

**EFFECT OF CUSTOMER SERVICE PERFORMANCE ON GUEST LOYALTY: A
CASE OF CASCADE HOTEL, THIKA TOWN.**

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HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT OF GREYSA UNIVERSITY**

OCTOBER, 2025

DECLARATION AND APPROVAL

DECLARATION

Declaration by Student

I declare that this is my original project and has never been presented to any other university for a similar purpose.

Signature:  _____


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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

SERVPERF– Service performance Model (developed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry)

HPM – Hospitality Management

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

Customer Service Performance – The quality of service provided by hotel staff, measured using the SERVPERF model across five dimensions: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. In this study, customer service performance is the independent variable.

Guest Loyalty – The likelihood of guests returning to the hotel, recommending it to others, and their overall satisfaction. In this study, guest loyalty is the dependent variable, measured through repeat patronage, positive word-of-mouth, and emotional attachment.

Tangibles – The physical aspects of the hotel, including cleanliness, staff appearance, and the overall atmosphere.

Responsiveness – The willingness and timeliness of hotel staff to address guest requests and concerns.

Assurance – The staff's professionalism, competency, and capacity to instill confidence and trust in visitors.

Empathy – The degree of individualized care and attention that hotel employees give visitors.

SERVPERF Model – Five factors are the core of this approach for evaluating service quality: tangibles, assurance, responsiveness, empathy, and reliability.

Convenience Sampling – Participants who are willing and able to participate were chosen for this study using a non-probability sampling technique.

ABSTRACT

Customer service performance is a fundamental driver of guest loyalty in the hospitality industry, influencing guest satisfaction, repeat patronage, and word-of-mouth recommendations. Using the SERVPERF model, which assesses service quality along five major dimensions—tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy—this study looks at how customer service performance affects client loyalty at the Cascade Hotel in Thika Town, Kenya. The purpose of the study was to ascertain how these aspects of service quality affect patron loyalty, as indicated by recommendations, return business, and emotional ties to the hotel. Data from 170 hotel guests was gathered using structured questionnaires as part of a quantitative study strategy. To determine the association between service quality aspects and guest loyalty, the data was examined using cross-tabulation techniques, frequency distribution, and descriptive statistics. The findings revealed that responsiveness and tangibles had the most significant influence on guest loyalty, with 76.5% of guests rating responsiveness positively and 67.7% expressing satisfaction with the hotel's physical aspects. Additionally, it was discovered that assurance and dependability played a major role in fostering guest loyalty by guaranteeing that services were provided consistently and that employees instilled confidence in visitors. Although empathy, which entails individualized care and attention, was important, its influence was not as great as that of other factors. The study concludes that maintaining high service quality standards across all SERVPERF dimensions is essential for fostering guest loyalty. Key recommendations for Cascade Hotel's management include enhancing physical facilities, improving service reliability, and ensuring staff responsiveness to guest needs. Additionally, investing in staff training programs to improve professionalism, customer engagement, and problem resolution is crucial. The study also suggests leveraging technology, such as digital feedback systems and personalized customer engagement strategies, to improve service delivery. For hospitality managers, this study offers insightful information that highlights the need of reliable, superior service as a tactic for retaining customers and gaining a competitive edge. Additionally, it adds to the larger body of scholarly research on customer service effectiveness and loyalty in the hospitality sector, especially in the setting of Kenya. In order to better understand visitor experiences and expectations, future study could examine comparable studies conducted in other hotels or geographical areas using qualitative approaches.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter will include the research backdrop, problem statement, study purpose, and goals that served as the study's compass. the research questions, the conceptual framework that lists the dependent and independent variables, the importance of the study, its boundaries or scope, and its constraints.

1.2 Background of the Study

The hotel sector has long acknowledged that providing excellent customer service is a key factor in determining patron loyalty. In an increasingly competitive global market, hotels that prioritize exceptional customer service tend to enjoy higher retention rates, positive word-of-mouth referrals, and a stronger brand reputation. Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988) created the SERVPERF model, which has been widely used to assess service quality in five important areas: tangibles, assurance, responsiveness, empathy, and reliability. These factors offer a thorough foundation for comprehending how customer happiness and loyalty are impacted by service quality.

The hospitality sector in Africa has grown quickly, and retaining customers depends heavily on providing excellent customer service. According to studies, the main elements in raising client happiness and loyalty are professional staff, timely responses to guests' demands, and individualized service. (Agyapong et al., 2021). This is particularly relevant in countries where tourism is a major economic driver, such as Kenya. In East Africa, the hospitality sector has seen a direct correlation between improved customer service practices and increased guest loyalty (Muriithi & Wambugu, 2022). Hotels in Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania have increasingly focused on delivering high-quality service to attract and retain guests.

Customer service is a major factor in fostering repeat business in Kenya's hotel sector, which makes a substantial economic contribution to the country. Research by Kariuki and Mwangi (2022) indicates that hotels in urban areas, such as Nairobi and Thika, are investing heavily in staff training and digital innovations to enhance customer service performance. These investments are seen as essential strategies for retaining existing customers and attracting new ones in a highly competitive market.

Thika Town, located in the central region of Kenya, has a growing hospitality industry that is increasingly focusing on customer service to drive guest loyalty. Local studies, such as those conducted by Njoroge and Kamau (2021), reveal that hotels in Thika are adopting customer-centric approaches to improve guest experiences. These approaches include personalized services, quick problem resolution, and enhanced staff training programs.

Cascade Hotel, one of the prominent hotels in Thika Town, has been at the forefront of implementing robust customer service strategies. The hotel's management believes that customer service is integral to achieving guest loyalty. According to a recent internal report (Cascade Hotel, 2023), initiatives such as staff training, customer feedback mechanisms, and personalized guest services have been introduced to enhance the overall guest experience. However, despite these efforts, the hotel has faced challenges in maintaining consistent guest satisfaction and loyalty, as indicated by fluctuating guest satisfaction scores and repeat patronage rates.

Recent trends in the hospitality industry, influenced by technological advancements and changing guest expectations, have underscored the importance of exceptional customer service. Digital innovations such as mobile check-ins, virtual concierge services, and personalized marketing are becoming standard practices to improve customer service performance (Smith & Johnson, 2022). Employing these advances puts hotels in a better position to increase customer loyalty by providing more convenient and fulfilling experiences.

By examining these global, regional, and local perspectives, this study explored how customer service performance at Cascade Hotel influenced guest loyalty, providing insights into effective practices and strategies that could be adopted to enhance customer retention.

