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Abstract

Cultural differences and cultural diversity, in today's globalized world, is a challenge faced by individuals and organizations. The shrinkage of cultural boundaries across the world, as an impact of globalization, has made it imperative for global managers to possess the appropriate kind of skills that enables them to function effectively in diverse cross cultural settings. It is important for hotels to realize that customer cultural orientation are not identical all around the world and thus understanding customer cultural orientation is important in enhancing service quality. The study sought to evaluate how customers' cultural orientation affects service quality expectations among 3-5 star hotels in Nairobi City County. The target population was 12 managers, 72 supervisors and 1220 customers. Yamane formula was used to calculate sample size of 61 supervisors and 301 customers. Purposive sampling was used to choose 12 hotel managers. Pretest for the questionnaire was undertaken to ascertain the reliability of the tool before embarking for actual data collection. Data analysis involved both descriptive and inferential analyses. Descriptive analysis included frequency, percentages, means and standard deviation whereas inferential analysis involved correlation and regression analysis. Pearson correlation coefficients revealed that that there was a positive and statistically significant correlation between customer cultural orientation and service

quality of three to five star hotels in Nairobi City County. The study also found out that there was a positively and significant correlation between management perception and service quality of three to five star hotels in Nairobi City County. Finally, it was established that communication strategies had a positive and significant association with service quality of three to five star hotels in Nairobi City County. The model summary revealed that customer cultural orientation, management perception and communication strategies explains 53.9% of changes in service quality of three to five star hotels in Nairobi City County. Regression results showed that customer cultural orientation had a positive and statistically significant relationship with service quality of three to five star hotels. It was also established that management perception had positive and statistically significant relationship with service quality of three to five star hotels in Nairobi City County. Communication strategies had a positive and significant relationship with service quality of three to five star hotels in Nairobi City County. The study concluded that customer cultural orientation, management perception and communication strategies have a significant influence on the service quality expectations among 3-5 star hotel clients in Nairobi City County, Kenya. It was recommended that for the star hotels to offer quality services, there is need for the staff need to be updated on diversity in cultural orientation among the customers, take time to understand the needs of their customers, help clients to make decisions and learn more to get to know the diverse culture, language, perception, psychology, economy, political and social backgrounds of the clients. The managers and supervisors need to lead from the front by knowing diverse languages, culture and psychology to enable handle clients who may proof hard to handle by the other staff.

Keywords: *Customers cultural orientation, management of hospitality, communication strategies, service quality expectations, 3-5 star hotels, challenges*

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The travel and hospitality industry is one of the world's largest industries, accountable for 200 Million jobs and 9.8 percent of worldwide gross domestic product USD 7.2 trillion (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2018). According to the report, the global hotels market was valued at approximately USD 525.57 billion in 2018 and is expected to generate around USD 611.54 billion by 2026, at a compound annual growth rate of around 4.6% between 2019 and 2026 (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2019). This remarkable upswing in activity has enlarged the likelihood that many service workers in the hospitality and travel business will have encounters with guests from other cultures. The expansion and very continuation of companies in these industries will become more reliant on the achievements of these encounters between staff and overseas visitors (Sabiote, Frías & Castañeda, 2012). It is most vital that these service interactions are doing well and free of cultural misunderstandings.

Service firms have become highly concerned with the quality of their services, because the quality of the exchange between the customer and the employee is often the main reason for customer retention, the key pillar for the competitive strategies for all service

organizations (Ngacha & Onyango, 2017). Quality service delivery gives service providers the competitive advantage they need to favorably compete in an increasingly multicultural environment (Chung, 2015). According to Tsoukatos (2011), service quality is dependent on two variables: expected service and perceived service. Expectations are beliefs about the level of service that will be delivered by a service provider and they are assumed to provide standards of reference against which the delivered service is compared (Alshaibani, 2015). If there is congruence between the performance and the expectations, then a customer is said to be satisfied. Considering the hotel industry, bringing about service quality has complication that differs from when tangible product is involved (Uddin, 2015). Overall, the need for cross-cultural empirical research has been signaled by several researchers (Seo, 2012; Cao & Phan, 2015).

Hotels' practices often dismiss the importance of cultural orientation in their continual attempts to provide the best quality service based on their own understanding of service quality (Alshaibani, 2015). Customer cultural orientation is described as an aspect of the organizational culture which increases both customers' interests and organizational success (Chung, 2015). The creation of a consumer-oriented culture requires the production of commonly held purposes. This means that the hotels's strategy, its definition of its activities in relation to its environment, is an essential element of the development of hotels culture (Seo, 2012). The generation of an appropriate set of beliefs, norms and values in the hotel is significantly important in improving service quality. Moreover, understanding a customer cultural orientation may seem irrelevant as the complexity of culture add to the difficulty of measuring the critical elements within providing quality service (Tefera & Govender, 2017).

