman & Bell, 2015).

3.5 Sample Size

A sample size is a part of the population chosen for a survey in order to necessitate data collection (Sekaran, 2003). According to Kothari (2012), the number of study participants for inclusion in the sample is defined by the nature of the study and the research design. Thus, 100 customers were selected for inclusion in the study sample. The sample size was adequate for data analysis and reporting based on the descriptive research design (Bryman & Bell, 2018).

3.6 Research Instruments

The study used self-administered questionnaires to collect data. The questionnaire was designed with questions based on Likert scale for easier faster data collection, coding and analysis (Kothari, 2012).

3.7 Validity and Reliability of the Questionnaire

3.7.1 Validity of the Questionnaire

Validity refers to how well a scientific test or piece of research actually measures what it sets out to, or how well it reflects the reality it claims to represent (Bryman & Bell, 2015). In order to assess the validity of the questionnaire, the face validity was used. This was ascertained through the use of supervisor's review and judgment in order to evaluate how well questions covered the construct considered in the study.

3.7.2 Reliability of the Questionnaire

Reliability refers to the credibility or believability of the research findings (Kothari, 2012). As Sekaran (2003) suggested, Cronbach's alpha is the most commonly used indicator of internal consistency of items and this technique was used to establish reliability of the survey instrument. In the present study, five separate Cronbach's alphas were conducted for the food quality, personal interaction quality, physical environment quality, perceived value, and WoM. The Chronbach's alpha for were .705,

.895, .784, .941, and .845 respectively. Cronbach's alpha statistics above the threshold level of .70 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994), were considered to indicate the internal consistency of the measurements.

3.8 Data Collection Techniques

Several procedures were considered during data collection. First, the researcher sought and obtained permission approvals from the human resource manager of Aturukan hotel to conduct the study. Upon obtaining permission approvals, the researcher requested the hotel restaurants' supervisors to allow service employees to assist in the distribution the questionnaires to selected participants. The researcher explained the purpose of the study to all service employees in order for them to share the same to selected customers before filling the questionnaires. Selected customers were requested to fill the questionnaires and leave them on the table after service. The filled questionnaires were picked and submitted to the supervisors who then submitted to the human resource manager. It is at this point where the researcher picked the questionnaires.

3.9 Data Analysis

After collecting all the questionnaires, data processing was conducted before any data analysis. The data preparation process consisted of checking, editing, coding, and computations. Checking was done to ensure that all the questions in the questionnaires are completely filled by the respondents without omission. Following this step, coding, data entry, screening and data transformations were computed in order to facilitate data analysis using appropriate package. Both descriptive statistics and inferential statistics were used to analyze the collected data. For the former, frequencies and percentage scores were computed for nominal variables, specifically participants' bio data. Pearson correlation was used as an inferential statistic to identify the relationships within the study variables and thus as a basis for testing the study hypotheses.

3.10 Ethical Considerations

The researcher sought and obtained an informed consent from customers to participate in the study. Moreover, the researcher informed the participants of their voluntary participation and confidentiality of the information disbursed. In addition, participants were briefed before data collection in order to be aware of study purpose. The data collected from respondents will be used for the purposes of the study and not for any other use.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Introduction

The chapter presents results of the analysis of data collected in line with the study specific objectives.

4.2 Response Rate

A total of 100 questionnaires were distributed to customers in fast food restaurants. Out of these questionnaires. All were returned, but 25 had incomplete and were excluded from the main data analysis. This yielded 75 (75%) questionnaires.

4.3 Participants' Demographics

Results of the analysis of respondents' bio data are presented in Table 4.1.