1.3 Statement of Problem

A key component of hotels' performance and long-term viability is patron loyalty. Even while customer service is increasingly acknowledged as a major factor in fostering repeat business, many hotels struggle to consistently deliver the high-quality service that meets or exceeds guest expectations. Cascade Hotel, located in Thika Town, faces similar challenges, as indicated by fluctuating guest satisfaction scores and repeat patronage rates. While the hotel has implemented various customer service initiatives, There is still more to learn about

how these initiatives result in devoted customers. The management's capacity to make well-informed decisions targeted at enhancing customer retention is hampered by the lack of hard data at the Cascade Hotel that links customer service effectiveness to guest loyalty. By examining the impact of customer service performance on patron loyalty at the Cascade Hotel, this study filled this knowledge gap and offered practical advice for improving service delivery and cultivating enduring visitor connections.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

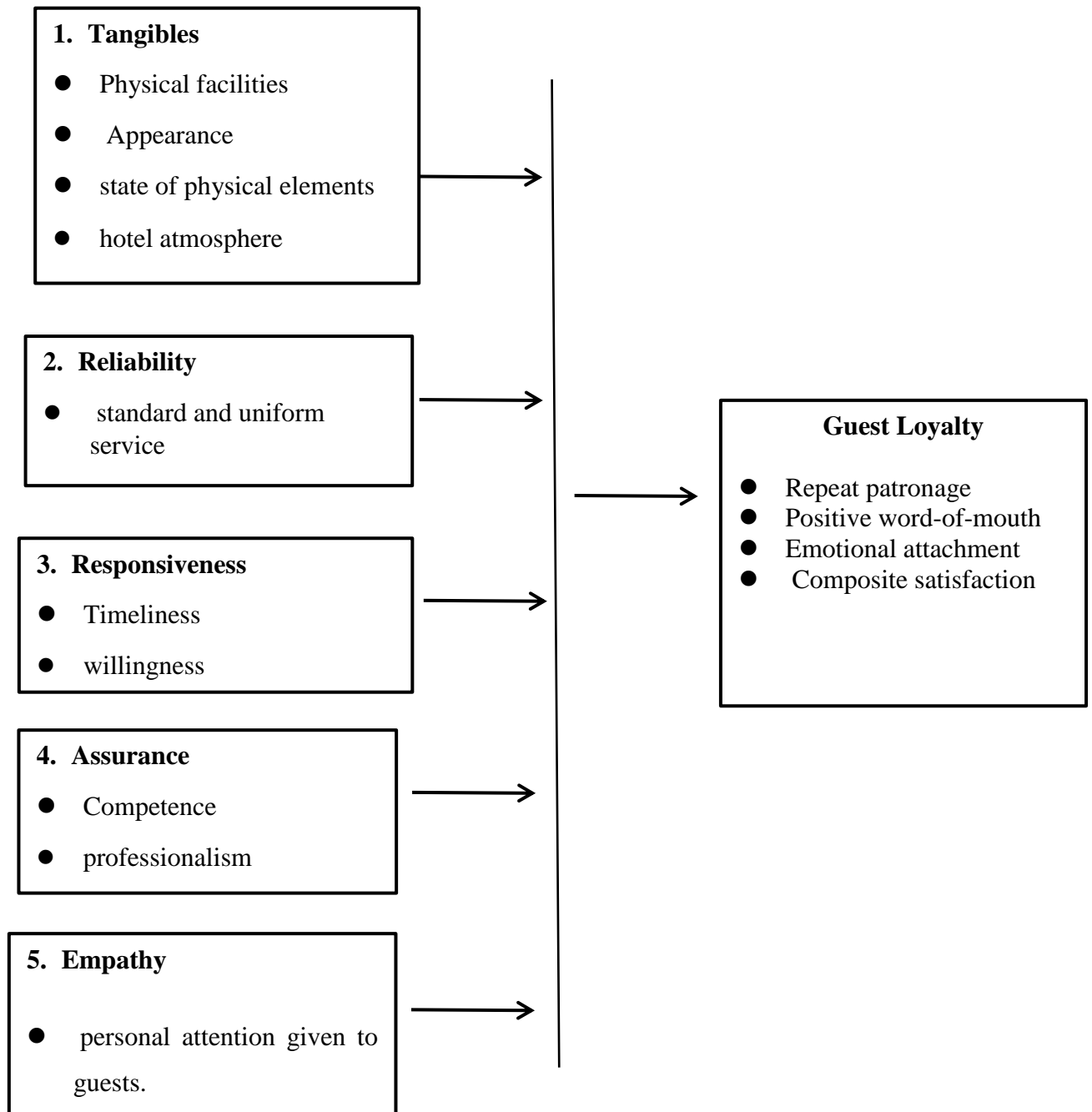
This study set out to assess the Cascade Hotel in Thika Town's customer service performance as determined by the SERVPERF model in connection to its effect on patron loyalty. The goal of the study was to investigate how several aspects of service quality—specifically, tangibles, assurance, responsiveness, responsiveness, and empathy—affect customer happiness, loyalty, and repeat business. Specifically, the research aimed to determine how the physical appearance of facilities and staff (tangibles), the dependability of service delivery (reliability), the promptness and willingness of staff to assist guests (responsiveness), the competence and courtesy of employees in instilling trust (assurance), and the individualized attention and care provided to guests (empathy) contribute to overall guest loyalty. By concentrating on these factors, the study aimed to shed light on how Cascade Hotel may improve the quality of its services in order to foster closer ties with its patrons and promote return business.

1.5 Conceptual Framework

Independent Variables

Dependent Variable

Customer service performance



1. Figure 1.1 : Conceptual Framework

1.6 Objectives of the Study

1.6.1 General Objective

To evaluate customer service performance as measured by the SERVPERF model in terms of its impact on guest loyalty at Cascade Hotel, Thika.

1.6.2 Specific Objectives

- i. To determine the influence of tangibles on guest loyalty at Cascade Hotel, Thika Town.
- ii. To establish the effect of reliability on guest loyalty at Cascade Hotel, Thika Town.
- iii. To examine the influence of staff responsiveness on guest loyalty at Cascade Hotel, Thika Town.
- iv. To assess the effect of assurance on guest trust and loyalty at Cascade Hotel, Thika Town.
- v. To evaluate the influence of empathy on guest satisfaction and repeat patronage at Cascade Hotel, Thika Town.