In Kenya, about 690,893 tourists visited the country in 2015 (Kenya Tourism Federation, 2015). From this statistics many of the visitors to Kenya are from diverse cultural backgrounds and many organizations do not realize the importance of training their staff on dealing with guest from different cultural backgrounds to ensure service quality. This study aimed at establishing the influence of customer cultural orientation on service quality expectations among 3-5 star rated hotels In Nairobi County, Kenya.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In today's globalized economy, there are many firms that expand their activities abroad. These cross-border expansions do not come without complications. If a firm's concept is flourishing in one country, it is not obvious that it will be as thriving in another (Fitzsimmons & Fitzsimmons 2011). The main reason for this is the difference in culture between countries Minh, Ha, Anh, and Matsui (2015) suggest that especially in the services sector (where producer and consumer have to work together in order to produce the service) cultural differences can cause tribulations, because customer satisfaction in this sector is strongly inclined by cultural values. A study from Kogut and Singh (1988) seems to support the conclusion of Dikmen and Bozdağlar (2017) that service firms

without a doubt face major problems when expanding their activities to countries which are culturally diverse from their home country.

Understanding customers' expectation is crucial in service industry such as hotel industry. Hotel management should endeavour to carry out initial market surveys to find out what the market needs are. This should also give an insight on the market characteristics. However, when hotel management fail to understand what consumers expect in a service and which features are needed to deliver high quality service, a mismatch between consumer expectations and performance perception exist as expressed through satisfaction level. Such a service quality gap is not ideal for a hospitality establishment.

Three to five star rated hotels in Nairobi City County are facing stiff competition from other hotel service providers in the industry. Service quality thus remains the differentiating factor to satisfy customer among hotel service providers (Muchogu, 2016). As a result, hotels must define ways to enhance service delivery in order to remain competitive and one of it is customer cultural dimension. Hotels' practices often dismiss the importance of cultural orientation in their continual attempts to provide the best quality service based on their own understanding of service quality (Alshaibani, 2015). Thus, the generation of an appropriate set of beliefs, norms and values in the hotel is significantly important in improving service quality.

An explanation for the problems with similar services in different cultures might be that the determinants of service quality are diverse between cultures (Cao & Phan, 2015). Regardless of such large numbers underlining the importance of inter-cultural service encounters around the world, there has been no comprehensive conceptual framework to guide research into the socio-psychological process underlying these encounters. As a result, previous studies explore only a few aspects of inter cultural service encounters, for example, customer experience (Lu, Berchoux, Marek & Chen, 2015). However, the current study focused on the role of cultural orientation in enhancing service quality among star rated hotels. A study by Mochogu (2016) focused only on service quality, customer satisfaction and customer loyalty in three to five star hotels in Nairobi City with no focus on customer cultural orientation contrasting current study that sought to establish the significant importance of customer cultural orientation in enhancing service quality in 3-5 star hotels. It is against this argument that the study sought to establish the influence of consumer's cultural orientation on service quality expectations among three to five star hotels in Nairobi City County.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

i. To evaluate how customers cultural orientation affect service quality expectations among 3-5 star hotels in Nairobi City County.
ii. To examine what management of hospitality establishments should do to ensure quality of services provided to guests from different cultural backgrounds.

iii. To examine the influence of communication strategies on service quality expectations to guests of different cultural backgrounds.

iv. To identify the challenges faced by staff in the hotels as they communicate to guests from different cultural backgrounds and how it affects service quality.

1.4 Research Hypothesis

H_{01}. There is no significant difference between customers' cultural orientation and service quality expectations.

H_{02}. There is no significant difference between hotel staff perceptions and attitudes in influencing customer satisfaction and service quality to guests of different cultural backgrounds.

H_{o3}. There is no significant difference between communication and service quality expectations to guests of different cultural backgrounds.
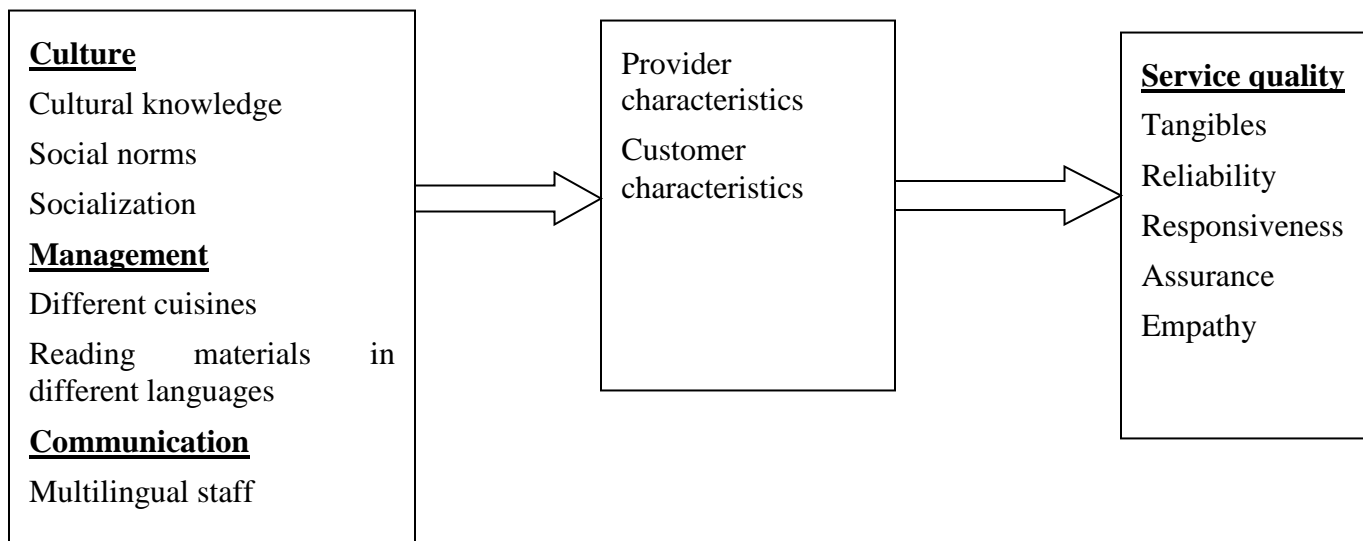
1.8 Conceptual Framework

