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Loyalty in the Lake Victoria Region Tourism Circuit,  
Kenya.

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## **Pull Motivation Factors Influencing Tourists' Destination Loyalty in the Lake Victoria Region Tourism Circuit, Kenya**

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### **ABSTRACT**

**Purpose:** The purpose of this study was to identify pull motivation factors influencing tourists' destination loyalty in the Lake Victoria Region Tourism Circuit, Kenya.

**Methodology:** The study adopted an explanatory research approach based on a cross-sectional survey design to collect and analyse quantitative data. This study proposed destination loyalty the most appropriate indicator of destination competitiveness. Self-administered questionnaires were used to collect quantitative primary data to help understand tourist pull motivation factors and destination loyalty. The instrument was pre-tested using 20 tourists who were not included in the final study. The study population consisted of 461 tourists drawn from the circuits' 26 classified hotels, based on the region's 35% average occupancy rate. Multi-stage sampling technique was used to get 299 tourists whereby proportionate sampling followed by simple random sampling was used to identify hotels while convenience sampling helped obtain actual respondents.

**Findings:** Tourists' pull motivation factors were identified as; destination core resources, destination support resources, qualifying and amplifying resources and destination management factors.

**Recommendations:** Based on the findings, the researcher suggests that destination managers should: constantly avail information linked to tourism to any intending traveler; ensure high quality hotel services; pay close attention to the safety and security of tourists in the destination, and; pay close attention to the accessibility of the destination for all intending clients respectively. Moreover, findings of this study offer guidelines to destination managers in the Lake Victoria Region Tourism Circuit Kenya, in monitoring and enhancing the destinations competitiveness based on destination loyalty.

**Key Words:** *Pull, Motivation, Loyalty, Competitiveness, Destination*

## INTRODUCTION

To enhance competitiveness, destination managers need to understand the link between tourists' pull motivation factors and destination loyalty. In the increasingly competitive tourism marketplace, the success of destination marketing and management should be guided by a thorough analysis of the tourist's motivation factors and their interplay with destination loyalty. Previous studies on destination competitiveness do not highlight linkage between these constructs. A review of literature reveals an abundance of studies on destination competitiveness, motivation, and loyalty, but the fit between the constructs has not been thoroughly investigated. Moreover, literature review on motivation reveals that people travel because they are "pulled" by the external forces of the destination attributes. Accordingly, to pull forces, contribute to destination loyalty. The degree of tourists' loyalty to a destination is reflected in their intentions to revisit the destination and in their recommendations to others.

The paper focuses on the Lake Victoria Region tourism circuit, Kenya, having lagged behind in terms of tourist visitation as compared to other destination in Kenya with somewhat similar attractions. This study offers an integrated approach to understanding tourists' motivation and attempts to extend the theoretical and empirical evidence on the relationships between and pull motivations and destination loyalty. The Lake Victoria Region is made up of territories from the Western part of Kenya with a population of over 10 million people of diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Counties that make up the region include Bungoma, Busia, Homa-Bay, Kakamega, Kisii, Kisumu, Migori, Nyamira, Siaya, Kericho, Trans-Nzoia, Bomet and Vihiga (see figure 2). The region lies between latitudes 10 16'N and 10 54'S and longitudes 330 55' and 350 51'E. The climate of the region is generally mild with monthly temperature ranging between 19 and 25 degrees Celsius throughout the year. Rainfall in the region is governed by a modified equatorial climate characterized by long rains (March to June) and short rains (September to November). The average annual rainfall varies from 700mm along the Lake Victoria shores to 2000mm in the highlands. The Lake Victoria Region tourism circuit is home to a variety of attractions including but not limited to: freshwater-based attractions including L. Victoria, L. Simbi Nyaima, L. Kanyaboli, L. Sare; mountains, hills and escarpments; Indigenous Forests; Caves and Rock outcrops; National Parks and National Reserves, Freshwater Beaches, Waterfalls; Hot Springs; Islands, Cultural Shrines, Wetlands; among others. Thus there are lots of opportunities for development of various forms of tourism in the circuit. However, the natural and cultural capital has not been optimally exploited for the development and the entire circuit is still lagging behind in various types of tourism

## PULL MOTIVATION FACTORS

Pull factors are external forces that lead an individual to select one destination over another. These factors have been characterized in terms of the characteristics or attributes of the destination itself (Klenosky, 2002). On this assumption, the individual's motivation would originate from the expected benefits to be attained in the product's use and the expectation of achieving personal values (Mort & Rose, 2004). Pull factors are those that emerge as a result of the attractiveness of a destination as it is perceived by the traveler. They include tangible and intangible resources of a specific destination such as beaches, sunshine, recreation facilities and

historic resources as well as travelers' perceptions and expectations such as novelty, benefit expectation, and the marketing image of the destination (Klenosky, 2002).