1.7 Research Questions

- i. How do tangibles influence guest loyalty at Cascade Hotel, Thika Town?
- ii. How does reliability affect guest loyalty at Cascade Hotel, Thika Town?
- iii. How does staff responsiveness influence guest loyalty at Cascade Hotel, Thika Town?
- iv. How does assurance impact guest trust and loyalty at Cascade Hotel, Thika Town?
- v. How does empathy affect guest satisfaction and repeat patronage at Cascade Hotel, Thika Town?

1.8 Research Hypothesis

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between tangibles and guest loyalty at Cascade Hotel, Thika Town.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between reliability and guest loyalty at Cascade Hotel, Thika Town.

H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between staff responsiveness and guest loyalty at Cascade Hotel, Thika Town.

H₀₄: There is no significant relationship between assurance and guest trust and loyalty at Cascade Hotel, Thika Town.

H₀₅: There is no significant relationship between empathy and guest satisfaction and repeat patronage at Cascade Hotel, Thika Town.

1.9 Significance of the Study

There were various reasons why this study was important. First, it gave the management of the Cascade Hotel important information on the connection between visitor loyalty and customer service performance, which they used to improve their service tactics. Second, it contributed to the body of information previously available in the hospitality industry by offering actual data on the results of customer service initiatives. Third, it served as a reference for other hotels in Thika Town and beyond, looking to enhance guest loyalty through improved customer service practices. Finally, the study helped students and academic researchers who wanted to learn more about the dynamics of loyalty and customer service in the hospitality industry.

1.10 Scope of the Study

The study examined the relationship between customer service effectiveness and guest loyalty at the Cascade Hotel in Thika Town. It covered various aspects of customer service, includes the SERVPERF model's definitions of tangibles, assurance, responsiveness, dependability, and empathy. Data for the study came from questionnaires, interviews, and observational methods, and it was restricted to the hotel's employees and visitors. Although the results were especially designed for the Cascade Hotel, it was anticipated that they would apply to other comparable hotels in the area.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a comprehensive review of literature related to customer service performance and its effect on guest loyalty within the hospitality industry. The chapter begins with a general review of literature related to the main concepts of the study customer service performance and guest loyalty followed by thematic discussions organized according to each research objective. The theoretical framework guiding the study is then discussed, highlighting the key theories underpinning the research. Finally, a summary of the identified gaps in the reviewed literature is presented to justify the need for the current study.

2.2 Review of Literature Related to the Main Concept

Customer service performance has become an essential factor in determining the success and competitiveness of hotels. It refers to how effectively a hospitality organization meets or exceeds guest expectations through the delivery of quality service (Ali, 2021). The SERVPERF model, which evaluates five essential dimensions—tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy—is frequently used to gauge service quality in the hotel sector (Cronin & Taylor, 1992). These elements collectively shape the guest's overall perception and influence their satisfaction and loyalty.

Conversely, the desire of patrons to return to the same business and to suggest it to others is known as guest loyalty (Kim & Lee, 2021). It involves both behavioral loyalty demonstrated through repeat patronage and attitudinal loyalty shown through emotional attachment and positive word-of-mouth. In a competitive market such as the hospitality sector, maintaining guest loyalty requires consistent, personalized, and trustworthy service. Hotels that consistently meet customer expectations build long-term relationships and enjoy higher retention rates, profitability, and brand reputation (Bandyopadhyay & Martell, 2021).

2.3 Tangibles and Guest Loyalty

Tangibles refer to the appearance of physical facilities, cleanliness, décor, staff appearance, and the general ambiance of the hotel. These factors form the first impression for guests and influence how they perceive the overall service quality (Park, Back, & Bufquin, 2021).

Tangible components are important for client retention and satisfaction, according to earlier research. The physical surroundings of hotels might affect visitors' feelings and propensity to return, according to Bitner (1990). Similarly, Agyapong and Boakye (2021) found that guests associate well-maintained facilities with professionalism and reliability. When a hotel invests

in appealing décor, modern amenities, and neat staff uniforms, it enhances comfort and confidence among guests.

In Kenya, many hotels have realized that tangibles directly affect brand image and customer perception. Kariuki and Mwangi (2022) reported that urban hotels in Thika and Nairobi have improved their interior design and cleanliness to attract and retain customers. Therefore, a crucial component of service quality that directly influences customer loyalty is the appearance of the facilities and personnel.

2.4 Reliability and Guest Loyalty

Examining how dependability affects customer loyalty was the second goal. The ability of the hotel to continuously provide services as agreed upon, such as prompt room service, correct billing, and dependable amenities, is referred to as reliability. (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988). Because consistency fosters brand confidence, it is one of the best indicators of guest trust.

According to Megehee and Spake (2023), reliable service delivery increases customer confidence and the likelihood of repeat patronage. Guests who experience consistent quality are more likely to perceive the hotel as trustworthy. Similarly, Lovelock and Patterson (2022) claim that because dependability reduces uncertainty and guarantees predictability in the service process, it is the foundation of customer happiness.

In the hospitality context, when guests receive consistent experiences such as correct bookings, prompt responses, and dependable services they develop a sense of assurance that motivates them to return. However, inconsistency, delays, or errors can negatively affect satisfaction. Consistent service performance across departments can greatly increase trust and strengthen visitor loyalty for Cascade Hotel.

2.5 Responsiveness and Guest Loyalty

The third objective focused on determining how responsiveness the promptness and willingness of staff to help affects guest loyalty. Responsiveness measures how quickly hotel staff attend to customer inquiries, requests, and complaints. In the hospitality industry, timely service is often associated with care and professionalism (Barsky & Nash, 2019).

Of all the SERVPERF aspects, Chen and Peng (2022) discovered that responsiveness had the biggest impact on visitor pleasure and loyalty. Guests appreciate when staff respond quickly to their needs, as it demonstrates attentiveness and respect. Dedeoğlu and Demirer (2023)

further noted that responsiveness enhances the emotional bond between guests and the hotel, especially when employees handle challenges with empathy and efficiency.

In Kenya, responsiveness remains a key differentiator for hotels competing in busy towns like Thika. Quick check-ins, prompt room service, and effective problem-solving contribute to positive guest experiences. Enhancing response times and giving employees the tools they need to effectively handle client problems could greatly increase Cascade Hotel's customer retention and happiness.

2.6 Assurance and Guest Loyalty

The fourth objective explored the role of assurance—the competence, courtesy, and professionalism of staff in building guest loyalty. Assurance gives guests confidence that the service providers are knowledgeable and capable of meeting their needs. It involves the ability of staff to inspire trust through professionalism, politeness, and reliability (Nguyen, de Pelsmacker, & Nguyen, 2023).