| **Culture**
 Cultural knowledge
 Social norms
 Socialization
 Management
 Different cuisines
 Reading materials in different languages
 Communication
 Multilingual staff | → | Provider characteristics
 Customer characteristics | → | **Service quality**
 Tangibles
 Reliability
 Responsiveness
 Assurance
 Empathy |

Figure 1: Conceptual framework on consumer's cultural orientation and service quality expectations

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Service Quality

Service quality is critical to the success of any service oriented industry like a hotel. Service quality is considered as an important aspect to the success of hotel industry, the importance of evaluating service quality provided to guests becomes apparent (Gunarathne, 2016). Service quality is considered the life of hotel and core of service management. Assessing service quality provides with the necessary information needed to manage service delivery operations appropriately (Uddin, 2015). There is a high level of customer interaction with various aspects in a service related industry like a hotel (Alshaibani, 2015). Customers assess the quality of service by comparing their perception of service delivery and services they receive. Hence, service quality plays a crucial role in adding value to the overall service experience (Minh, Ha, Anh & Matsui, 2015). Service quality is highly significant to attract and retain customers, to increase the market share and profitability of hotel service providers.

Service quality is characterized as client's view of how well a service quality meets or surpasses their desires. Martin (1999) suggested that a service is characterized by certain attributes that make evaluation of the performance even harder. Services are intangible in nature, this means it can be hard to quantify that on organization is offering to a customer. Gronroos (1984) postulated two types of service quality: technical quality (what the customers actually received from the service), and functional quality (the manner in which the service is delivered). Service quality can be described in terms of professionalism and skills, attitudes and behavior, accessibility and flexibility, reliability and trustworthiness, service recovery, services cape, reputation and credibility. Lehtinen and Lehtinen (1991) claimed that there are three service quality dimensions, namely, physical quality, corporate quality and interactive quality. The last dimension recognizes that service quality arises from the interaction between the service provider and service receiver and is therefore necessary to supplement the customer-centered view of service quality which has been the dominant paradigm to date. Further, Parsuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1986) measured service quality based on tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assuranceand empathy.

Despite the variety of proposed definitions, the SERVQUAL model (Parasuraman, 1985, 1988) remains the most widely adapted and tested conceptualization of service quality. SERVQUAL dimensions have been found to be useful and relevant in studying service quality in the hotel industry (Gunarathne, 2016). According to the model, service quality can be measured by comparing the service expectations of customers with their perceptions of actual performance. The SERVQUAL instrument uses 22 questions to measure both expectations and perceptions covering five service dimensions, namely, reliability, responsiveness, tangibles, assurance and empathy (Parasuraman, 1988). Reliability refers to accurate, dependable and consistent performance of the service. Responsiveness means being prompt and willing to serve the customer. The physical

service aspects such as appearance of employees, equipment and facilities are classified as tangibles. The dimension of assurance comprises the competence, courtesy and credibility of staff which generate customer trust and confidence. Empathy involves caring and personalized attention as well as understanding customer needs and convenient access to the service (Parasuraman, 1988).

2.2 Customers cultural orientation and service quality.

In order to remain competitive in a globalized hotel industry, it is critical to develop services that are able to satisfy a very diverse customer cultures. Culture is one of the most effective yet complicated elements that hotel operators need to understand in order to provide great services in accordance with the customers' needs (Cao & Phan, 2015). The social normality of one culture is not the same in another culture. Ueltschy *et al.* (2007) stated that it is important for service providing firms such as hotels to realize that customer preferences are not identical all around the world. Therefore, it is important for service providers to identify the critical factors of customer preferences and incorporate these discoveries into the services they offer to satisfy their culturally diverse group of customers more effectively (Alshaibani, 2015).

Cultural orientation differs among societies and organizations and the decisions one makes are heavily influenced by the culture that one is brought up in (Nóbrega, 2009). Moreover, culture not only influences behaviors of people, but also affects the rationalization process of the behavior (de Araújo, Costa & Nóbrega, 2013). Culture orientation also has strong impact on customers' expectation and evaluation of service quality. Customers from different cultural backgrounds are accustomed to their standards of service quality; therefore, it is imperative to look at the service cultures in each country and from which hotel operators can determine what guests from each culture expects from their services (Cao & Phan, 2015). Investigating each culture in detail helps hoteliers with the application of culture in their customizable service designs. Therefore, the uniqueness of organizational culture influences the development of customers' perception of service quality.

In order for the hotel industry to achieve its objective of delivering quality service for its customers, it is imperative to study how the hotel management can conceivably meet and even exceed customers' service delivery expectations (Dikmen & Bozdağlar, 2017). Management of hotels seeks to know the level at which the customers are satisfied with their services and the kind of service quality levels their customers would like in order to offer the exactly what would be taken positively (Minh, *et al.,* 2015). According to Krishna *et al.,* (2010) customers have the highest expectations on promptness of service, accuracy of transactions and security issues from the service provider management. It is vital for hotel management to prioritize on attention to details and promptness in addressing customer complaints related to service quality issues (Dominici & Guzzo, 2010).