Table 4. 1. Respondents Bio-data

	Frequency (n)	Percent
Sex		
Female	13	45.6%
Male	12	12.5%
Age		
18-25	1	5.5%
26-33	19	45.3%
34-41	4	23.4%
42-49	1	5.6%
50 and above	2	2.3%
Frequency of visit		
Once	12	54.5%
Two times	18	5.5%
Three times	45	45.3%
Above 4 times	21	5.6%

As shown in Table 4.1, 50.2% of the respondents are female and 49.8% male. The numbers of male and female are nearly equal. Moreover, about 72.4% of the participants were aged between 26 and 33 years. Additionally, majority 54.5% of the respondents had frequented the fast food restaurants for 3 times.

4.4 Descriptive Results

4.4.1 Word of Mouth Behavior

Table 4.2 demonstrates the mean scores of the level of agreement of 3 factors used to measure word of mouth of behaviors.

Table 4. 2. Mean scores of the level of agreement (word of mouth behavior factors)

	n	M	SD
I say positive things about the hotel to other people	75	4.05	0.78
I recommend the hotel to someone who seeks my advice	75	4.15	0.69
I encourage friends and relatives to refer to the restaurant	75	4.85	0.17

The mean scores of the level of agreement for all the items ranged from 4.05 to 4.15. These results indicate that respondents in the study agreed with all the factors of positive word of mouth behavior.

4.4.2 Food Quality

Table 4.3 displays the mean scores of food quality construct.

Table 4. 3. Mean scores of the level of agreement (Food quality factors)

	n	M	SD
Food presentation is visually attractive	75	3.92	0.91
The hotel offers a variety of menu items	75	3.32	1.02
The hotel offers healthy options in the menu	75	3.15	1.12
The hotel serves tasty food	75	3.45	0.96
The hotel offers fresh food	75	4.03	0.67
Food is served at the appropriate temperature	75	4.12	0.51

The mean scores of the six factors of food quality ranged from 3.15 to 4.03. The factor with the highest mean of 4.03 ($SD = 4.03$) was “the hotel offers fresh food”. The “hotel offers healthy options in the menu” was rated the lowest. However, all factors had means scores above the mean of the scale (3.00) demonstrating that respondents in the study agreed with the items of food quality.

4.4.3 Personal Interaction Quality

The results of the analysis of personal interaction quality are displayed in Table 4.4.

Table 4. 4. Mean scores of the level of agreement (personal interaction quality)

	n	M	SD
I would say the quality of my interaction with service employees is high	75	4.12	0.51
The hotel's service employees are friendly and hospitable	75	4.05	0.72
The hotel's employees respond to guest concerns in a quick and prompt manner	75	3.88	0.84

The mean scores for the 3 factors of personal interaction quality ranged from 3.88 to 4.05. The highest rated factor of personal interaction quality was “I would say the quality of my interaction with the service employees is high” with a mean score of 4.12 ($SD = 0.51$). The lowest rated indicator of food quality was “the hotel's employees respond to guest concerns in a quick and prompt manner” with a mean score of 3.88 ($SD = 0.84$); however, it was still above a scale mean of 3.00 showing that the respondents agreed with this factor.

4.4.4 Physical Environment Quality

Results of the analysis of data collected are presented in Table 4.5.

Table 4. 5. Mean scores of the level of agreement (Physical environment quality)

	n	M	SD
The hotel has appealing decorations	75	4.15	0.38
The hotel has appropriate background music	75	4.75	0.19
The lighting and illumination in the hotel are good	75	4.03	0.21
The hotel has clean and elegant dining equipment	75	4.07	0.56

The mean scores for the 4 indicators of physical environmental quality were between 4.03 to 4.75 meaning that respondents agreed with them. The highest rated indicator of physical environment quality was “The hotel has appropriate background music” with a mean score of 4.75 ($SD = 0.19$).

4.4.5 Perceived Value

The respondents were asked to indicate their perceptions of the degree of agreement of each factor on a five-point Likert scale, where 1 represented “strongly disagree” and 5 denoted “strongly agree”. Table 4.5 shows the mean scores for the 3 items of perceived value.