According to Bandyopadhyay and Martell (2021), guests are more loyal to hotels where employees exhibit confidence and integrity in their work. Assurance also involves clear communication, which reduces misunderstandings and enhances trust. Kim and Lee (2021) observed that staff professionalism contributes to guests feeling safe and respected, thereby strengthening their attachment to the hotel brand.

Because of rising visitor awareness and expectations, assurance has become more crucial in Kenya's hotel industry. Hotels that invest in staff training to improve professionalism, communication skills, and service ethics tend to enjoy higher guest retention. For Cascade Hotel, maintaining staff competence and confidence can reinforce guest trust and promote repeat visits.

2.7 Theoretical Framework

The current study is guided by two main theories: the SERVPERF Model (Cronin & Taylor, 1992) and Customer Loyalty Theory (Oliver, 1999).

2.7.1 SERVPERF Model

The SERVPERF model forms the foundation for assessing service performance in this study. It focuses on actual performance perceptions rather than expectation gaps, making it more relevant for evaluating real guest experiences in hotels. The model comprises five

dimensions—tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy—that collectively determine service quality.

According to Cronin and Taylor (1992), eliminating the expectation component simplifies the assessment process and yields more accurate results. Studies by Ali (2021) and Brady (2002) confirmed that the SERVPERF model provides a better prediction of customer satisfaction and loyalty than traditional models like SERVQUAL. For Cascade Hotel, the SERVPERF model offers a practical framework to measure how each service dimension influences guest loyalty.

2.7.2 Customer Loyalty Theory

Oliver's (1999) Customer Loyalty Theory explains how repeated positive experiences lead to loyalty. It posits that loyalty evolves in three stages: cognitive (based on rational evaluation of quality), affective (emotional attachment), and conative (behavioral commitment). This theory highlights that loyalty extends beyond satisfaction; it also involves emotional and psychological commitment.

This theory aids in explaining why visitors form enduring bonds and brand advocacy with Cascade Hotel when they receive dependable, tailored, and consistent services. It offers a strong theoretical foundation for investigating how aspects of service performance affect customer loyalty when paired with SERVPERF.

2.8 Summary of Identified Gaps in the Reviewed Literature

There are still a number of holes in the vast amount of study that has been done on customer service and visitor loyalty worldwide. First, most studies focus on luxury hotels or international chains, with limited attention to mid-sized hotels such as those in Thika Town. Second, previous studies (e.g., Chen & Peng, 2022; Megehee & Spake, 2023) have emphasized the general link between service quality and loyalty but have not examined the relative impact of specific SERVPERF dimensions in a Kenyan context.

Third, there is insufficient empirical evidence addressing how customer service performance influences loyalty in smaller, locally owned hotels where management and service practices differ significantly from multinational brands. This study fills these gaps by applying the SERVPERF model to Cascade Hotel to determine how tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, and assurance influence guest loyalty in a localized context. The findings will provide

actionable insights for hotel managers seeking to enhance service delivery and strengthen guest relationships.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The research approach utilized to examine the connection between guest loyalty and customer service performance at the Cascade Hotel in Thika Town is described in this chapter. The study used a quantitative research approach, and only structured questionnaires were used to collect data. The questionnaire was designed to measure guest perceptions of service quality across the five dimensions of the SERVPERF model (tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy) and their impact on guest loyalty. This chapter provides a detailed description of the questionnaire, its structure, and the data collection process.

3.2 Research Design

A descriptive research approach was used in the study, which was suitable for comprehending the present condition of customer service performance and how it affects customer loyalty. The descriptive design allowed for the collection of quantitative data that could be analyzed to identify patterns, trends, and relationships between service quality and guest loyalty. Data collection was methodical and concentrated on the important factors of interest thanks to the use of a standardized questionnaire.

3.3 Study Area

The Cascade Hotel in Thika Town, Kiambu County, Kenya, served as the study's site.. Thika was a major urban and commercial centre in central Kenya and served as an important industrial and transport hub for the surrounding counties. Cascade Hotel operated within this dynamic urban environment and attracted a variety of visitors, business travelers, and local customers, which makes it a suitable location to look into how customer service effectiveness affected patronage. The hotel was situated within the central business area of Thika, with convenient access to main roads, transport services, and commercial activities. Its location within an urban context exposed it to diverse customer segments and frequent guest turnover, providing a rich environment for observing and measuring customer service interactions.

3.4 Target Population

The target population for this study comprised 360 guests who had stayed at Cascade Hotel during the research period. The study focused on both repeat and first-time visitors to ensure

a diverse range of perspectives on service quality and loyalty. The population figure of 360 guests was obtained from the hotel's guest registry records for the study period (Cascade Hotel Guest Registry, 2025).

3.5 Sampling Technique

The study employed a convenience sampling technique to choose participants. This approach was selected because it made it possible to get data from visitors who were willing and able to engage in an efficient manner. The sample included guests from different demographic backgrounds and stay durations to ensure a representative mix of perspectives.

3.6 Sample Size

Following Taro Yamane Formula (Uakarn, Chaokromthong & Sintao, N.2021 we can work out the needed sample population

$$n = N / (1 + Ne^2)$$

where:

n = sample size

N = population size

e = error (0.05) reliability level 95%

Taking N=360 then

$$n=360 / (1 + 360(0.05^2))$$

$$n= 360/ (1+0.9)$$

$$n= 360/1.9$$

$$n=189.4736$$

Thus, the study's sample size consisted of 190 workers from the three hotels in Thika town that were chosen..

3.7 Measurement of Variables

The table below outlines the variables measured in the study, their corresponding questions, and whether they are independent or dependent variables.

1 Table 3.1: Measurement of Variables.

Variable	Measurement	Type
Tangibles	Cleanliness and maintenance of facilities, staff appearance, atmosphere	Independent
Reliability	Consistency in delivering services as promised, service quality	Independent
Responsiveness	Staff's willingness to help, timeliness in addressing requests	Independent
Assurance	Competence, professionalism, and confidence-inspiring behavior of staff	Independent
Empathy	Staff's ability to understand and cater to guest needs	Independent
Guest Loyalty	Likelihood of returning, recommending the hotel, overall satisfaction	Dependent

3.8 Research Instrument

Hotel, Thika Town, a structured questionnaire was utilized as the main research instrument. The questionnaire was systematically designed to collect data on key variables of customer service performance, Specifically, tangibles, guest loyalty, certainty, attentiveness, responsiveness, and empathy. To aid in quantitative analysis, it was primarily composed of closed-ended questions on a five-point Likert scale from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5). The survey was broken down into sections that collected demographic data, opinions on aspects of service quality, and measures of customer loyalty like satisfaction, intention to return, and recommendation. The questionnaire was preferred because it allowed for the collection of standardized data from a relatively large sample of guests in an efficient and objective manner.