The quality of services provided by hotel may not meet up the standard owing to lack of commitment from the hotel management (Wu & Ko, 2013). According to Waitiki, (2014) the hotel management need to know the level at which the customers are satisfied with their services and the kind of service quality levels their customers would like in order to offer the exactly what would be taken positively. Many managerial initiatives to improve service quality should be clearly defined in the hotel (Minh, Ha, Anh & Matsui, 2015). The hotel management service initiatives to promote service quality may include organizational support, rewards, empowerment, and employee training and continual service improvement.

Communication is an the activity aiming to constitute an arrangement to convey information as one of the fundamental pillars of social life and organizational structure as well as the activity of forming relationships between organizations and groups (Seyitoglu & Yuzbasioglu, 2015). A healthy communication is needed for people to know and understand each other better, to create better functioning organizations and to resolve problems easier (Ruck & Welch, 2012). If an adequate importance is not placed on communication channels in an organization, it may not be possible to have en effectively working organization.

Communication is considered as an important factor in hotel industry establishments where communication among hotel staff, customers and management is critical (Slåtten *et al.,* 2010). Hotel establishment which does not use communication channels properly may not be able to deliver quality services to its customers. Brownell (1990) has pointed out the importance of clearly defined norm of communication with customers. Waiters and waitress play an important role in connecting with and providing service to customers and forming long-term relationships with them (Kusluvan, 2003). Hotel employees with proper communication and engagement skills would be able to increase the quality of service by managing relationships with customers more effectively due to increased self-confidence and would contribute to the positive perception of customers with regard to the service quality (Demir, 2011; Zulhamri & Claina, 2012). Harrington and Akehurst (1996) emphasized the need for hotels to develop more effective internal communication systems to facilitate a greater understanding of hotel policy as it relates to providing quality services for the customer.

However, Communication challenges are common in hotel industry where quests and service providers hail from different cultural backgrounds. Understanding how to communicate effectively with hotel customers speaking another language is very important (Qadri, Ahsan & Hashmi, 2016). Given different cultural contexts, this brings new communication challenges to the workplace (Disilva, 2017). Even when employees located in different locations or offices speak the same language, there are some cultural differences that should be considered in an effort to optimize communications between the two parties.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

2.3.1 Servqual Theory

Grönroos' model on service quality was later used and extended in the model by Parasuraman, Berry and Zeithaml (1985; 1988). Instead of the two dimensions of Grönroos, five dimensions are used that influence expected and perceived quality (Brady & Cronin, 2001; Parasuraman, Berry & Zeithaml, 1985). The following descriptions of the five dimensions are given by Zeithaml, Bitner and Gremler in their book (2009): (1) reliability, this is the ability to perform the service that is promised dependably and accurately. (2) Responsiveness; the willingness to offer your customers help and provide a prompt service. (3) Assurances, the knowledge of employees and their ability to inspire and give a feeling of trust and confidence. (4) Empathy is the extent to which individualized attention and caring is given to customers. (5) The fifth and last dimension is tangibility, which consists of the appearance of physical facilities, equipment, written materials and personnel.

2.3.2 Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions

Hofstede (1980) composed a model based on research for IBM in the sixties. The model consists of five cultural dimensions to differentiate between national cultures: Power distance, individualism, masculinity, uncertainty avoidance and long-term orientation. Power distance can be described as the degree of inequality between people and their superiors in organizations that is accepted and seen as normal. Individualism is about the extent to which people are tended to integrate tightly into social groups. For individualistic countries, a higher independence with respect to other people is found compared to countries where collectivism plays a bigger role. Masculinity deals with how strong the feeling in a country is about a rigid division of roles between males and females.

A country with a high degree of masculinity has restrictions with respect to free role selection, and the more feminine the society is, the more freedom regarding role selection. Uncertainty avoidance tries to measure the influence of culture on how comfortable or uncomfortable people feel when they are placed in an uncertain or unknown situation. The last cultural dimension, which Hofstede added later to the four mentioned above, is long-term orientation (with short-term orientation as its counterpart). In societies with a long-term orientation, values such as perseverance, thrift and a feeling of shame are important. Values belonging to the short-term orientation are fulfilling social obligations and protecting your face.

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a cross sectional survey research design. The study was carried out in Nairobi City County, Kenya. The study population was twelve 3-5 star hotels in Nairobi. The target population was therefore 12 managers, 72 supervisors and 1220 customers. Yamane (1967) formula was used to calculate a sample size of 61 supervisors and 301

customers. Thus, stratified random sampling was used to select 61 supervisors and 301 customers. Purposive sampling was used to choose 12 Hotel managers. Two sets of questionnaire and an interview guide was used to collect data. The questionnaires were administered to supervisors and customers. A Likert scale of five responses was used. Interview schedule were administered to hotel managers. Pre-test was conducted in order to test for reliability and validity of the data collection instruments.

