TOURIST SATISFACTION LEVEL AT OL PEJETA CONSERVANCY (OPC) IN LAIKIPIA, KENYA

BY

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DECLARATION BY THE CANDIDATE

I, Douglas Kamaru Njeri declare that this project is my own original work and has not been submitted to any University, College or any other learning institution for award of Degree, Diploma or any other academic award. It is therefore submitted to the School of Natural Resource Management, Moi University, for the fulfillment for award of diploma in Tourism and Wildlife Management.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

DEDICATION

I whole heartedly dedicate this work to my great and wonderful late mum, Ms. Elizabeth Njeri Kamaru, for her advice and sacrifices she made to see me successful through my studies. I will always be indebted to you MUM!

ABSTRACT

A study on tourist satisfaction level was done in Ol Pejeta Conservancy in order to identify Ol Pejeta Conservancy's centre of tourist attraction, assess the quality of information, hospitality, accommodation and infrastructure and to determine tourists' overall satisfaction level.

The data for this study was collected between January to October 2012, with a targeted sample size of 381, which was calculated based on 95% confidence level with an average of 40,000 tourists who visit Ol Pejeta Conservancy per annum. 261 tourists of 30 nationalities were interviewed through a self administered questionnaire, using a systematic sampling technique whereby one questionnaire was issued to the tourist at the main entry to the Conservancy in an hourly interval basis.

Analysis indicated that females were more satisfied than males. There was also a significant difference in visitation to various key tourist sites, indicating that some visitors failed to visit some sites. Chimpanzee sanctuary and Baraka (blind rhino) site were the most visited. Wildlife was rated the leading motivating factor for visits to OPC, followed by accessibility.

To enhance the visitors' experience, there's need to improve guide services, minimize time spent while clearing at the gates, improve tourism infrastructure and ensure gate staff are easily identifiable by name tags. There is also need to revise entry and camping tariffs differentially with a view to attracting more local visitors while targeting visitation during off seasons.

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CHAPTER ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Measuring and managing customer satisfaction is important for the survival, development and success of the tourism business (Sirakay, 2003). When measuring customer satisfaction, the basic premise is that consumers reflect on their experiences and express these honestly and free of bias. Customer satisfaction is one of the most frequently examined topics in the hospitality and tourism industry because it plays an important role in the continued and sustained operation of any tourism business (Gursoy et al. 2003, 2007).

A high level of customer satisfaction is likely to generate positive feedback from the customer including revisiting the tourist area, increased purchase of products, and recommending these to others (Kozak and Rimmington, 2000; Gursoyet al. 2003; Andaleeb and Conway, 2006). The input of the tourists towards development and enhancement of a tourist destination is therefore essential in maintaining its competitive advantage. For this reason it is important for players in the industry to regularly assess the tourists' impressions of the visited sites, as a feedback to help improve and diversify the products and services offered. Several advantages for this undertaking include, but are not limited to, ensuring that the tourists' needs and expectations are met, maximizing tourist flow and income generation.

Kenya is one of the world's great tourist destinations, known for its remarkable diversity of landscapes, wildlife and culture, thus making the tourism industry the second largest source of foreign exchange revenue generated after the horticultural industry. According to the Ministry of Tourism, there were a total of 1,095,945 tourists who visited Kenya in 2010, recording an increase of 15% from the previous year. This earned the country a total of Ksh.73.68 billion, an

upward trend is projected to continue as more aggressive marketing is launched in various parts of the world by the Kenya Tourism Board.

The Ol Pejeta Conservancy is among the most visited tourism destinations in Kenya with an average of 40,000 tourists visiting it per annum. In 2010, the conservancy generated an income of approximately Ksh.112, 026,859 from the tourism activities. The conservancy offers a wide variety of tourist attractions which includes high abundance of wildlife, including 'the big five', a chimpanzee sanctuary, black rhinos, and four of the seven remaining species of Northern white rhinos in the world, which were brought to the conservancy from the Czech republic in 2009. Other tourism products offered include day and night game drives, lion tracking which facilitates close view of the lions, bush camping, and bush walks.

There are several tented camps which offer a variety of quality accommodation services. This study was carried out in order to assess the level of tourist satisfaction in various tourist sites within the conservancy as well as general satisfaction for the tourism products offered by the conservancy. This project was carried out with the primary aim of identifying any gap(s) or factors that may lead to tourist dissatisfaction and hence improving the tourist satisfaction, through informed decision making implemented by the tourism department of the conservancy. The study was also aimed at creating a benchmark(s) for future regular monitoring of performance indicator(s).

1.1 Study area

The project was carried out in the Ol Pejeta Conservancy which is a 90,000 acres property, located N0°.00' – S0°.02'; E36°.44' 6°.59' on the Laikipia Plateau, Kenya, between the Aberdares Mountains and Mt. Kenya. It is 15km West of Nanyuki town in Laikipia County and 240 Km

North of Nairobi city. The average altitude is 1810m above sea level and gradually rises from East to West forming three main hills to the western boundary. There are two permanent rivers, namely; Ewaso Ngiro and Ngobit and several other seasonal streams. The mean annual rainfall is 800 mm with peaks from March to May and short rains in October to December. The annual mean maximum and minimum temperatures are 28°C and 12°C respectively.

Ol Pejeta Conservancy is one of the most visited tourist destinations in Laikipia County due to its diverse tourist attractions and accommodation facilities, coupled with the high abundance and diversity of wildlife. The latter include 'the big five', Chimpanzees, four of the remaining seven species of Northern white rhinos worldwide, as well the largest black rhino sanctuary in East Africa. Apart from several camp sites, there are also various first class accommodation facilities including Sweetwater's Tented Camp which has a capacity of 78 beds, the famous Ol Pejeta House with a capacity of 12 beds, Ol Pejeta Bush Camp, Kicheche Camp and Porini Rhino Camp among other new ones which are in the process of construction.

1.2 Problem statement

A high level of tourist satisfaction is the key factor in maintaining the competitive advantage and tourist flow in a tourist destination, consequently maintaining generation of the income. Prior to this study, Ol Pejeta Conservancy had not undertaken any detailed study to investigate whether the tourist clients are satisfied with the products and services offered. The Conservancy sometimes introduces new products to the tourists with the aim of enhancing their level of satisfaction. However, obtaining formal feedback from the tourists on the old and new products was lacking.

1.3 Goals and objectives

The ultimate goal of this project was to find out the overall satisfaction level of the tourists visiting Ol Pejeta Conservancy so that needed improvements can be made in order to maximize the positive experiences of the tourists.

1.3.1 Specific objectives

The specific objectives are to:

  i.   Identify Ol Pejeta Conservancy's centre of tourist attractions and the magnitude and significance of these

  ii.   Assess the quality of Information, Hospitality, Accommodation and Infrastructural facilities provided to the tourists in the Conservancy

  iii. Determine the overall satisfaction level of tourists visiting Ol Pejeta Conservancy

1.4 Justification

The main aim of this study was to gather and analyze the views of tourists visiting the Ol Pejeta Conservancy on various aspects, which include: Hospitality, Education/Information, Accessibility, Camping and Accommodation among others. The output of this study will act as a benchmark on the satisfaction level of the tourists in the Conservancy. The information will also help the management to improve the tourist products and ultimately ensure a high level of tourist satisfaction and subsequently increased revenue generation from tourism.

1.5 Limitations of the study

This study had various limitations in that it did not factor some aspects which may affect the overall satisfaction level of tourists, for example customer behavior (mood) of the tourists.

However, mood is considered to be beyond the control of the tourism management (Sirikaya, 2003).

Secondly, this study did not examine the aspects of short and long-term visitor satisfaction. However, according to Neal (2003), short-term visitors are less satisfied with the perceived quality and the cost benefit of their travel destination than the long-term visitors hence this aspect was ignored in the study design.