Destinations are comprised of various attributes that significantly affect visitors at different stages. For example, a favorable image of a destination formed by a combination of the destination's attributes (e.g., beautiful landscape, shopping opportunities, cultural exchange, infrastructure, safety, and activities) significantly affects individuals' destination choices (e.g., Chi & Qu, 2008; Echtner & Ritchie, 1993; Hallab, et al., 2012). Moreover, the performance of destination attributes determines visitors' satisfaction and future behavior, such as revisits and word-of-mouth publicity (e.g., Chi & Qu, 2009; Ozdemir et al., 2012).

Given the versatile roles of destination attributes, researchers have widely studied the attributes of destinations and have developed destination competitiveness models grounded in the various factors of destinations (e.g., Crouch & Ritchie, 1999; Dwyer & Kim, 2003; Enright & Newton, 2004; Ritchie & Crouch, 2003). However, there are limited studies of this nature in the Lake Victoria Region Tourism, Circuit Kenya to date.

The aforementioned studies have advanced the understanding of the critical roles of the destination attributes in maintaining a competitive edge in a highly competitive market place. However, few studies have examined the relationship between destination attributes and future behavior (destination loyalty) (Assaf & Josiassen, 2012; Meng, 2006). Just like the present study, previous researchers have assessed destination competitiveness by use a demand perspective and, therefore, survey tourists about the list of competitiveness indicators (Andrades- Caldito et al., 2014; Cracolici & Nijkamp, 2009; Garau-Taberner, 2007; Goffi, 2013; Hsu et al., 2004; Kozak & Rimmington, 1998, 1999). The argument in favor of using tourists states that tourists are the ones who experience the tourism product and that without tourists there is no tourism (Raj, 2004). Surveying tourists also enables the capturing of their opinions and feelings towards their experience of destinations (Kozak & Rimmington, 1999). Several gaps have been left by the previous destination competitiveness studies. One, the studies have not attempted to identify the particular attributes of the destination that significantly appeal to the individual tourist. Two, the studies have bundled all the destination attributes as contributing to the competitiveness of the destination irrespective of the different tourist market segments that exist, for example the green consumers.

This study therefore aimed at advancing knowledge in this field by investigating pull motivation factors to determine destination competitiveness from the tourists' perspective in the study area. This approach is expected to help the study destination identify its best-valued attributes as well as those to be improved (Pike & Ryan, 2004). By doing so, the destination managers in the Lake Victoria Region Tourism Circuit, Kenya would be able to predict tourists' behavioral intentions as well as get critical insights for managing and developing the destination for enhanced competitiveness (Bigné, Sanchez, & Sanchez, 2001; Fakeye & Crompton, 1991).

## METHODOLOGY

### RESEARCH DESIGN

The researcher used a cross-sectional survey to gather primary data due to its advantages over other survey designs. Using cross-sectional survey design, data was collected within a short period of time and less expensively. The results obtained from the survey sample were generalisable to the entire population of tourists visiting the Lake Victoria Region Tourist Circuit, in Kenya. This research design involved administering a questionnaire once a tourist drawn from a sample of the tourists visiting the Lake Victoria Region Tourist Circuit, Kenya, between August and October 2018.

### POPULATION OF THE STUDY

The population for this study consisted of tourists visiting hotels and attractions in the Lake Victoria Region tourism circuit, Kenya between the months of August and October, 2018. According to the Kenya gazette (2018), there were 26 classified hotels and lodges in the Lake Victoria Region tourism circuit with an estimated bed capacity of 1843 beds and 1317 rooms. Therefore the population of the study was estimated to be 1317 tourists assuming that 1 room in a given hotel or lodge was occupied once by 1 tourist during the three months of data collection as shown in Table 1 below.