The statistics generated include descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics consisted of computation of sums, means, standard deviations, frequencies and percentages. The particular inferential statistics were correlation and regression analyses. A critical p value of 0.05 was used to determine whether the individual variables are significant or not. Hypothesis testing was done using significance t-calculated statistic. The acceptance/rejection criterion was that, if the t calculated is greater than the t-critical statistic of 1.96, the study fails to reject the Ho but if it's less than 1.96 t-critical, the study rejects the Ho. The qualitative data collected using the interview guide was analyzed using content analysis.

4.0 DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Response rate

The number of questionnaires distributed was 61 supervisors. A total of 56 questionnaires were retuned. Further, 301 questionnaires for customers was distributed where 235 questionaries' were successfully filled and returned. Twelve (12) hotel managers were supposed to participate in interview session, however, 6 hotel managers were available for interview. The response rate is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Response Rate

Item	Administered	Returned	Unreturned	Response rate
Supervisors	61	56	6	91.8
Customers	301	235	66	78.0
Hotel managers	12	6	6	50.0

Results in Table 1 indicate return rate of 78.0% for customers and response rate of 91.8% for managers and supervisors. A response rate of above 50% is adequate for a descriptive study. Further, Babbie (2004) confirms that response rates of above 50% are acceptable for analysis, 60% is good, 70% is very good while above 80% is excellent. Hence, a response rate of 78.0% for customers, 91.8% for customers and 50.0% participation rate for hotel mangers was good for the study (Kothari, 2004).

4.2 Customer cultural orientation

4.2.1 Relationship between customer cultural orientation and service quality3-5 star hotels in Nairobi City County

Table 2 present model fit statistics for the regression model fitted to the data.

Table 2: Customer cultural orientation model fit

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
	.574[a]	.330	.323	.47509

The results show that customer cultural orientation explained 33.0% of variation in service quality of 3-5 star hotels in Nairobi City County. Culture orientation also has strong impact on customers' expectation and evaluation of service quality. Customers from different cultural backgrounds are accustomed to their standards of service quality; therefore, it is imperative to look at the service cultures in each country and from which hotel operators can determine what guests from each culture expects from their services. The results are in agreement with Furrer, Liu and Sudharshan (2000) who conducted a study on the relationships between culture and service quality perceptions and found that reliability and responsiveness are extremely important and are delighted by empathetic service employees, service providers should put forth much of their effort on equipping and empowering the employees so that they are capable of providing dependable, accurate, and prompt services. The results agree with Khairizam, et al (2013) who conducted a study to examine guest perception on service quality in hotel industry in Malaysia and revealed that tangibility aspect is very important to influence the level of customer perception on service quality. Table 3 presents the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) statistics.

Table 3: Analysis of variance

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	11.231	1	11.231	49.757	.000
Residual	22.797	101	.226		
Total	34.027	102			

The results indicate that the model with one predictor variable (customer cultural orientation) was statistically significant and predicts the dependent variable (service quality of 3-5 star hotels in Nairobi City County). This results is supported with the F-Statistic equal to 49.757 and the calculated p-value equal to 0.00<0.05. Culture orientation has strong impact on customers' expectation and evaluation of service quality.

Customers from different cultural backgrounds are accustomed to their standards of service quality; therefore, it is imperative to look at the service cultures in each country and from which hotel operators can determine what guests from each culture expects from their services. Investigating each culture in detail helps hoteliers with the application of culture in their customizable service designs.

Riddle (1992) suggested that hotel guests from cultures preferring low context communication tend to focus their evaluations on task completion and efficient delivery, whereas guests from cultures that prefer high context communication tend to focus on the quality of the interactions between employees and guests. The results are also consistent with Seo (2012) who conducted a study on cultural impact on customer satisfaction and service quality evaluation in hotels and found that it is important to measure customer satisfaction of hotel guests using cultural aspects and to provide service in accordance with the cultural aspects. The results are also in line with de Araújo, Costa and Nóbrega (2013) a customer orientation and servant behavior, in turn, appear to be important factors to consider in enhancing service quality provision in hotel industry. The regression coefficients of the model were presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Regression coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.438	.243		5.920	.000
Customer cultural orientation	.544	.077	.574	7.054	.000

The specific model was:

Service quality $=1.438+.544X_1$

Where X_1 is customer cultural orientation

From the analysis, customer cultural orientation was found to have a positive and significant relationship with service quality of 3-5 star hotels in Nairobi City County (r=.544, p=0.000<0.05). This means that a unitary increase in customer cultural orientation will lead to a corresponding .544 unit increase in service quality of 3-5 star hotels in Nairobi City County. Hotels' practices often dismiss the importance of cultural orientation in their continual attempts to provide the best quality service based on their own understanding of service quality. In order to remain competitive in a globalized hotel industry, providing services that serve diverse customer cultures is important.

> *"....culture of guests is highly respected in this hotel. The hotel considers service culture as critical in enhancing quality service delivery. The service culture focuses on serving and satisfying the customer and is characterized by a strong commitment to service".* Hotel Manager 1 [Key Informant, 2019]

The results agree with Umesh (2014) who conducted a study on relationship between service quality and customer relationship between service quality and customer relationship between service quality and customer relationship between service quality and customer relationship between service quality and established that the courtesy of attendants, comfort in guestroom, cleanliness and environment of hotel play a vital role in creating serenity and subsequent contentment among customers. The results are also in consistent with Donthu and Yoo (1998) who conducted a study on cultural influences on service quality expectations and found that consumers have varying quality service expectations and expect responsive and reliable services.