1.6 Scope of the study

This study focused on various aspects of visitor satisfaction in OPC, as well as assessed the satisfaction level at a general perspective. The data for this project was collected in three phases in order to capture tourism seasonality, and reduce sampling bias. The first phase was done between January and March 2012, the second phase between April to June 2012, and the third phase between July to October 2012.

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Tourist products

The tourism industry consists of a number of different sectors including the travel, hospitality and visitor services, within each of these sectors there are a number of individual enterprises that provide a range of services to people who are travelling away from their home environment. This travel could be for a variety of reasons including for pleasure, to visit friends and relatives, to work on a short term basis, to attend conferences, to participate in business activities, or any of a number of specific reasons. While the industry distinguishes between the various groups according to their purpose for travel, convention has it that all these short-term travelers are defined as 'tourists' (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1997).

Drawing on the consumer literature, it is too easy to assume that the outcomes of the tourist activities are solely the creation of the tourist operators/industry. However, it is perhaps more enlightening to adopt a 'transactional perspective' outlined in the recreation literature. Here, the tourist "actively creates the recreation(tourist) experience, through a transaction with the physical and social setting, including what the tourist brings to the process in terms of history, perceptions, companions, skills, equipment, identities, hopes and dreams" (Williams, 1988). With this perspective, more emphasis is placed on the behavior of the individual and his/her role in creating the experience. Subsequently, not all the responsibility for creating high levels of satisfaction rests with the service deliverer.

Consumer satisfaction is a topic that attracted the interest of marketing scholars in the last few decades. However, though consumer satisfaction has been studied extensively, a general

accepted definition does not exist. Giese and Cote (2008) defined satisfaction as a summary affective response of varying intensity with a time specific point of determination and limited duration directed towards local aspects of product acquisition and/or consumption. On cognitive approach, satisfaction is the consumer's response to the congruence between performance and comparison standards (Olive, 1980). A cognitive-affective model has been proposed where satisfaction is influenced by the individual's cognitive judgments and emotions derived from the consumption experience (Birgne, Andreu and Gnoth; 2005; Phillips and Baumgartner; 2002, Jun et al. 2001; Oliver, 1994; Mano and Oliver; 1993).

The study of tourist satisfaction is a critical issue not only for academics and managers, but also for individuals themselves (Dosgue and Hector, 2008). A study by Fernandez – Ballesteros, Zamarron and Ruiz (2001), stated that life satisfaction is related to the individual's satisfaction with health, work, family or leisure. Satisfaction with tourist experiences contributes significantly to life satisfaction (Neal, Sirgy and Ugsal, 1999), which is one of the central concepts of individual well-being (Oishi, 2006). Ryan and Deci (2001) proposed that there are two approaches to defining well-being: the hedonic and eudemonic views. The hedonic view is defined as the momentary pleasure achieved through the satisfaction of subjective needs, i.e. for a short term satisfaction, while the eudemonic well-being refers to self-realization through the satisfaction of deeply held needs or values (long- term satisfaction).

Crompton and Love (1995) distinguishes between quality of opportunity and quality of experiences. Quality of opportunity is defined as qualities of the attributes of a service that are under the control of a supplier. Evaluation is concerned with judgments about the performance of the leisure opportunity supplied. In contrast, quality of experience involves not only the

attributes provided by a supplier, but also attributes brought to the opportunity by the visitor or recreationist. Quality of experience is a psychological outcome or emotional response. Satisfaction is therefore measured by how well leisure activities are perceived to fulfill the basic needs and motivation that stimulated the idea to participate in the activity.

Visitors are increasingly demanding value for money and the provision of quality products and services. Consequently, customer satisfaction has undoubtedly become a fundamental goal of service-oriented businesses. The underlying reason for this premise can be found in its importance for economic success. There are a number of benefits that can be realized from measuring the "health" of the industry including strategic planning , understanding the customers' reaction to a product, encouraging both new and repeat visitation and comparing different sectors within the industry to determine areas that may need improvement. Therefore, having a clear understanding of the causes and nature of visitor satisfaction and dissatisfaction can assist in the promotion and development of tourism destinations and enterprises (Ritchie, Mules and Sue, 2008).

2.2 Destination image

Destination image is defined as an individual's mental representation of knowledge, beliefs, feelings and overall perception of a particular destination (Crompton, 1979; Fakeye and Crompton, 1991). Destination image plays two important roles in behaviors: (1) to influence the destination choice decision-making process and (2) to condition the after-decision-making behaviors including participation (on-site experience), evaluation (satisfaction) and future behavioral intentions (intention to revisit and willingness to recommend) (Ashworth and

Goodall, 1988; Bigne et al. 2001; Cooper, Fletcher, Gilbert, and Wanhill, 1993; Lee et al., 2005; Mansfeld, 1992).

Destination images influence a tourist's travel decision-making, cognition and behavior at a destination as well as satisfaction levels and recollection of the experience (Jenkins, 1998). Therefore the image of a destination in terms of hospitality, quality services, and attractions impacts on willingness/motivation of tourists to visit a destination. Satisfaction is key for customer retention and recruitment. Consequently, many tourism and hospitality businesses track satisfaction of their customers via surveys (Sirakaya, 2003).When measuring customer satisfaction, the basic premise is that consumers reflect on their experiences and divulge their thoughts honestly and free of bias. Studies conducted in consumer behavior suggest that customers usually exhibit a positive bias, where they seem to be generally satisfied with what they receive. The concern is that somehow their response are artificially inflated, masked by some intervening variable and one such variable is consumer moods. Moods can be influenced by a variety of factors many of which are beyond the control of the management; therefore the important aspects are the customer satisfaction measurements taken during a particular time when people are in a positive or bad mood.

According to Ritchie, Mules and Sue (2008), visitor satisfaction is a major factor in determining repeat visitation and/or the propensity for recommending the destination to others. Kozak and Rummington (2000) suggest that there is a significant relationship among tourist satisfaction, intention to return and positive words-of-mouth, while Sirakaya, (2005) stated that there is a significant relationship between consumers' satisfaction with a product or service and their mood

states during evaluation. Vacationers with lower moods evaluation tended to have lower satisfaction levels. Further, lower levels of satisfaction were related to bad moods.

According to Tian-Cole and Crompton (2003), tourist satisfaction is determined by the extent to which desired outcomes or benefits are realized, while Lee, Graefe and Burns (2004) states that service quality is an antecedent of satisfaction and satisfaction is a mediator between service quality and behavioral intentions. Significant differences have been identified between "short term" visitors and "long term" visitors, and first time and repeat visitors. Short term visitors are less satisfied with perceived service quality and perceived fairness of price of their travel destination than long term visitors (Neal, 2003). Baloglu et al. (2003) stated that the repeat visitors scored higher in satisfaction than first time visitors.

Tourists take a trip to visit the destination to consume the product or experiences that it offers, to have good memories to share with their friends and relatives, and have contact with service providers or host residents. They form their judgment of a destination by comparing their actual experiences with their expectations (McDowall, 2010).They form their expectations based on their past experience, friends, and relatives, marketer and competitor information and promises (Kotler, Bowen and Makens, 2006). According to McDowall (2001), if performance exceeds expectations, they are satisfied; on the other hand, they are dissatisfied when expectations are not met.