Table 4. 6. Mean scores of the level of agreement (perceived value factors)

	n	M	SD
The hotel offered good value for money	88	4.15	0.68
I would think that the prices that I pay for the services are worthwhile	88	4.45	0.39
I would rate my overall experience at this hotel extremely good value	88	4.21	0.79

The mean of all the factors of perceived value ranged from 4.15 to 4.45. The highest rated factor was “I would think that the prices that I pay for the services are worthwhile” with a mean score of 4.45 ($SD = 0.39$).

4.5 Testing of Study Hypotheses

Pearson correlation coefficient (r) was used to test the study hypotheses. Table 4.7 displays the correlations among the study independent variables and the dependent variable.

Table 4. 7. Results of the correlation analysis

Variables		Word of mouth behavior
Food quality	r	.706**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
Personal interaction quality	r	.578**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001
Physical interaction quality	r	.351**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
Perceived value	r	.418**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000

Notes: n = 316. **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

As indicated in Table 4.6, food quality, personal interaction quality, physical interaction quality, and perceived have positive correlations with word of mouth behavior.

The relationship between food quality and word of mouth behavior was positive, strong in strength and statistically significant ($r = .706^{**}$, p value = .000). The relationship between personal interaction quality and word of mouth behavior was positive, strong in strength and statistically significant ($r = .578^{**}$, p value = .000). Pearson correlations for physical environment quality and perceived value were $.351^{**}$ and $.418^{**}$ respectively. These correlations were both positive, weak in strength and statistically significant. The correlations results indicated that, generally, there were positive statistically significant relationships. Thus, all the null hypotheses (H_{01} , H_{02} , H_{03} , and H_{04}) were rejected. Table 4.8 displays a summary of hypotheses testing results.

Table 4. 8. Summary of hypotheses testing

Hypotheses	Sig. (p value)	Results
H_{01} Food quality has no statistically significant relationship with word of mouth behaviors	.000	Not supported
H_{02} Personal interaction quality has no statistically significant relationship with word of mouth behaviors	.000	Not supported
H_{03} Physical environment quality has no statistically significant relationship with word of mouth behaviors	.000	Not supported
H_{04} Perceived value has no statistically significant relationship with word of mouth behaviors	.000	Not supported

Notes: $p < .01^{**}$

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of the findings, conclusions and recommendations.

5.2 Summary of Findings

5.2.1 Objective 1: the influence of food quality on word of mouth behavior

The respondents agreed with all the items measuring food quality. In addition, Pearson correlation results revealed a strong positive statistically significant relationship between food quality and word of mouth behavior.

5.2.2 Objective 2: the influence of personal interaction quality on word of mouth

The respondents revealed high levels of agreement with factors measuring personal interaction quality where all the mean scores were above the scale mean of 3.0. In addition, results of the Pearson correlation indicated that there was a significant positive association between personal interaction quality and word of mouth.

5.2.3 Objective 3: the influence of physical environment quality on word of mouth

The respondents agreed with all items measuring physical environment quality. The results of the Pearson correlation indicated a positive statistically significant association between physical environment quality and word of mouth among customers of hotels in Kitale.

5.2.4 Objective 4: the relationship between perceived value and word of mouth behavior

The mean scores of the analysis of data collected on perceived value indicated that respondents agreed with all the items measuring the construct. Additionally, the

Pearson correlation results revealed positive statistically significant association between perceived value and word of mouth behavior.

5.3 Conclusions

The following conclusions are made:

- Hotel customers in Kitale value food quality more than anything else and as aspect that can compel them towards positive word of mouth behavior.
- Food quality and personal interaction quality have relatively stronger positive statistically relationships with word of mouth behavior among customers when compared to the physical environment quality and perceived value.

5.4 Recommendations for Practice

The following recommendation are made:

- The management of hotels in Kitale need to focus on ensuring quality of the foods served to customers as this variable has a strong positive statistically significant relationship with word of mouth behavior.
- The Management of hotels in Kitale need to focus on personal interaction quality by encouraging waiters to engage customers more when serving.
- The management of the hotels in Kitale need to also consider the physical environmental quality by ensuring the service scape is clean and appealing.