4.2.2 Hypothesis testing for customer cultural orientation

The hypothesis was tested using the simple linear regression model as shown in Table 4. The study sought to test the given null hypothesis:

$H_{o1:}$ *There is no significant relationship between customer cultural orientation and service quality of 3-5 star hotels in Nairobi City County.*

The criterion for rejecting null hypothesis is to reject the null hypothesis if the calculated t value is greater than the critical value of 1.96. The results in Table 4 show that the calculated value of 7.054>1.96, hence, the null hypothesis was rejected therefore customer cultural orientation has a significant relationship with service quality of 3-5 star hotels in Nairobi City County. In order to remain competitive in a globalized hotel industry, it is critical to develop services that are able to satisfy a very diverse customer cultures. Culture is one of the most effective yet complicated elements that hotel operators need to understand in order to provide great services in accordance with the customers' needs. The results are in agreement with Mmutle and Campus (2017) who conducted a study to examine the customers' perception of service quality and its impact on a selected hotel's reputation and found that service quality has an impact on hotel reputation as poor service provision invariably leads to negative conversations and bad publicity concerning the hotel.

4.3 Management perception

4.3.1 Relationship between management perception and service quality of 3-5 star hotels

Table 5 present model fit statistics for the regression model fitted to the data.

Table 5: Management perception model fit

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
	.600	.360	.354	.46432

The results show that management perception explained 36.0% of variation in of variation in service quality of 3-5 star hotels in Nairobi City County. Many managerial initiatives to improve service quality should be clearly defined in the hotel. The hotel management service initiatives to promote service quality may include organizational

support, rewards, empowerment, and employee training and continual service improvement. The results agree with Lu, Berchoux, Marek and Chen (2015) who conducted a study on hotel service quality and customer satisfaction and established that there were no fundamental disconnects in the respective understandings of managers and guests; however, the two groups used different language to describe luxury, service quality and satisfaction; the managers evaluated satisfaction in terms of services provided, but the guests conceptualized satisfaction in terms of value received for the price of lodging; and luxury, service quality and satisfaction were closely related in the minds of the managers and guests and were not independent constructs. The results are also in agreement with Kiange (2011) who conducted a study on managers' perception of customer expectation and perceived service quality the case of hotel industry and established that managers have a good idea of what customers expect in terms of service quality, however, this study established that there are gaps in service delivery. Table 6 presents the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) statistics.

Table 6: Analysis of variance

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	12.252	1	12.252	56.830	.000
Residual	21.775	101	.216		
Total	34.027	102			

The results in Table 6 indicate that the model with one predictor variable (management perception) was statistically significant and predicts the dependent variable (service quality of 3-5 star hotels in Nairobi City County). The results agree with Vijayadurai (2008) who found that hotel managers should train their personnel to ensure delivery of polite, respectful and friendly service. This results is supported with the F-Statistic equal to 56.830 and the calculated p-value equal to 0.00<0.05. The results are also in agreement with Lacle *et al.* (2013) who conducted a study management perception of service quality in the hospitality industry and established that effectively management service quality starts with having the right perception of service quality which relies on how much emphasis management puts in understanding their customers. The regression coefficients of the model were presented in Table 7.

Table 7: Regression coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.316	.244		5.403	.000
Management perception	.594	.079	.600	7.539	.000

The specific model was:

Service quality $=1.316+.594X_2$

Where X_2 is management perception

From the analysis, management perception was found to have a positive and significant relationship with service quality of 3-5 star hotels in Nairobi City County (r=.594, p=0.000<0.05). This means that a unitary increase in management perception will lead to a corresponding .594 unit increase in service quality of 3-5 star hotels in Nairobi City County. For the hotel industry to achieve its objective of delivering quality service for its customers, it is imperative to study how the hotel management can conceivably meet and even exceed customers' service delivery expectations.

> *"....service quality is of critical importance to this hotel. The management is often involved in making key decisions on how to effectively improve business service delivery in order to compete in a highly competitive industry."* Hotel Manager 5 [Key Informant, 2019]

Management of hotels seeks to know the level at which the customers are satisfied with their services and the kind of service quality levels their customers would like in order to offer the exactly what would be taken positively. The results agree with Aldehayyat, Al Khattab and Anchor, (2011) who found that customers gave the lowest ranking of quality compared to expectations in the "tangible" dimension, meaning that hotel managers should pay more attention to the physical aspects of the service quality. These areas include equipment and facilities, appearance of employees, materials associated with the service and operating hours in the hotels.

The results are also in agreement with Lacle (2013) who conducted a study management perception of service quality in the hospitality industry and established that effectively management service quality starts with having the right perception of service quality which relies on how much emphasis management puts in understanding their customers. According to Wang'ombe and Ngige (2016) hotel management should endeavour to understand what customers expect during service encounter and what features are needed to deliver high quality services. Likewise the results are in line with Mose and Kibera (2015) that there is need for top management support in promoting quality service delivery in the hotels.