2.3 Tourist perception towards a destination

Tourists themselves through their feelings, combined with other factors such as climate and group interaction, can affect their judgment of the destination's performance and satisfaction, which affects the likelihood of their returning to the destination again or recommending it to

others (McDowall, 2010). Satisfaction is part of "vacation sequence" which is composed of generic expenditure, information acquisition, joint-decision making, vacation activities and subsequence satisfaction and complains (Raaij and Francken, 1984). Repeat tourists are more likely to return to their previously visited destinations (Kozak, 2010; Kozak and Rimmindton, 2000) and more likely to be loyal to the destination than the first-time visitors (Gitelson and Crompton, 1984; Gyte and Phelps, 1989). Thus first time and repeat visitors differ in their evaluation of destination performance and overall satisfaction (Baloglu et al, 2003).

Customer satisfaction measures how well a customer's expectations are met while customer loyalty measures how likely customers are to return and to spread positive words about destination to others. Therefore, customer expectations must be met or exceeded to form loyalty (Kotler et al, 2006). Satisfaction is a valuable concept in understanding the performance of destinations. Destinations that can identify attributes that satisfy tourists increase their chances of having loyal tourists (McDowall, 2010).

From the perspective of tourist consumption process (Ryan, 2002; Williams and Buswell, 2003), tourist behavior can be divided into three stages: pre-, during- and post visitation. More specifically, tourist behavior is an aggregate term, which includes pre-visit's decision-making, onsite experience, experience evaluations and post-visit's behavioral intentions and behaviors. It has been generally accepted in the literature that destination image has influence on tourist behaviors (Lee, 2005; Bigne and Sanchez 2001; Fakeye and Crompton, 1991). The tourist behaviors include the choice of a destination to visit and subsequent evaluations and future behavioral intention. The subsequent evaluations include the travel experience or perceived trip

quality during the stay, perceived value and overall satisfaction while the future behavioral intentions include the intention to revisit and the willingness to recommend.

2.4 Motivation and destination loyalty

Motivation is the need that drives an individual to act in a certain way, to achieve the desired satisfaction. A review of literature on tourist motivations indicates that the motivation concept can be classified into two forces which indicate that people travel because they are pushed and pulled to do so by 'some forces' or factors. These forces describe how individuals are pushed by motivation variables into making travel decision and how they are pulled or attracted by destination attributes. The push motivations are associated to the tourists' desire whereas pull motivations are related with the attributes of the destination choices. Additionally, push motivations are more connected to internal or emotional aspects while pull motivations are linked to external, situational, or cognitive aspects (Wipada, Thaothampitak and Naree Weerakit, 2006).

Repeat purchases or recommendations to other people are most usually referred to as consumer loyalty in the marketing literature. The concept and degree of loyalty is one of the critical indicators used to measure the success of marketing strategy (Flavian, Martinez, and Polo, 2001). Similarly, travel destinations can be considered as products, and tourists may revisit or recommend travel destinations to other potential tourists such as friends or relatives.

The satisfied tourists not only will revisit the place, but also will recommend it to others. Besides, increasing the level of satisfaction will reduce the number of tourists' complaints. On the other hand, the tourist satisfaction will not be achieved unless the tourists feel that the quality received is greater that the money paid. This justification is usually based on the tourists'

anticipation of the place and also the image that they have before the travel. Also, the satisfaction is created when the pre-travel expectations of the tourists are fulfilled by the real experiences after the travel. This expectation is also formed by the image that they have from the destination (Ehsan Sadeh et al. 2012).Therefore the following Ehsan Sadeh structural model explains the relationship between various influencing factors on the tourist satisfaction.
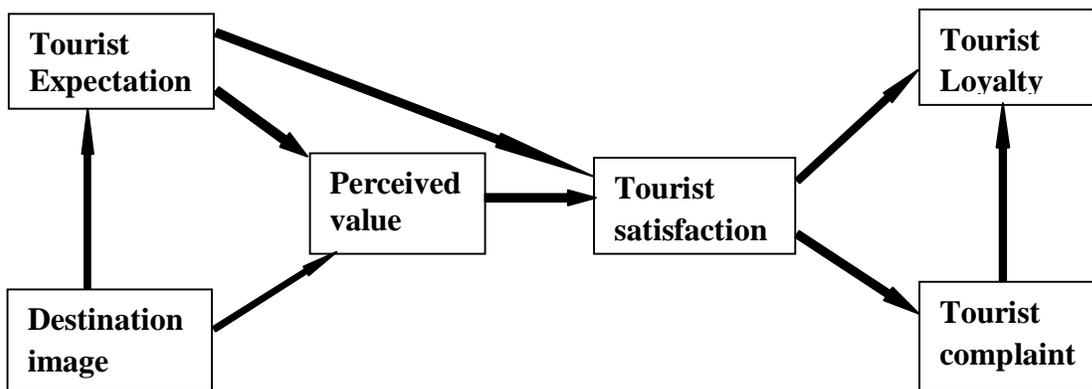
Destination image directly influences tourist expectation.

Destination image directly influences perceived value.

Tourist expectation directly influences perceived value.

Tourist expectation directly influences tourist satisfaction.

Perceived value directly influences tourist satisfaction.

Tourist satisfaction directly influences tourist loyalty.

Tourist satisfaction directly influences tourist complaints.

Tourist complaints directly influence tourist loyalty.

Conceptual model by Ehsan Sadeh et al. 2012

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Target group

This project focused on all types of tourists- international and local tourists, day trippers and night visitors. Questionnaires were given out to tourists aged 18 years and above.

3.2 Sample size

A total of 381 tourists were targeted to be interviewed to represent an average population of 40,000 tourists visiting OPC annually. This sample was calculated based on 95% confidence level and 5% confidence interval of the average number of tourist who visits OPC per annum.

3.3 Sampling techniques

Sampling was done systematically, whereby one questionnaire was given to the tourists on an hourly basis interval, in order to reduce the chances of giving out more than one questionnaire to a group of tourists visiting together, and therefore reducing the level of influences and replication of information/answers.

3.4 Data collection instrument

Data was collected through self administered questionnaires, given to the tourist as they enter into the conservancy through the main entry point (Rongai gate). The questionnaires comprised of two sections; the first section focused on the general aspects i.e. demographics, nationality, and sources of information among others, while the second part focused on questions regarding various aspects of satisfaction including customer care, accommodation, information, and accessibility. The filled questionnaires were dropped at the Exit on their way out, and for the tourists staying overnight in OPC, left at various camps where they were being accommodated.

3.5 Data analysis

Data was entered into Microsoft Excel © where it was coded and analyzed and the descriptive analysis of sample variables presented in form of tables and graphs. Chi-square test of independence was then used to compare the influence of confounding factors (e.g. age, gender) on level of satisfaction. Chi-square test of independence was also used to compare the number of visitation on various key tourist sites within OPC. The outcome was presented with 95% confidence intervals and the results considered significant at $p \leq 0.05$.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 TOURISTS SAMPLE PROFILE

The study was carried out between the months of January to October 2012 in which 261 tourists were interviewed representing 69% of the targeted sample size of 381 respondents. Out of the 261 tourists interviewed, 38% stayed overnight. Most of the respondents were males accounting for 54% of the total respondents while 46% were females (Fig. 1). 28% of the respondents were aged between 35- 44 years recording the highest number compared to the rest of the age groups (Table 1). 74% of the respondents indicated that they visited the conservancy for the first time, while 26% had visited OPC before, which ranged from one to fifteen times. (Table 2).
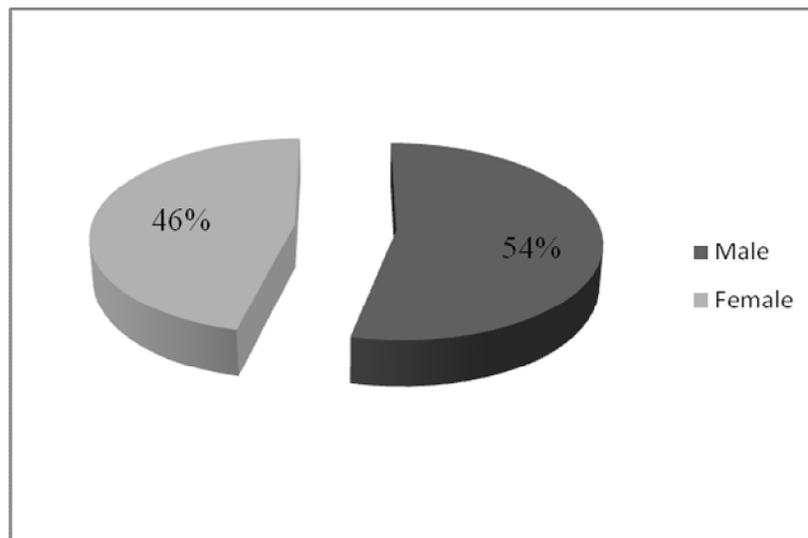
Figure 1: Percentage of male and female respondents