3.9 Validity of Measurement

To make sure the questionnaire appropriately captured all pertinent facets of the characteristics being examined the study used content validity. Content validity involved assessing whether each questionnaire item adequately represented the indicators for each variable, such as the physical appearance of facilities, consistency of service delivery, promptness of staff response, level of staff competence, and personalized attention to guests. To achieve this, experts in hospitality management, customer service, and research methodology reviewed the questionnaire and provided feedback on its clarity, comprehensiveness, and relevance. Their expert advice enabled the instrument to be improved so that it accurately measured guest loyalty as intended and sufficiently covered all important aspects of customer service performance. The general validity and correctness of the data gathered for the study were improved by this procedure..

3.10 Reliability of Measurement

Internal consistency was used in the study to assess the questionnaire's dependability. This method made sure that, under constant circumstances, the items created to measure the same variable yielded comparable findings. Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was used in reliability testing to assess how consistent and linked the items in each construct were to one another. A high degree of internal consistency among the items was indicated by a Cronbach's Alpha score of 0.7 or more, which was deemed satisfactory. This approach made guaranteed that the tool yielded consistent and reliable findings for various responders and over the course of multiple administrations.

3.11 Data Collection Technique

Guests were given the questionnaire either during their stay or when they checked out. Participants were provided with a brief explanation of the study's purpose and assured of the confidentiality of their responses. To satisfy visitor preferences and guarantee a high response rate, the survey was made available in paper and digital versions. Over the course of four weeks, 170 completed questionnaires were gathered as part of the data gathering process.

3.12 Data Analysis Methods

Frequency distribution analysis was used to examine the information gathered from the questionnaire. The responses were categorized according to their “Very Poor,” “Poor,” “Neutral,” “Good,” and “Very Good,” and the frequency of each response was calculated. The analysis followed several key steps. Counting the number of answers in each category for each question was the first step in the frequency distribution. The distribution of answers across categories was then better understood by converting the frequencies into percentages. Lastly, the connection between the independent variables the service quality dimensions and the dependent variable guest loyalty was investigated using cross tabulation. Tables and charts were used to display the analysis's results, giving a succinct and aesthetically pleasing synopsis.

3.13 Ethical Considerations

Several ethical and logistical guidelines were followed in this study to guarantee that the research was carried out effectively and ethically. First and foremost, all participants gave their informed consent after being fully informed about the study's objectives, the terms of their involvement, and their freedom to discontinue participation at any moment without incurring any fees. Second, during the whole research procedure, confidentiality and anonymity were rigorously upheld. The identities of the participants were kept secret because all data was managed securely and utilized only for academic purposes. Thirdly, the study was executed smoothly because to meticulous planning of logistical arrangements, including obtaining access to hotel guests, setting up suitable data collection times, and guaranteeing sufficient sample representation. Additionally, by using standardized questionnaires and remaining impartial during data collection and analysis, attempts were taken to reduce any potential biases—both from the researcher and participants. These

practical and ethical steps were essential for protecting study participants' rights, maintaining data integrity, and boosting the validity of the study's conclusions..

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

The findings from the data gathered at the Cascade Hotel in Thika Town are shown and discussed in this chapter. Using the five SERVPERF model elements as a guide, the analysis's goal was to assess how guest loyalty is impacted by customer service performance. The study used both descriptive and inferential statistical methods to interpret the findings comprehensively.

Descriptive statistics, including frequencies and percentages, were used to summarize responses on service quality aspects, while inferential statistics, such as correlation and regression analysis, were employed to evaluate how well the independent and dependent variables predicted one another. Version 27 of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to do the analysis.

4.2 Response Rate

Out of the 190 questionnaires that were given to hotel visitors, 170 were correctly completed and returned, yielding an 89.5% response rate. This response rate above the 70% threshold advised for scholarly research and was deemed exceptional and sufficient for analysis. (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). The high level of participation was made possible by the cooperation of the hotel's management and the researcher's personal follow-up with respondents. This high return rate ensured that the findings accurately represented the views of guests who had experienced the hotel's services.

4.3 Demographic Data

2. Table 4.1: Demographic Data

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	95	55.9
	Female	75	44.1
Age Bracket	Below 20 years	12	7.1
	21–30 years	68	40.0
	31–40 years	55	32.4
	41–50 years	25	14.7
	Above 50 years	10	5.8
Marital Status	Single	87	51.2
	Married	67	39.4
	Divorced/Widowed	16	9.4
Education Level	Secondary	20	11.8
	College Diploma	72	42.4
	Bachelor's Degree	60	35.3
	Postgraduate Degree	18	10.5
Purpose of Visit	Business	72	42.4
	Leisure	63	37.1
	Conference/Seminar	25	14.7
	Other	10	5.8

4.3.1 Gender

The findings showed that out of 170 respondents, 95 were male while 75 were female. This indicates a slight dominance of male guests at Cascade Hotel. The disparity might be explained by the greater proportion of male business tourists, which fits in with Thika's bustling business district. The hotel serves both male and female guests, though males visit more frequently, reflecting a moderate gender balance among the clientele.

4.3.2 Age Bracket

According to the findings, the majority of visitors were between the ages of 21 and 30, with those between the ages of 31 and 40 coming in second. A smaller number of respondents were below 20 years or above 50 years. This pattern shows that the hotel mainly attracts young and middle-aged adults who are likely to be active in employment or business. The dominant age groups were young and middle-aged guests, suggesting that Cascade Hotel appeals primarily to working-age travelers.

4.3.3 Marital Status

According to the study, the majority of respondents were unmarried, followed by married people, and the number of guests who were divorced or widowed was lower. According to this distribution, the majority of the hotel's patrons are independent tourists who may be there for leisure or business. Single guests formed the largest group, implying that Cascade Hotel is popular among individual travelers rather than family-oriented visitors.

4.3.4 Education Level

Most respondents possessed a college diploma, followed by those with a bachelor's degree. Some were postgradually qualified, while others had finished secondary school. This indicates that most guests at Cascade Hotel are well-educated, which aligns with the hotel's business and corporate clientele. The findings suggest that the hotel attracts guests with higher education levels, reflecting a clientele made up mainly of professionals and business travelers.