4.3.2 Hypothesis testing for Management perception

The hypothesis was tested using the simple linear regression model as shown in Table 7. The study sought to test the given null hypothesis:

$H_{o2:}$ *There is no significant relationship between management perception and service quality of 3-5 star hotels in Nairobi City County.*

The criterion for rejecting null hypothesis is to reject the null hypothesis if the calculated t value is greater than the critical value of 1.96. The results in Table 7 show that the

calculated value of 7.539>1.96, hence, the null hypothesis was rejected therefore management perception has a significant relationship with service quality of 3-5 star hotels in Nairobi City County. The quality of services provided by hotel may not meet up the standard owing to lack of commitment from the hotel management. Hotel management need to know the level at which the customers are satisfied with their services and the kind of service quality levels their customers would like in order to offer the exactly what would be taken positively. This is consistent with Wu and Liang (2009) who noted that the interactions between the employees and guests play a vital role in a customer's perception of the hotel stay. Carneiro and Costa (2001) have emphasized that staffs are effective in the perceptions of customers at five-star hotels in Lisbon. According to Wang'ombe and Ngige (2016) hotel management should endeavour to understand what customers expect during service encounter and what features are needed to deliver high quality services.

4.4 Communication strategies

4.4.2 Relationship between communication strategies and service quality in 3-5 star hotels in Nairobi City County

Table 8 present model fit statistics for the regression model fitted to the data.

Table 8: Communication strategies model fit

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
	.598	.357	.351	.46533

The results show that communication strategies explained 35.7% of service quality of 3-5 star hotels in Nairobi City County. Hotel employees with proper communication and engagement skills would be able to increase the quality of service by managing relationships with customers more effectively due to increased self-confidence and would contribute to the positive perception of customers with regard to the service quality. Effective internal communication facilitates a greater understanding of hotel policy as it relates to providing quality services for the customer. The results are in agreement with Johansson and Carlson (2015) that communication between business and customers, the company identifies a brand image and make a brand promise that are both based on organizational goals and values. All communication between the business and the public is coordinated to reflect this promise, and the focus is on building two-way interactive relationships with customers. Table 9 presents the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) statistics.

Table 9: Analysis of variance

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	12.157	1	12.157	56.146	.000
Residual	21.870	101	.217		
Total	34.027	102			

The results indicate that the model with one predictor variable (communication strategies) was statistically significant and predicts the dependent variable (service quality of 3-5 star hotels in Nairobi City County). This results is supported with the F-statistic equal to 56.146 and the calculated p-value equal to 0.00<0.05. Communication in the hotel industry should be clearly defined. Waiters and waitress play an important role in connecting with and providing service to customers and forming long-term relationships with them.

The results are in line with Seyitoglu and Yuzbasioglu (2015) that there was a positive link between strategic communication dimension and operational effectiveness, as well as increased overall effectiveness of the organization and better internal operational qualities of separate departments. The results conger with Duncan (2004) the company cannot directly control what the public thinks, but works to influence public perceptions through repeated positive contacts. It does this through comprehensive understanding of current and potential customers, made possible by modern database technology; dividing the constituents into logical segments possessing common interests; and communicating with them interactively in ways that are highly relevant to their interests. The regression coefficients of the model were presented in Table 10.

Table 10: Regression coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.305	.247		5.292	.000
Communication strategies	.600	.080	.598	7.493	.000

The specific model was:

Tourism performance $= 1.305 + 0.600 \, X_3$

Where X_3 is communication strategies

From the analysis, communication strategies was found to have a positive and significant relationship service quality of 3-5 star hotels in Nairobi City County (r=0.600, p=0.000<0.05). This means that a unitary increase in communication strategies will lead

to a corresponding 0.495 unit increase in service quality of 3-5 star hotels in Nairobi City County. Hotel employees with proper communication and engagement skills would be able to increase the quality of service by managing relationships with customers more effectively due to increased self-confidence and would contribute to the positive perception of customers with regard to the service quality.

> *"……staff in this hotel have been trained on how to address guests. They are always encouraged to observe core communication essentials that include: make eye contact, smile, greet warmly, and use the customer's name."* Hotel Manager 4 [Key Informant, 2019]

The results agree with Costa, Glinia, Goudas and Antoniou (2004) that in hospitality management, many subtle elements communicate non-verbal messages, such as room cleanliness, employee attitudes and other functions which may or may not be visible to the customer, but affect the customer's experience. According to Muchogu (2016) hotels should have clear channel of communication.

4.4.2 Hypothesis Testing for Communication strategies

The hypothesis was tested using the simple linear regression model as shown in Table 10. The study sought to test the given null hypothesis:

$H_{o3:}$ *There is no significant relationship between communication strategies and service quality of 3-5 star hotels in Nairobi City County.*

The criterion for rejecting null hypothesis is to reject the null hypothesis if the calculated t value is greater than the critical value of 1.96. The results in Table 10 show that the calculated value of 7.493>1.96, hence, the null hypothesis was rejected therefore there is a significant relationship between communication strategies and spending and service quality of 3-5 star hotels in Nairobi City County. Communication in the hotel industry should be clearly defined. Waiters and waitress play an important role in connecting with and providing service to customers and forming long-term relationships with them. The results are in line with Seyitoglu and Yuzbasioglu (2015) that there was a positive link between strategic communication dimension and operational effectiveness, as well as increased overall effectiveness of the organization and better internal operational qualities of separate departments. According to Obiero (2018) effective communication among divisions in the hotel is one of the main factors that contribute to customer satisfaction.