Table 1: Respondents per age class

Age	Respondents	%
18-25	26	10
26-34	59	23
35-44	74	28
45-54	57	22
55 & above	45	17

Table 2: Number of respondents who have revisited OPC

Revisits	Respondents
1	22
2	11
3	13
4	5
5	1
6	4
7	1
8	3
10	1
15	1

A total of 58% of the respondents indicated that they knew OPC through relatives and/or friends, who recommended to them a visit to the Conservancy, 24% knew OPC through the tour operator, while the conservancy's website and Media (local and international) contributed 11% and 5% respectively (Table 3)

Table 3: Response on knowing OPC

Variable	% of respondents
Relative and Friend	58%
Tour operator	24%
Conservancy website	11%
Media	5%
College trip	2%

4.2. OL PEJETA CONSERVANCY'S CENTRE OF TOURIST ATTRACTION AND ITS

   MAGNITUDE
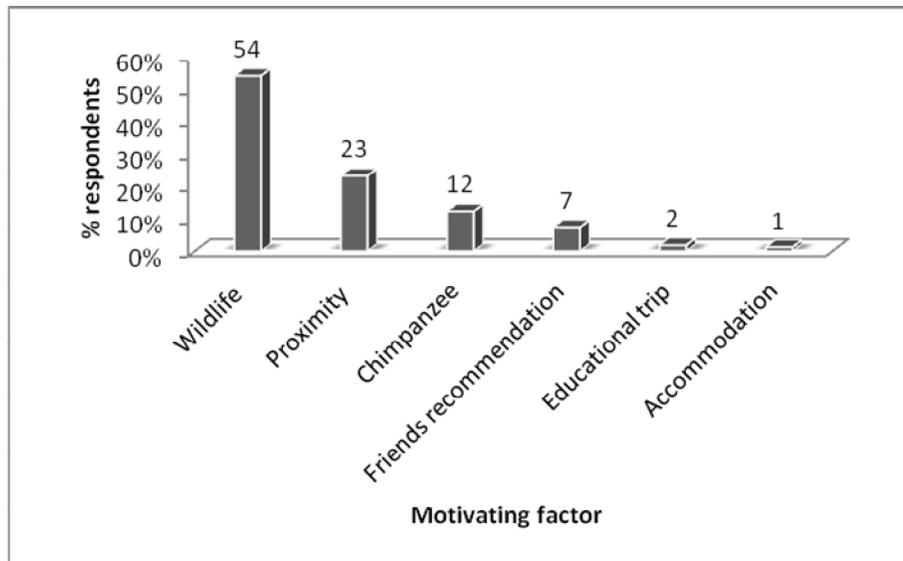
Figure 2: Major motivating factors to visiting OPC

Tourists visiting OPC come from different regions of the world, with 56% of the respondents interviewed were non-residents from 29 different countries (Appendix 1). Among the non-residents, USA was leading with 16% followed by UK and Germany with 9% and 5% respectively, while the remaining 44% of the respondents were Kenyan residents comprising of mostly locals. Although the Kenyan residents are the major market for OPC, the analysis indicates that there was no significant difference between the number of resident respondents and non-residents who were interviewed during the study period (X^2=3.222 df =1 p=0.073).

According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), tourism and travel is now considered one of the world's largest industries. The 2020 UNWTO vision for Tourism forecasts that international arrivals are expected to reach nearly 1.6 billion by the year 2020. Of

these worldwide arrivals, 378 million will be long-haul travellers and 1.2 billion will be intra-regional (UNWTO, 2008). For tourism to contribute to both local and national development, its attractions and resources must be nationally and internationally recognizable and competitive (Yoon, Gursoy, and Chen, 2001).

Tourist satisfaction is important to successful destination marketing because it influences the choice of destination, the consumption of products and services, and the decision to return (Kozak and Rimmington, 2000). This study indicate that the tourists visiting OPC comes from a wide range of countries across the world, with the domestic tourism been the major tourism market. However, tourists from abroad also contribute significantly to the market for OPC with USA leading. These differences suggest that it is important for OPC to focus on different tourist generating regions when designing new products in order to maximize on satisfaction. The World Tourism Organization report of 1997 projected that the Republic of China will become the fourth largest tourist generating country by the year 2020. It is therefore important for OPC to make preparations and enhance its marketing strategies in advance to tap that potential, but also focus on the current generating markets in order to enhance its competitiveness in the new markets.

The conservancy received tourists from about 31 different tourist generating countries across the world, with different needs, taste and expectations; therefore it is important to understand the needs of the tourists from these generating countries, in order to satisfy their needs during their visit. This will help the conservancy in widening its market and ensuring high level of satisfaction to all its visitors.

Wildlife was ranked as the highest motivating factor for visiting OPC, with 40% of the respondents indicating that they were motivated to visit by the presence of high abundance and

diversity of wildlife, thereby acting as the conservancy's strength against its competitors. Other points of competitive advantage are the fact that it is the largest black rhino sanctuary in Eastern Africa, and the only place where chimpanzees are found in Kenya, as well as being the custody of the Northern white rhinos. These factors have earned the conservancy a wider global recognition, as well as an enhanced local market.

Proximity was rated second with 23% of the respondents, who indicated that the conservancy was close to the capital city (Nairobi) and Nanyuki town making it easily accessible. Chimpanzee sanctuary was ranked third by 12% of the respondents (Fig.2).

4.3 THE QUALITY OF INFORMATION, HOSPITALITY, ACCOMODATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE.

4.3.1 Satisfaction on the information provided in various key tourist sites
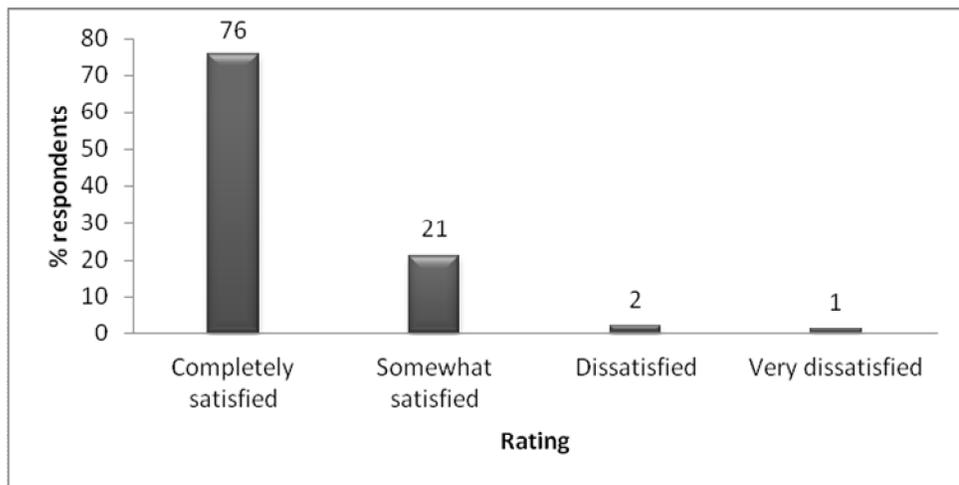
Figure 3: Overall percentage on information satisfaction provided in various key sites