4.3.5 Purpose of Visit

The majority of respondents visited the hotel for business, followed by those who came for leisure. A smaller number attended conferences or seminars, while a few visited for other purposes. This shows that Cascade Hotel caters to both corporate and leisure markets, though it serves more business-related guests. Business and leisure were the main reasons for visiting Cascade Hotel, showing its effectiveness in meeting both professional and recreational accommodation needs.

4.2 Tangibles and Guest Loyalty

The initial goal was to determine how the hotel's physical features—such as cleanliness, personnel appearance, and overall ambiance—affect patronage.

3. Table 4.2: Tangibles and Guest Loyalty

TANGIBLES	FREQUENCY (N=170)	PERCENT (%)
VERY POOR	7	4.1
POOR	17	10.0
NEUTRAL	31	18.2
GOOD	54	31.8
VERY GOOD	61	35.9
TOTAL	170	100.0

The results show that about 68% of respondents rated the physical appearance and facilities of the hotel as either “Good” or “Very Good.” This indicates that guests appreciated the hotel’s cleanliness, ambiance, and staff appearance. However, a small proportion (14%) expressed dissatisfaction, citing areas such as maintenance and facility upgrades as needing attention.

These findings imply that guests' opinions of service quality are greatly influenced by physical elements, which also make powerful first impressions. A well-maintained environment, neat staff, and appealing décor make guests feel comfortable and valued, which encourages loyalty and repeat visits.

4.3 Reliability and Guest Loyalty

The second objective examined how reliability, defined as the ability to provide dependable and consistent service, affects guest loyalty.

4. Table 4.3: Reliability and Guest Loyalty

RELIABILITY	FREQUENCY (N=170)	PERCENT (%)
VERY POOR	6	3.5
POOR	14	8.2
NEUTRAL	35	20.6
GOOD	60	35.3
VERY GOOD	55	32.4
TOTAL	170	100.0

The findings reveal that approximately 68% of guests rated the hotel’s reliability positively. Guests appreciated that services were delivered as promised—such as timely room service, accurate billing, and consistent housekeeping.

All things considered, these results show that customers and the hotel gain trust when the hotel is dependable. Visitors are more inclined to return and refer others to the hotel when they have faith in its ability to provide consistent service.

4.4 Responsiveness and Guest Loyalty

The third objective evaluated the role of responsiveness, referring to the willingness and promptness of staff in assisting guests.

5. Table 4.4: Responsiveness and Guest Loyalty

RESPONSIVENESS	FREQUENCY (N=170)	PERCENT (%)
VERY POOR	4	2.4
POOR	11	6.5
NEUTRAL	25	14.7
GOOD	60	35.3
VERY GOOD	70	41.2
TOTAL	170	100.0

The majority of guests (76.5%) rated responsiveness as “Good” or “Very Good.” This shows that most guests found the hotel staff to be attentive, approachable, and eager to help. Out of all the dimensions, responsiveness received the highest satisfaction rating, demonstrating the staff’s capacity to promptly and expertly attend to guests' demands. This result emphasizes how crucial personnel availability and timeliness are. Response time is a key factor in

determining customer loyalty since guests frequently use it to gauge the quality of the services they receive.

4.5 Assurance and Guest Loyalty

The influence of assurance—which includes staff professionalism, competency, and the capacity to instill confidence in visitors—was examined in the fourth objective.

6. Table 4.5: Assurance and Guest Loyalty

ASSURANCE	FREQUENCY (N=170)	PERCENT (%)
VERY POOR	5	2.9
POOR	15	8.8
NEUTRAL	30	17.6
GOOD	65	38.2
VERY GOOD	55	32.5
TOTAL	170	100.0

The assurance component received a favorable rating from 70.7% of respondents. This suggests that the majority of visitors were pleased with the hotel staff's expertise, civility, and professionalism. Visitors who thought the staff was knowledgeable and reliable were more likely to stay at the hotel again.

However, a small portion (about 12%) felt that not all staff displayed confidence or mastery of their roles. This implies that ongoing staff training is necessary to guarantee consistent service delivery across departments.

4.6 Empathy and Guest Loyalty

The fifth objective focused on empathy, defined as the hotel staff's ability to provide personalized and caring service to each guest.

7. Table 4.6: Empathy and Guest Loyalty

EMPATHY	FREQUENCY (N=170)	PERCENT (%)
VERY POOR	6	3.5
POOR	14	8.2
NEUTRAL	40	23.5
GOOD	60	35.3
VERY GOOD	50	29.4

TOTAL	170	100.0
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The results show that 64.7% of the respondents rated empathy positively, meaning they felt the staff were caring and considerate. Nonetheless, some guests (about 12%) believed that service could be more personalized.

According to this research, although most visitors value prompt, courteous service, interactions can still be better tailored to each visitor's interests.

4.7 Guest Loyalty

Guest loyalty was measured through repeat patronage, recommendation likelihood, and overall satisfaction.

8. Table 4.7: Guest Loyalty

INDICATORS OF GUEST LOYALTY	FREQUENCY (N=170)	PERCENT (%)
VERY UNLIKELY	5	2.9
UNLIKELY	15	8.8
NEUTRAL	35	20.6
LIKELY	55	32.4
VERY LIKELY	60	35.3
TOTAL	170	100.0

About 68% of those surveyed said they were either likely or very likely to stay at the hotel again and suggest it to others. This high degree of loyalty shows how well the Cascade Hotel's customer service tactics work to encourage return business and goodwill.

4.8 Correlation Analysis

To investigate the direction and intensity of the association between each customer service dimension, correlation analysis was performed. The Pearson correlation coefficients (r) and their corresponding significance levels (p -values) are presented in the table below.

9. Table 4.8: Correlation between Service Dimensions and Guest Loyalty

<i>Service Dimension</i>	<i>Correlation Coefficient (r)</i>	<i>Significance (p-value)</i>
<i>Tangibles</i>	0.681	0.000
<i>Reliability</i>	0.637	0.001
<i>Responsiveness</i>	0.742	0.000
<i>Assurance</i>	0.664	0.000
<i>Empathy</i>	0.598	0.002

The findings indicate that, at the 0.05 significance level ($p < 0.05$), there was a positive and substantial correlation between all five service quality parameters and guest loyalty. This indicates that when any aspect of customer service is improved, visitor loyalty rises in tandem.

Among the five variables, responsiveness exhibited the strongest relationship ($r = 0.742$), implying that prompt, attentive, and courteous service has the greatest effect on whether guests remain loyal to the hotel. Tangibles ($r = 0.681$) and assurance ($r = 0.664$) also displayed strong positive correlations, demonstrating that physical appeal, cleanliness, and staff professionalism significantly enhance guests' perceptions of quality. Reliability ($r = 0.637$) and empathy ($r = 0.598$) showed moderate but meaningful relationships, suggesting that consistent and personalized service contributes to long-term customer satisfaction.