**Table 1: Bed capacities of classified hotels and lodges in the Lake Victoria Region Tourism Circuit as at January, 2018**

|    | <i>Hotel / Lodge</i>                                   | <i>County</i> | <i>Rooms</i> | <i>Beds</i> | <i>Star</i> |
|----|--|---------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|
| 1  | Boma Inn-Eldoret                                       | Uasin Gishu   | 68           | 80          | 4           |
| 2  | Hotel Nyakoe   | Kisii         | 75           | 86          | 3           |
| 3  | Sovereign Hotel  | Kisumu        | 32           | 64          | 3           |
| 4  | Imperial Hotel   | Kisumu        | 78           | 90          | 3           |
| 5  | The Vic Hotel  | Kisumu        | 106          | 122         | 3           |
| 6  | The Noble conference center                            | Uasin Gishu   | 53           | 67          | 3           |
| 7  | Golf Hotel   | Kakamega      | 62           | 124         | 2           |
| 8  | Dados Hotel  | Kisii         | 57           | 72          | 2           |
| 9  | St. Johns Manor – Le savanna country lodges and hotels | Kisumu        | 49           | 49          | 2           |
| 10 | Le savanna Country Lodge and Hotel                     | Kisumu        | 39           | 78          | 2           |
| 11 | Sunset hotel   | Kisumu        | 50           | 100         | 2           |
| 12 | Poa place Resort                                       | Uasin Gishu   | 15           | 35          | 2           |
| 13 | Hotel Winstar  | Uasin Gishu   | 85           | 95          | 2           |
| 14 | Hotel Comfy & Lodge                                    | Uasin Gishu   | 96           | 110         | 2           |
| 15 | Cicada Hotel   | Uasin Gishu   | 56           | 56          | 2           |
| 16 | Kenmosa Resort   | Uasin Gishu   | 17           | 26          | 2           |
| 17 | Starbucks Hotel & restaurant ltd.                      | Uasin Gishu   | 93           | 182         | 2           |
| 18 | The pearl Tourist Hotel ltd.                           | Uasin Gishu   | 42           | 42          | 2           |

|    |                        |                     |      |      |   |
|----|------------------------|---------------------|------|------|---|
| 19 | Hotel horizon          | Uasin Gishu         | 60   | 75   | 2 |
| 20 | Dewchurch Drive Hotel  | Kisumu              | 13   | 16   | 2 |
| 21 | Kisumu Hotel           | Kisumu              | 86   | 120  | 3 |
| 22 | Kiboko Bay Resort      | Kisumu              | 10   | 20   | 3 |
| 23 | Kerio View Lodge       | Elgeyo-<br>Marakwet | 28   | 40   | 3 |
| 24 | Samich Resort          | Elgeyo-<br>Marakwet | 15   | 30   | 3 |
| 25 | Jambo Impala Eco-lodge | Kisumu              | 12   | 24   | 3 |
| 26 | Rondo Retreat Centre   | Kisumu              | 20   | 40   | 3 |
|    | Total capacity         |                     | 1317 | 1843 |   |

**Source:** Kenya Gazette (2018)

Given that hotel room occupancy rate in Kenya had been ranging between, 30% and 40% from the year 2010 to the year 2017 (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2018), the tourists population of the study was 461 tourists assuming a 35% average occupancy rate during the data collection period.

Tourists were chosen as respondents of this study because they are the ones who experience the tourism product (Raj, 2004) and from them opinions and feelings towards the tourism product of the destination could be captured (Kozak & Rimmington, 1999). This is as opposed to using tourism practitioners only such as the business development managers, hotel managers, tour operators and other destination managers, from whom information collected could carry some bias and exaggerations (Dwyer et al., 2003).

**Inclusion and exclusion criteria**

- i. Only tourists visiting hotels and attraction at the Lake Victoria Region Tourism Circuit during the data collection period were included in the study.
- ii. The tourists included in the study must have been residing in a hotel in the circuit or were at a tourist attraction in the circuit at the time of data collection.

### STUDY SAMPLE

To generate representative sample sizes from the population of tourists, Creative Research Systems (2003) formula was used. Using the formula, the sample size was determined as follows:

$$SS = \frac{Z^2 \times (p) \times (1 - p)}{C^2}$$

Where:

SS = Sample Size

Z = Z-value (e.g., 1.96 for a 95 per cent confidence level)

P = Percentage of population picking a choice, expressed as decimal (.5 used for sample size needed)

C = Confidence interval, expressed as decimal (e.g., .04 = +/- 4 percentage points)

$$SS = \frac{1.96^2 \times (0.5) \times (1-0.5)}{0.04^2}$$

$$SS = 600$$

The required sample size for an infinite population is thus 600.