4.5 Challenges Facing Staff in the Hotels as they communicate

Communication satisfaction is an important antecedent to significant work outcomes. Most staff understands utmost two languages. In Kenya, English and Kiswahili is widely spoken However, hotel visitors are from different nationalities and do not understand Kiswahili or native languages. Communication in English is an important antecedent for a noteworthy work performance in hospitality industry. English has been considered the

universal language, an employee into hospitality sector is expected to be more communicative in English language to service guest with no geographic bounds and coordinate immigrant employees from any part of the world. However, some quests are not much acquainted with English and this makes communication between hotel staff and customers problematic. According to Disilva (2017) effective communication enhances service delivery to the guest service while maintaining cultured work environment. Communication plays an imperative role in servicing the guest; an employee with an eminent communication skill preeminently services his guest.

> *"……language barrier is a challenge in this hotel as most employees understand two languages, English and Kiswahili. However, there are visitors speaking other languages and who do not understand Kiswahili and or English languages."* Hotel Manager 4 [Key Informant, 2019]

Communication challenges often lead to misunderstanding of subtle cues or different meanings of similar words leading to mismanagement of personnel. By providing practices that circumvent language barriers, hotel managers may have more resources to be more effective in their communication with subordinates who have limited language skills. Hotel practices that reduce language barriers may include using bilingual personnel or translating materials into various languages. Hotel industry serves the guest more manually the employees should be communicatively presentable to serve his guest. Employees at departments like Front Office, Food and Beverage Service, Accommodation Operation, sales and marketing are urged to provide information to the guest. The employee must be able to understand the guest requirement and provide correct information. Scuffled and vacillated information from the employee may create negative impression about the concern results descend in business. According to Salehi and Hanzaei (2014) that revealed that many customers are satisfied with the ability of staff to speak a foreign language, friendliness of staff providing extra personal attention.

Some of their communicative problems stem from the inability to express themselves correctly using the correct communicative terms. This can also be caused by the lack of confidence to use the language under the certain demanding circumstances and situations. As such, they tend to correct the situation using logical thinking and make simple utterances based on guesswork, which sometimes may not work as expected. Increasing communication problems in the service-producing front office department prevents efficient operation and thus causes the end of customer satisfaction over time and thus the productivity of the accommodation, causing a great damage to the accommodation operation. Briefly, while the success of communication increases customer satisfaction and productivity, miscommunication and problems in communication cause the decrease of the satisfaction of the guests and hence the decrease of the productivity. Harrington and Akehurst (1996) emphasized the need for hotels to develop more effective internal communication systems to facilitate a greater understanding of hotel policy as it relates to providing quality services for the customer. Brownell (1990) has pointed out the importance of clearly defined norm of communication with customers. Waiters and

waitress play an important role in connecting with and providing service to customers and forming long-term relationships with them.

5.0 CONCLUSIONS

The study concluded that the customer background information, management interventions to promote diversity, communication among employees and with customers and customer perceptions and characteristics as indicators of hotel interventions to understanding customer cultural orientations have a significant influence on the service quality expectations among 3-5 star hotel clients in Nairobi City County, Kenya.

From the study findings, the study concludes that service quality expectations among 3-5 star hotel clients in Nairobi City County is significantly influenced by customer cultural orientation, management perception and communication strategies. The study found that customer cultural orientation had a positive and statistically significant relationship with service quality of three to five star hotels in Nairobi City County. The study therefore concludes that a unit increase in customer cultural orientation of five star hotels in Nairobi City County would lead to a unit increase in service quality of three to five star hotels in Nairobi City County.

The study found that management perception had positive and statistically significant relationship with service quality expectations in 3-5 star hotels in Nairobi County. The study therefore concludes that a unit increase in management perception would lead to a unit increase in service quality expectations in 3-5 star hotels in Nairobi County.

It was also concluded that communication strategies had positive and statistically significant relationship with service quality expectations in 3-5 star hotels in Nairobi County. The study therefore concludes that an improvement in communication strategies with quests would lead to improvement in service quality expectations in 3-5 star hotels in Nairobi County.

There existed management goodwill, informed staff with necessary skills and strategic location and catchment of clientele but the customer service strategy was poor, poor communication skills among the hotel staff and poor customer care and also failure of staff to appreciate diverse client cultural orientation to reliably improve service quality and customer service. This led to poor attendance to customers and therefore performance below expectations among the 3-5 star hotels in Nairobi City County.

The study concluded that staff in star rated hotels faced some communication challenges. Most staff understands utmost two languages. In Kenya, English and Kiswahili is widely spoken However, hotel visitors are from different nationalities and do not understand Kiswahili or native languages. Communication challenges often lead to misunderstanding of subtle cues or different meanings of similar words leading to mismanagement of personnel.

6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. It was recommended that for the establishments to offer quality service and to customer expectations, the staff need to be updated on diversity in cultural orientation among the customers, take time to understand the needs of their customers, help clients to make decisions and learn more to get to know the diverse culture, language, perception, psychology, economy, political and social backgrounds of the clients.
2. The managers and supervisors need to lead from the front by knowing diverse languages, culture and psychology to enable handle clients who may proof hard to handle by the other staff.
3. The hotels need to invest in the capacity of their employees by taking them for trainings to improve their knowledge and skill base. This will assist in improving service delivery and hence customer satisfaction.

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