Table 4: Satisfaction level on information provided in various key tourist sites within OPC

SITES	Completely satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Total number of respondents
Chimpanzee sanctuary	86% (179)	12% (25)	2% (4)	0% (1)	209
Baraka platform (Blind rhino)	81% (173)	17% (51)	1% (5)	1% (2)	180
Main gate to the conservancy	75% (145)	22% (31)	2% (2)	1% (2)	231
Morani information centre	75% (115)	23% (35)	1% (1)	1% (2)	153
Northern white rhino	71% (79)	24% (27)	4% (5)	1% (1)	112
Hippo hide (Hippo trail)	68% (74)	26% (28)	5% (5)	2% (2)	109

NB: Figures in parenthesis shows the number of respondents in each case

On average, 76% of the respondents indicated that they were completely satisfied with the quality of information provided to them, while 21% indicated that they were somewhat satisfied, while 2% and 1% indicated that they were dissatisfied and very dissatisfied respectively. However, there was significant difference in the level of satisfaction on the information provided in various key tourist sites (X^2=76.076 df=5 p=0.000). Chimpanzee sanctuary contributed highly on information satisfaction with86% of the respondents indicating that they were completely satisfied with the information provided to them, followed by the Baraka platform (Blind rhino) 81%, while the hippo site was rated least by 69% of the respondents (Fig. 3 and Table 4).

The need for guiding services was mentioned as a factor that might lead to low satisfaction levels on information in OPC. The statistics showed that most of the tourists are motivated to visit OPC by its abundance and diversity of wildlife, and therefore providing professional guiding services would increase their satisfaction and enhance quality of game drives and increase their chances of sighting animals. One of the tourists indicated that he had been informed that there were high abundance of wild animals in OPC, but had not seen many during his visit. This could have affected his satisfaction since his expectations were not met. Therefore, providing correct

information to tourists and how it is packaged would help in solving such cases. There is also need to improve information in some of the sites like Hippo Hide and the Morani Information Centre, as well as need to keep high standards and keep educating the guides so that they are able to provide accurate information.

4.3.2 Ratings on the quality of hospitality in various key tourist sites in OPC
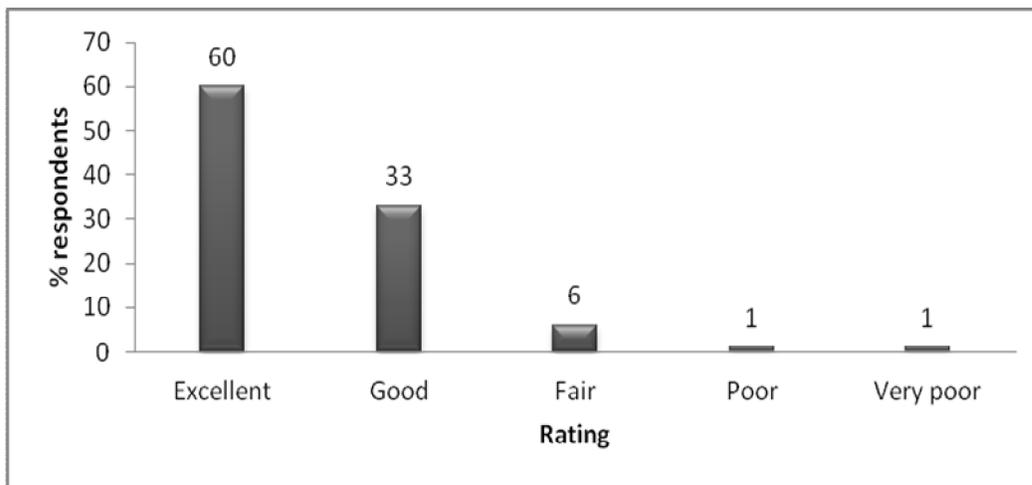
Figure 4: Overall percentage rating on quality of hospitality in OPC.

Table 5: Tourist response on the quality of hospitality in various key tourist sites within OPC

Site	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Very poor	Total number of respondents
Chimps sanctuary	71% (153)	24% (51)	4% (8)	1% (2)	0% (0)	214
Main gate to the conservancy	60% (151)	35% (88)	3% (8)	0% (1)	1% (2)	250
Morani information centre	60% (98)	35% (57)	5% (9)	0% (0)	0% (0)	164
Northern white rhino	57% (79)	36% (49)	6% (8)	1% (1)	1% (1)	138
Hippo hide	49% (61)	35% (43)	11% (14)	3% (4)	2% (2)	124

 **NB:** The figures in parenthesis are the number of respondents in each case

Overall, 60% of the respondents indicated that the hospitality provided to them in various tourist sites was excellent, 33% indicated that it was good while 6% said that it was fair (Fig. 5).On the contribution of each site to the overall satisfaction on hospitality, 71% of the respondents indicated that the hospitality at the chimpanzee sanctuary site was excellent, while 24% said it was good (Table 5). At the main gate to the conservancy and Morani Information center, 60% of the respondents indicated that the hospitality was excellent, while 35% said it was good (Table 5)

4.3.3 Rating on the quality of accommodation in various lodges and camps in OPC
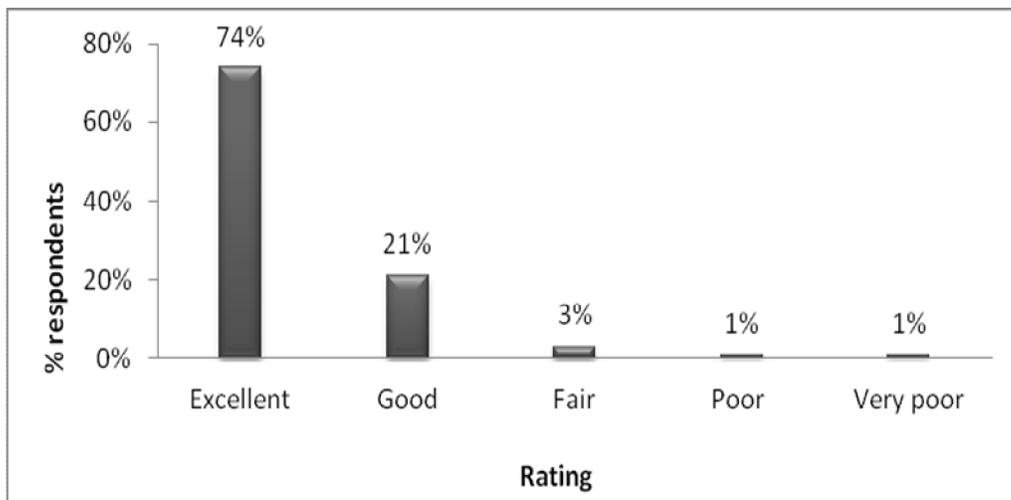
Figure 5: Overall percentage rating on satisfaction level of accommodation

Table 6: Tourists rating on the satisfaction level in various accommodation facilities

Lodge/Camps	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Very poor	Total respondents	%
Sweetwater's tented camp	44	14	1	1	1	61	62
Ol Pejeta House	20	6	1			27	27
Pelican House	4	1	1			6	6
Porini rhino camp	2					2	2
Ol Pejeta bush camp	2					2	2
Kicheche camp	1					1	1

On the overall rating of the quality of the accommodation in OPC, 74% of the respondents who stayed overnight (38%) indicated that it was excellent, while 21% indicated that it was good (Fig. 5).Out of those visitors who stayed overnight, 62% were accommodated at the Sweetwater's tented camp while 27% were accommodated at the Ol Pejeta House, some camps did not have sufficient response to carry-out analysis, since the respondents were significantly low (Table 6).