5.5 Recommendations for Future Research

- A research that would incorporate other factors other than those investigated in the study should be conducted.
- A similar study needs to be conducted incorporating hotels in other regions in Kenya and beyond.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Letter of Introduction



SCHOOL OF HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM MANAGEMENT

Dear Sir/Madam,

This letter is to introduce **Linet Chepchirchir**, registration number HPM-4-2308-17 who is a student in the Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management of Gretsa University pursuing a Bachelor of Science Degree in Hospitality Management. She will produce her student card as proof of identity.

To complete her degree course, she is undertaking research leading to the production of a research report or other publications and her study is titled: *DRIVERS OF WORD OF MOUTH BEHAVIOR AMONG CUSTOMERS OF ATURUKAN HOTEL IN KITALE, KENYA.*

She would like to invite you to assist in this project, by filling in the questionnaire which covers certain aspects of this topic.

Be assured that any information provided will be treated in the strictest confidence and none of the participants will be individually identifiable in the resulting research report or other publications. You are, of course, entirely free to discontinue your participation at any time or to decline to answer particular questions.

Any inquiries you may have concerning this research project should be directed to me by telephone on 0715 567 175 or by email (johnkahuthugitau@gmail.com).

Thank you for your attention and assistance.

Yours sincerely

John K. Gitau
Research Coordinator & Lecturer
Department of Hospitality Management, Gretsa University

Appendix 2: Questionnaire for the Customers in the Hotel

GRETSA UNIVERSITY
School of Hospitality and Tourism Management

Part One

This part is designed to collect information on participant's *demographic information*. You are required to respond to all questions.

1. Gender: Male Female
2. Your age in years [*tick appropriately*]
18 and 25 26-33 34-41 42-49 50 and above
3. How many times have you visited the hotel?
This is my first time 2 times 3 times 4 times above 4 times

Part Two

This part is designed to collect information regarding **FOOD QUALITY**. You are required to answer all questions. Please note that all questions are based on a 5-point Likert scale with 1=*strongly disagree*, 2=*disagree*, 3=*Undecided*, 4=*agree*, and 5=*strongly agree*.

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
1. Food presentation is visually attractive					
2. The hotel offers a variety of menu items					
3. The hotel offers healthy options in the menu					
4. The hotel serves tasty food					
5. The hotel offers fresh food					
6. Food is served at the appropriate temperature					

Part Two

This part is designed to collect information on **PERSONAL INTERACTION QUALITY** with regard to the hotel. You are required to respond to all questions in a scale of 1 to 5 (1=*Strongly Disagree*, 2=*Disagree*, 3=*Undecided*, 4=*Agree*, 5=*Strongly Agree*).

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
I would say the quality of my interaction with service employees is high					
The hotel's service employees are friendly and hospitable					
The hotel's employees respond to guest concerns in a quick and prompt manner					

Part Three

This part is designed to collect information on **PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT QUALITY** with regard to the hotel. You are required to respond to all questions in a scale of 1 to 5 (*1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Undecided, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree*).

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
The hotel has appealing decorations					
The hotel has appropriate background music					
The lighting and illumination in the hotel are good					
The hotel has clean and elegant dining equipment					

Part Four

This part is designed to collect information on **PERCEIVED VALUE** with regard to the hotel. You are required to respond to all questions in a scale of 1 to 5 (*1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Undecided, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree*).

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
1. The hotel offered good value for money					
2. I would think that the prices that I pay for the services are worthwhile					
3. I would rate my overall experience at this hotel extremely good value					

Part Five

This part is designed to collect information on **WORD OF MOUTH BEHAVIOR** with regard to the hotel. You are required to respond to all questions in a scale of 1 to 5 (*1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Undecided, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree*).

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
I say positive things about the hotel to other people					
I recommend the hotel to someone who seeks my advice					
I encourage friends and relatives to refer to the restaurant					