4.9 Regression Analysis

To ascertain the overall impact of all customer service performance parameters on guest loyalty, a multiple linear regression analysis was performed. The results are summarized in the table below

10. Table 4.9: Model Summary

<i>Model Statistic</i>	<i>Value</i>
<i>R</i>	0.828
<i>R²</i>	0.685
<i>Adjusted R²</i>	0.674
<i>Standard Error of Estimate</i>	0.341

The model summary reveals that the correlation coefficient (R) of 0.828 indicates a strong overall relationship between customer service dimensions and guest loyalty. The R² value of 0.685 indicates that the combined effects of tangibles, certainty, responsiveness, empathy, and reliability can account for 68.5% of the variation in visitor loyalty. The remaining 31.5% may be attributed to other factors not captured in the model, such as pricing, location, or

brand reputation. The relatively low standard error of 0.341 indicates a good model fit, meaning the predicted values are close to the actual observed data.

11. Table 4.10: Regression Coefficients

<i>Predictor Variable</i>	<i>Beta (β)</i>	<i>t-value</i>	<i>Significance (p)</i>
<i>Tangibles</i>	0.214	3.215	0.002
<i>Reliability</i>	0.178	2.865	0.005
<i>Responsiveness</i>	0.295	4.952	0.000
<i>Assurance</i>	0.186	2.781	0.007
<i>Empathy</i>	0.152	2.433	0.016

Guest loyalty is positively and statistically significantly impacted by all five factors, according to the regression coefficients ($p < 0.05$). Among them, responsiveness ($\beta = 0.295$) emerged as the most influential predictor, followed by tangibles ($\beta = 0.214$) and assurance ($\beta = 0.186$). This suggests that visitors are more likely to stay at the hotel again and refer others to it if they believe the personnel to be timely, effective, and helpful.

Tangibles also had a notable impact, suggesting that clean, attractive facilities and a comfortable environment strengthen loyalty. Assurance ranked third, demonstrating the importance of confident, knowledgeable, and courteous staff in fostering trust. Although reliability ($\beta = 0.178$) and empathy ($\beta = 0.152$) had relatively smaller effects, they remained significant, showing that consistency and personalized attention are still vital components of guest satisfaction.

the regression analysis confirms that customer service performance dimensions collectively exert a strong and positive influence on guest loyalty.

4.10 Hypothesis Testing

In order to assess the study's hypotheses, the regression analysis's p-values were compared to the significance level of 0.05. The table that follows provides an overview of the hypothesis testing process.

12. Table 4.11: Summary of Hypothesis Testing

<i>Hypothesis Code</i>	<i>Statement</i>	<i>p-value</i>	<i>Decision</i>
H_1	Tangibles significantly affect guest loyalty.	0.002	Accepted
H_2	Reliability significantly affects guest loyalty.	0.005	Accepted
H_3	Responsiveness significantly affects guest loyalty.	0.000	Accepted

H_4	Assurance significantly affects guest loyalty.	0.007	Accepted
H_5	Empathy significantly affects guest loyalty.	0.016	Accepted

According to the results of the hypothesis test, guest loyalty was significantly impacted by each of the five SERVPERF aspects ($p < 0.05$). This indicates that all dimensions rejected the null hypotheses, which claimed that there were no significant impacts.

Among the variables, responsiveness demonstrated the strongest statistical significance ($p = 0.000$), reinforcing its crucial role in shaping guest loyalty. A visually pleasing setting and knowledgeable staff increase guests' trust and contentment, according to tangibles and assurance, which also had a big impact. Because visitors prefer dependable service and personalized attention, reliability and empathy were somewhat less significant but still significant.

These results demonstrate that increasing every facet of customer service performance significantly increases Cascade Hotel guests' loyalty. The findings align with earlier research by Chen and Peng (2022) and Dedeoğlu and Demirer (2023), which discovered that aspects of service quality are powerful indicators of repeat business in the hospitality sector..

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The main conclusions, recommendations, and findings from the data analysis in Chapter Four are summarized in this chapter. The purpose of the study was to investigate how guest loyalty at the Cascade Hotel in Thika Town was impacted by customer service performance. In particular, five SERVPERF model-based goals served as the research's compass: to ascertain how tangibles, assurance, responsiveness, empathy, and dependability affect visitor loyalty. In light of current ideas and literature, the findings have been examined, and their management and future research implications have been emphasized.

5.2 Summary of Findings

The study achieved an excellent response rate of 89.5%, demonstrating the reliability and representativeness of the data. The findings demonstrated a positive and statistically significant correlation between guest loyalty and each of the five customer service performance dimensions: tangibles, assurance, responsiveness, empathy, and reliability.

The first objective, which examined the influence of tangibles, revealed that guests were generally impressed with the physical facilities, staff appearance, and cleanliness of the hotel. A well-maintained environment was found to enhance customer satisfaction and create a positive image that encourages repeat visits.

The second objective focused on reliability and established that consistent, dependable, and error-free service delivery significantly improved guest trust and confidence. The fact that their expectations were regularly fulfilled was much appreciated by the guests, especially in regards to timely service, correct billing, and efficient cleanliness.

The third objective, which assessed responsiveness, indicated that the willingness and promptness of staff to assist guests was the most influential factor on loyalty. Guests valued timely attention and quick resolution of their needs, confirming that responsiveness is the strongest driver of satisfaction and return intentions.

The fourth objective examined assurance, which encompasses staff competence, courtesy, and professionalism. The findings showed that guests who interacted with confident and knowledgeable staff felt secure and appreciated, resulting in higher loyalty levels. Assurance built trust, which encouraged positive word-of-mouth and repeat patronage.

Finally, the fifth objective explored empathy, which involved understanding and responding to guests' individual needs. The findings showed that visitor loyalty was moderately but significantly impacted by empathy. Although the majority of visitors expressed satisfaction with the degree of care and attention they received, others recommended that services be more tailored to each visitor's particular tastes.

The regression analysis revealed that 68.5% of the variation in guest loyalty was explained by customer service performance dimensions. Responsiveness had the greatest impact, followed by tangibles and assurance, while reliability and empathy also contributed significantly. This suggests that one of the main factors influencing the Cascade Hotel's guests' loyalty is its exceptional customer service performance.