In spite of high level of tourist satisfaction on accommodation, whereby 72% of the respondents indicated that the accommodation was excellent, there were concerns about various issues, with a significant number of respondents indicating that the drinking water at Sweetwater Tented Camp should be served as part of the meals rather than at the bar. Some were not happy with the charges for the use of internet services. Some also indicated that the tents were too close to each other and therefore affecting on the privacy. A number of respondents indicated that there were no safe place to lock valuables, and that there was a need to put hair driers and binoculars at the tents.

4.3.4. Tourist response on the status of roads and signage infrastructure within OPC
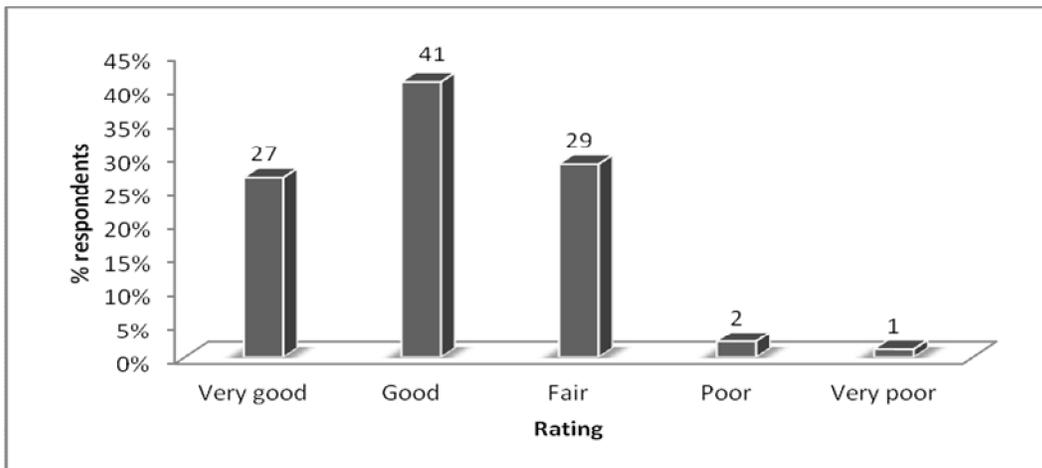
Figure 6: Percentage rating on the quality of roads in facilitating game drives within OPC
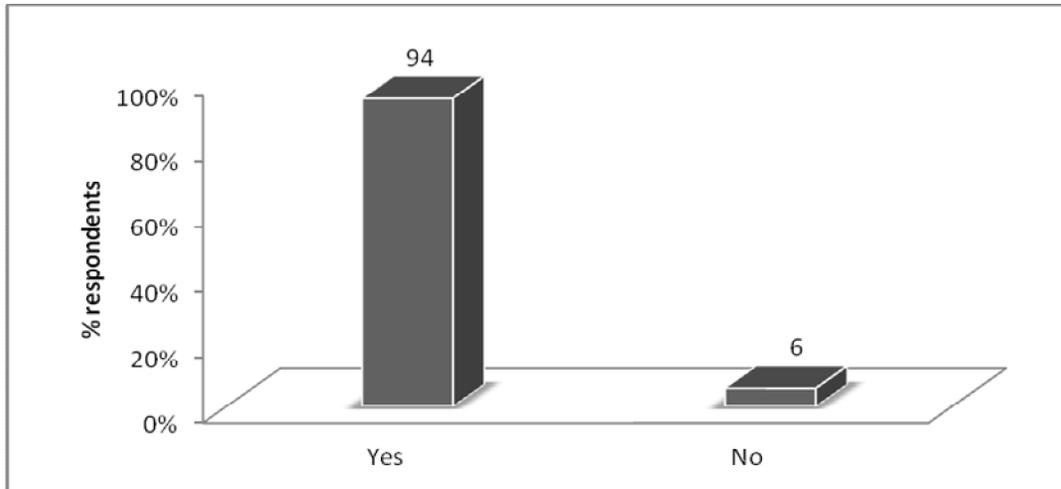
Figure 7: Response on the importance of signage in giving direction within OPC.

A total of 27% of the respondents indicated that the roads within OPC were very good in facilitating game drives, while 41% indicated that the roads were good, 29% indicated that they were fair (Fig. 6). On the signage, 94% of the respondents indicated that the signage was important in directing them around the conservancy and to the various tourist sites. (Fig.7).

A significant numbers of tourists indicated that there was need to improve game drives roads, since some of them were not visible due to over-grown grass, while others were impassable during rainy season. Although significant number of the respondents indicated that they were satisfied with signage in directing them around the conservancy, improvements were still needed, with some respondents indicating that the signage were too small and not clearly visible and there was need to indicate the distances to various sites.

4.4 OVERALL RATING ON SATISFACTION LEVEL OF TOURISTS VISITING

OL PEJETA CONSERVANCY
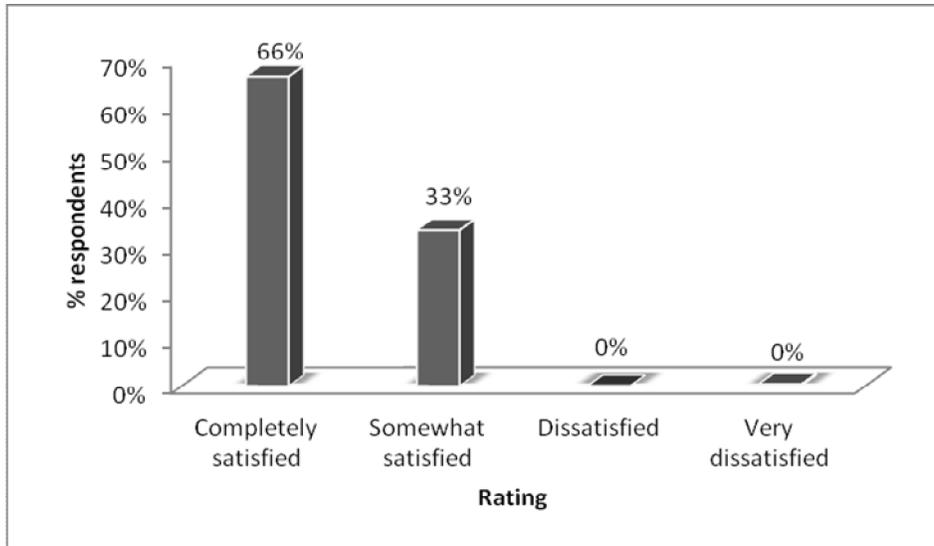
Figure 8: Percentage rating on overall satisfaction level
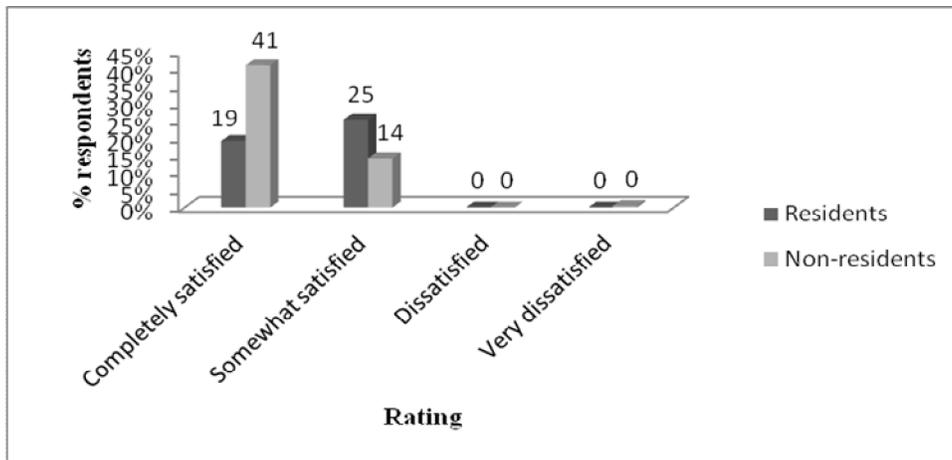
Figure 9: Percentage satisfaction rating of residents vs. non-residents

Tourists were asked to rate their overall experience within OPC, whereby 66% (n=173) of the respondents indicated that they were completely satisfied with the products and services offered by the conservancy, while 33% (n=87) indicated that they were somewhat satisfied (Fig. 8). The

non-residents tourist were more satisfied compared to the residents (X^2=13.255 df=1 p=0.000) (Fig. 9).

The effect of age on satisfaction level was investigated in order to get an in-depth understanding of contribution of the products offered in OPC towards satisfaction across different age classes. The results showed that there was significant difference in satisfaction across the age classes (X^2=24.423 df=4 p=0.000), with the age between 18 to 25 years recording the least satisfaction (X^2=1.385 df=1 p=0.239). Subsequently, there is need to address the needs of the young visitors by developing appropriate products and services in order to meet their expectations and thereby improving their satisfaction. This would also ensure that in future, the number of repeat visitors from this age group is maximized.

Generally, despite various complains from the tourists on various issues, most of them recorded high levels of satisfaction, with 96% indicating that they would wish to revisit OPC in the future. Therefore, their concerns should be addressed in order to meet their expectations when they revisit OPC in the future. Their satisfaction will help in continuing marketing of OPC through spreading word of mouth, since the results indicated that the highest number of the respondents knew OPC through the recommendation from friends and/or families. OPC should therefore engage various tourism partners to ensure high satisfaction level to its visitors at all times; this will be achieved by ensuring that the visitor's satisfaction always appears on top of the list of important issues that must be addressed by all partners.

4.5 Response on the willingness to donate

Since satisfaction will influence on the willingness by the tourist to support various projects in the conservancy, the study also assessed the willingness of the tourist to donate towards these projects (Fig.10).
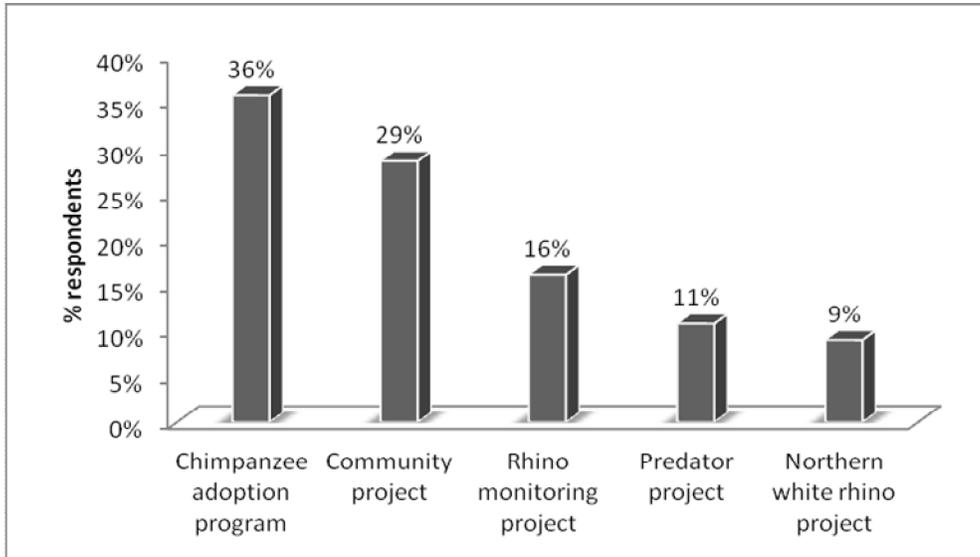
Figure 10:% respondents on willingness to donate to various projects in OPC

A total of 22% of the respondents indicated that they were willing to donate, while 78% indicated that they were not willing to. A total of 36% of those who were willing to donate indicated that they were willing to donate to the Chimpanzee adoption program, while 29% and 16% were willing to donate to community and rhino monitoring projects respectively.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

The aim of this study was to investigate the level of tourist satisfaction in OPC, while identifying some of the factors that might affect the level of satisfaction, as well as creating a bench mark for continuous assessment of tourist satisfaction in order to maintain high levels of satisfaction at all times. These will increase the tourist loyalty and chances of revisits, as well as recommending visit to friends and relatives. High satisfaction levels of the tourists will also increase their stay in OPC, thereby increasing income generation.

The recently opened Morani restaurant will help in providing refreshments to the day trippers, since during the study period significant number of respondents particularly the locals indicated that there was need to establish such a refreshment point. There is need to create awareness to the public regarding it's existence since lack of such awareness may lead to low number of people who visit the restaurant, since most of them will continue to carrying packed snacks while visiting the conservancy.

According to Chen (2010), satisfaction is created by the comparison of the customer's expectations before and after consumption. Obviously, if the performance of the service or product cannot fulfill the expectations, dissatisfaction will result. Specifically, tourist satisfaction is created by the comparison of pre-travel expectations and post-travel experiences.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on various complains which were raised by the tourists on various issues, which seemed to have affected their satisfaction, there is need for the Conservancy to ensure that those concerns are addressed in order to ensure their satisfaction when they revisit. This will help in improving their trust with the Conservancy leading to loyalty. Therefore, I wish to recommend the following actions:

Reviewing of the park and camping fees for the locals, since quite significant number of local respondents indicated that the charges were too high for them which was discouraging their revisit. Possibly the reduction of the charges can be done during the low season in order to attract more locals and this will ensure flow of tourists into the conservancy throughout the year.

Provision of professional guides to help in shepherding the tourists around the conservancy and to interpretation of various aspects regarding conservancy and general conservation issues, this will help in improving the satisfaction level on information provided thereby achieving the overall goal of educating the public about various issues affecting the environment and general ecosystem there by increasing their level of satisfaction.

There is also need to facilitate training of the guides in various tourist sites, on various issues regarding guiding ethics and principles. This will help in enhancing the hospitality in these sites, thereby creating a good image for the Conservancy.

There is also need to harmonize information provided by the guides to the tourists, possibly by creating a standardized commentary for all guides in OPC, including those in the private camps. The guides should be provided with monthly information updates, possibly through a forum to

discuss various issues to enhance their guiding skills. This will also facilitate development of new ideas amongst themselves.

Owing to the fact that OPC has a lot of potential and unexploited tourism resources, there is need to maximally utilize these resource in order to fully gain from them.

The results showed that The Hippo Hide site recorded the least visitors among other key sites, therefore the need to improve this site in order to get more visitors, possibly by improving the hippo information center and improvement of the trail.

There is also need to minimize the time spent at the gates clearing the tourists; this seemed to have significantly affected the level of satisfaction of some tourists. Hence there is need to explore other means of clearing tourists quickly for example by adopting a pre-booking system. This will also help in easing congestion at the gate especially during the high seasons.

According to my observation, small game drive tracks are created and no maintenance is done to them. They end up over-grown with grass or other vegetation thereby becoming invisible and unsuitable especially for the small cars. Therefore, there is need to keep on maintaining these roads to facilitate easy movement by tourist vehicles while on game drives; this will help in increasing their level of satisfaction.