5.3 Conclusions

The results of the study indicate that the Cascade Hotel's customer service performance significantly and favorably influences patron loyalty. The quality of interaction between guests and staff, combined with the hotel's physical environment and reliability of services, has a significant impact on whether visitors would return or suggest the hotel to others.

According to the study's findings, the most important factor affecting customer loyalty is responsiveness. When hotel employees respond promptly, courteously, and efficiently to guest needs, satisfaction levels increase significantly. Tangibles and assurance are also key contributors, as they enhance the hotel's professional image and create an atmosphere of trust and comfort.

Reliability ensures that guests receive consistent service, which strengthens confidence and satisfaction, while empathy contributes to personalized service experiences that make guests feel valued. Overall, customer service excellence fosters long-term relationships, strengthens the hotel's reputation, and sustains its competitive advantage in the hospitality industry.

5.4 Recommendations

Management should continue to train and motivate employees to attend to guests promptly and courteously. Quick response to inquiries, complaints, and service requests builds a sense of care and professionalism, thereby encouraging loyalty.

The hotel should regularly maintain and update its physical environment, including rooms, décor, and public spaces. Clean and attractive surroundings contribute positively to guest perception and overall satisfaction.

Service consistency should be maintained through effective supervision and standard operating procedures. Accurate billing, dependable housekeeping, and timely delivery of services create trust and credibility.

The management should fund staff members' ongoing professional development to boost their confidence, communication abilities, and hospitality etiquette. Trained employees provide reassurance and improve the entire customer experience.

Employees should be encouraged to understand individual guest needs and preferences. Personalized attention, such as remembering repeat guests or offering tailored services, can significantly increase guest satisfaction and repeat visits.

5.5 Recommendations for Further Research

In order to improve generalizability, future research should expand the scope by incorporating many hotels in the area or throughout Kenya, as this study concentrated on just one hotel, the Cascade Hotel in Thika Town. Other elements that affect guest loyalty, like price, brand image, digital service experience, and cultural considerations, might also be taken into account in future research. Furthermore, qualitative research employing focus groups or interviews may offer more profound understandings of visitors' emotional experiences and opinions regarding the caliber of the services.

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APPENDICIES

Appendix (i): Letter of Introduction

The Manager,

Cascade Hotel,

P.O. Box

Thika, Kenya.

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: INTRODUCTION LETTER FOR A RESEARCH STUDY

I am a student at Greta University pursuing a Bachelor's Degree in Hospitality Management. As part of the requirements for the award of this degree, I am conducting a research study titled:

“Effect of Customer Service Performance on Guest Loyalty: A Case Study of Cascade Hotel, Thika Town.”

The main purpose of this study is to evaluate customer service performance, as measured by the SERVPERF model, and its impact on guest loyalty at Cascade Hotel. The specific objectives of the study are:

- i. To determine the influence of tangibles on guest loyalty at Cascade Hotel, Thika Town.
- ii. To establish the effect of reliability on guest loyalty at Cascade Hotel, Thika Town.
- iii. To examine the influence of staff responsiveness on guest loyalty at Cascade Hotel, Thika Town.
- iv. To assess the effect of assurance on guest trust and loyalty at Cascade Hotel, Thika Town.
- v. To evaluate the influence of empathy on guest satisfaction and repeat patronage at Cascade Hotel, Thika Town.

The study is purely for academic purposes, and any information obtained will be treated with the highest level of confidentiality. Your cooperation in allowing me to collect data from guests and staff of Cascade Hotel will be highly appreciated.

Thank you in advance for your time and support.

Yours faithfully,

Edna Chepchumba ,
Student, Grets University

Appendix (ii): Questionnaire

Customer Service Performance and Guest Loyalty at Cascade Hotel

Section 0: Demographic Information

This section seeks to obtain general background information about the respondents.

1. Gender:

- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to say

2. Age Bracket:

- Below 20 years
- 21–30 years
- 31–40 years
- 41–50 years
- Above 50 years

3. Marital Status:

- Single
- Married
- Divorced
- Widowed

4. Educational Level:

- Primary
- Secondary
- College Diploma

- Bachelor's Degree
- Postgraduate Degree

5. Frequency of Stay at Cascade Hotel:

- First-time guest
- Occasionally (1–2 times a year)
- Frequently (3–5 times a year)
- Regularly (more than 5 times a year)

6. Purpose of Visit:

- Business
- Leisure
- Conference/Seminar
- Other (please specify): _____

Section 1: Tangibles

This section focuses on the physical aspects of the hotel, including facilities, appearance, and overall atmosphere.

1. How would you rate the cleanliness and maintenance of the hotel's physical facilities (e.g, rooms, lobby, restrooms)?

- Very Poor
- Poor
- Neutral
- Good
- Very Good

2. How would you rate the appearance and professionalism of the hotel staff?

- Very Poor
- Poor
- Neutral
- Good
- Very Good

3. How would you rate the overall atmosphere and aesthetic appeal of the hotel?

- Very Poor
- Poor
- Neutral
- Good
- Very Good

Section 2: Reliability

This section evaluates the hotel's ability to deliver consistent and dependable service.

4. How satisfied are you with the hotel's ability to deliver services as promised (e.g., timely room service, accurate billing)?

- Very Poor
- Poor
- Neutral
- Good
- Very Good

5. How reliable was the hotel in meeting your expectations during your stay?

- Very Poor
- Poor
- Neutral
- Good
- Very Good

6. How consistent was the quality of service you received during your stay?

- Very Poor
- Poor
- Neutral
- Good
- Very Good

Section 3: Responsiveness, Assurance, and Empathy

This section assesses the hotel staff's willingness to help, professionalism, and personalized attention.

7.How responsive was the hotel staff in addressing your requests or concerns during your stay?

- Very Poor
- Poor
- Neutral
- Good
- Very Good

8.How would you rate the competence and professionalism of the hotel staff?

- Very Poor
- Poor
- Neutral
- Good
- Very Good

9.How well did the hotel staff understand and cater to your individual needs and preferences?

- Very Poor
- Poor
- Neutral
- Good
- Very Good

Section 4: Guest Loyalty

This section measures your likelihood of returning to the hotel and recommending it to others.

10.How likely are you to return to Cascade Hotel for future stays?

- Very Unlikely

- Unlikely
- Neutral
- Likely
- Very Likely

11. How likely are you to recommend Cascade Hotel to friends, family, or colleagues?

- Very Unlikely
- Unlikely
- Neutral
- Likely
- Very Likely

12. How would you rate your overall satisfaction with your stay at Cascade Hotel?

- Very Dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Neutral
- Satisfied
- Very Satisfied

Thank you for your participation!