The main gate (Rongai) gives the first impression of the OPC image to the visiting tourist, and that impression will influence their expectation. It is therefore important to improve the quality of the gate, possibly by refurbishing the gate and provision of modern toilets as well as toilets for the handicapped. There is also the need to give a brief introduction to the tourist as they enter OPC on what they can expect, this will increase their enthusiasm to explore OPC.

Since the youths (18-25) recorded the least satisfaction, there is need for the conservancy to design products which are targeted to the youths, this will enhance their satisfaction, thereby maximizing on their revisits.

Some respondents indicated that there were a lot of tourist groups at the chimpanzee platform which could create negative effects to the chimpanzees due to noise levels. This could affect their normal behavior in the long run; they indicated that in some instances some chimpanzees became aggressive while other became bored and therefore the numbers of visitors should be regulated at this site to avoid over-crowding.

There is need to ensure that all the staff that interact directly with the visitors have name tags, this will help in maintaining high level of professionalism, thereby earning tourist confidence.

Continuous surveys of the tourist satisfaction is encouraged in order to maintain high level of satisfaction, while identifying any gap or factor that may lead to dissatisfaction.

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APPENDICES

Appendice 1: Number of respondents per country

Country (ies)	Respondents
Australia	5
Belgium	1
Botswana	1
Canada	8
China	2
Denmark	5
Ethiopia	1
Fiji	1
France	8
Germany	12
Ghana	1
Holland	1
India	7
Netherlands	3
Israel	2
Italy	4
Japan	1
Kenya	116
Mauritia	1
Nepal	2
Norway	3
Scotland	1
Serbia	1
South Africa	3
Spain	2
Sweden	1
Switzerland	1
Uganda	1
United Kingdom	24
USA	42

Appendice 2: Number of Males respondents per country and age classes

Males respondents Country/Age class	18-25	26-34	35-44	45-54	55 & above	Total
Australian					1	1
Belgian						
Botswana				1		1
Canadian				3	1	4
China						
Denmark			1		2	3
Dutch					1	1
Ethiopia			1			1
Fiji		1				1
French		1		4		5
Germany		1	2	2	1	6
Ghana			1			1
Holland				1		1
Indian			1	2	2	5
Irish						
Israel				1		1
Italian	1		1	1		3
Japan						
Kenya	5	24	21	14	5	69
Mauritian						
Nepal			2			2
Norway	1					1
Scottish						
Serbia					1	1
South Africa						
Spain						
Swedish						
Swissland					1	1
Uganda			1			1
UK	1	2	3	4	4	14
USA		4	5	3	5	17
Grand Total	**8**	**33**	**39**	**36**	**24**	**140**

Appendice 3: Number of female respondents per country and age classes

Female respondents Country/Age class	18-25	26-34	35-44	45-54	55 & above	Total
Australian		1	1		2	4
Belgian		1				1
Canadian				2	2	4
China		1	1			2
Denmark				1	1	2
Dutch			1			1
French			2		1	3
Germany	1		1	3	1	6
Indian	1		1			2
Irish				1		1
Israel	1					1
Italian				1		1
Japan			1			1
Kenya	10	17	16	4		47
Mauritian			1			1
Norway		1			1	2
Scottish			1			1
South Africa			1	2		3
Spain				2		2
Swedish			1			1
UK	1	3	2	1	3	10
USA	4	2	5	4	10	25
Grand total	**18**	**26**	**35**	**21**	**21**	**121**

Appendice 4: Tourist satisfaction survey sample questionnaire.

Dear Respondent,

We would like to welcome you to the Ol Pejeta Conservancy, East Africa's Largest Black Rhino Sanctuary. Your tour will provide you to get a chance to see the Big Five, an up close Chimpanzee's at the Sweetwater's Chimpanzee Sanctuary as well as the view of the Northern White Rhinos. In our quest to deliver the most memorable experience during your visit we would like to gather valuable feedback from you. The information will provide an opportunity for the Conservancy to understand our challenges and more importantly improve on them to make your next visit even more enjoyable. We would like to request that you kindly complete this questionnaire and return it to the camp reception. Thank you for your time.

1. Please indicate your Nationality:…………………………………………………………

 2. Gender: [   ] Male   [   ] Female

3. Kindly tick against your age (years) bracket below:

   [   ] 18 to 25. [   ] 26 to 34. [   ] 35 to 44. [   ] 45 to 54. [   ] 55 and above

4.   Is this your first time to visit Ol Pejeta Conservancy?

[   ] Yes.

[   ] No. Kindly indicate how many times you have visited in the past…………………

 5.   How did you get to know about Ol Pejeta Conservancy?

        [   ]   Conservancy's website

        [   ]   From relative/s

        [   ]   From friend/s

        [   ]   From a tour operator

        [   ]   From the media

[   ] Others. Kindly specify……………………………………………………………….

6. What are the main factor(s) you considered that made you decide to visit Ol Pejeta Conservancy?…………………………………………………………………………………………………….
………
………

7. How can you rate the road infrastructure within the Conservancy in terms of enabling you to easily see wildlife?

[   ] Very good

[   ] Good

[   ] Fair

[   ] Poor

[   ] Very poor

8. Were the road signs helpful as a guide around the Conservancy?

[   ] Yes

[   ] No: Please suggest for any improvements………………………………………………

9. If you camped in the Conservancy, were you happy with:

i)   Location of the site.   [   ] Yes   [   ] No

ii)   Facility(ies) provided. [   ] Yes   [   ] No

iii)   Please comment and or give suggestions for improvement………………………..

………………………………………………………………………………………………

10. How can you rate the hospitality given to you at the following sites? (Tick in the box appropriately)

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Very poor
Main gate to the conservancy					
Sweetwaters Chimpanzee Sanctuary					
Morani Information Centre					
At the Northern White Rhino.					
At the Hippo Hide					

Please give your comment(s):…………………………………...

…………………………………………………………………………………………..

11. How can you rate the quality and content of information given to you at the following sites?

	Completely satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
Main gate to the conservancy				
Chimpanzee sanctuary				
Morani information centre				
At Baraka platform (Black rhino)				
At the Northern white rhino.				
At the hippo site				

Please give your comment(s):…………………………………...

…………………………………………………………………………………………..

12. Please rate your level of satisfaction for the accommodation facility you stayed in (if applicable).

Name of the Lodge/Camp ……………………………………………

Completely Dissatisfied				Completely Satisfied
1	2	3	4	5

13. Please list down in order of importance what gave you the most satisfaction during your visit.

    1. ……………………………………………………………………………………
    2. ……………………………………………………………………………………
    3. ……………………………………………………………………………………

14. Please list down the things which you were not happy about during your visit.

    1. ……………………………………………………………………………………
    2. ……………………………………………………………………………………
    3. ……………………………………………………………………………………

15. Kindly rate your overall satisfaction for your visit to Ol Pejeta Conservancy.

    [   ] Completely satisfied

       [   ] Somewhat satisfied

       [   ] Dissatisfied

       [   ] Very dissatisfied

16. Would you consider making another visit to Ol Pejeta Conservancy in future?

    [   ] Yes   [   ] No

17. Kindly give general suggestions for any improvement(s), comments or complaints:

……………………………………………………………………………………………....
…………………………………………………………………………………………….

18. A number of the tourists who have visited Ol Pejeta Conservancy in the past have donated to various projects within the conservancy. Would you wish to donate?

[   ] Yes   [   ] No

If yes which of the following project(s) would you wish to donate to?

[   ] Chimpanzee adoption

    [   ] Rhino monitoring project

    [   ] Predator project

    [   ] Northern white rhino project

    [   ] Community development project

If in the affirmative, please provide us with your email and we will contact you.

Email address: …………………………………………………………………...

We thank you most sincerely for taking time to fill the questionnaire and most especially for your visit to Ol Pejeta Conservancy.