Since the population of tourists by use of hotel rooms was estimated at 461, and assuming that each room is occupied by a different tourist only once throughout the data collection period the new sample size for the study was calculated as shown below.

$$\text{New } SS = \frac{SS}{(1 + (SS - 1)/pop)}$$

Where pop = finite population

$$\text{New } SS = \frac{600}{(1 + ((600 - 1)/461))}$$

$$\text{New } SS = 260.943396$$

$$\text{New } SS = 261 \text{ Tourists}$$

To obtain the actual sample size multi-stage sampling was used. Stratified sampling and proportionate sampling were used to obtain samples whereby hotels were first be stratified into geographic strata, i.e. hotels located in each of the identified counties. Stratification helped in splitting the heterogeneous population into fairly homogeneous groups so that samples could be drawn from the group with precision. Using a minimum sample size of 261, the respondents were drawn proportionately from the strata using the formula as shown in below. As noted by Van Dalen (1979), proportional sampling provides the researcher with a way to achieve greater representativeness in the sample of the population.

$$\text{Actual Sample Size} = \frac{\text{Population Strata}}{\text{Estimated Study Population}} \times \text{Minimum Sample Size for the Study}$$

Where:

*Population strata* = 243 tourists in Uasin Gishu county hotels, 53 tourists in Kisii county hotels, 198 tourists in Kisumu county hotels, 16 in Kakamega county hotels, and 17 tourists from Elgeyo-Markwet county hotels. Table 2 shows the sample size from each county.

Where; Estimated study population = 461; and Study sample size = 261

**Table 2: Tourists proportion that were considered in the study by county**

| <i>County Strata</i> | <i>Total number of tourists</i> |
|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| Elgeyo-Marakwet      | 10                              |
| Kakamega             | 09                              |
| Kisumu               | 112                             |
| Kisii                | 30                              |
| Uasin Gishu          | 138                             |
| Total                | 299                             |

Simple random sampling was used to identify the actual hotels from which the respondents were obtained.

Finally convenience sampling was considered to select actual respondents for the study from the selected hotels (i.e. 299 tourists). At least 10 respondents were picked from each selected hotel, 10 being the lowest number of rooms in all the hotels sampled. Similarly, Convenience sampling was used to pick respondents from the tourism attraction sites.

## FINDINGS

To identify pull factors, respondents were required to rate on a scale of 1 – 7 how important each of the 36 items were, in motivating their visit to the destination. The 36 items were drawn from literature. The mean ranking results are summarised in Table 3a.

**Table 3a. Mean ranking of tourist pull motivation factor by importance**

| <b>Measures of pull motivation factor</b> | <b>Min</b> | <b>Max</b> | <b>Mean</b> | <b>SD</b> |
|---|------------|------------|-------------|-----------|
| Safety and security at the destination    | 1.00       | 7.00       | 5.81        | 1.12      |
| Political stability                       | 2.00       | 7.00       | 5.81        | 1.22      |
| Value for money                           | 2.00       | 7.00       | 5.75        | 1.24      |
| Cleanliness of the destination            | 1.00       | 7.00       | 5.74        | 1.13      |
| Hotel prices                              | 2.00       | 7.00       | 5.71        | 1.15      |
| Quality of hotel services                 | 1.00       | 7.00       | 5.68        | 1.01      |
| Overall destination image                 | 2.00       | 7.00       | 5.64        | 1.24      |
| Cost of transport                         | 1.00       | 7.00       | 5.62        | 1.11      |
| Climate of the region                     | 1.00       | 7.00       | 5.46        | 1.12      |
| Festivals and events in the area          | 1.00       | 7.00       | 5.42        | 1.10      |
| Attractions of cultural heritage          | 1.00       | 7.00       | 5.39        | 1.06      |
| Gastronomy offered in the area            | 1.00       | 7.00       | 5.39        | 1.13      |
| Online booking facilities available       | 1.00       | 7.00       | 5.39        | 1.14      |
| Entertainment                             | 1.00       | 7.00       | 5.36        | 1.11      |
| Shopping opportunities                    | 1.00       | 7.00       | 5.34        | 1.12      |



|  |      |      |      |      |
|--|------|------|------|------|
| Sport-recreation activities available  | 1.00 | 7.00 | 5.29 | 1.12 |
| Accessibility of the destination   | 2.00 | 7.00 | 5.29 | 1.14 |
| Unspoiled nature   | 1.00 | 7.00 | 5.26 | 1.08 |
| Available information linked to the tourism product offered at the destination | 1.00 | 7.00 | 5.26 | 1.19 |
| Availability of conference and business meeting facilities                     | 2.00 | 7.00 | 5.25 | 1.12 |
| Destination reputation related to tourism                                      | 1.00 | 7.00 | 5.23 | 1.21 |
| Availability of up-to-date audio-visual equipment                              | 1.00 | 7.00 | 5.18 | 1.12 |
| Local transportation quality   | 1.00 | 7.00 | 5.15 | 1.11 |
| The hospitality of the local people  | 1.00 | 7.00 | 5.12 | 1.23 |
| The available interpretation and education services at the destination         | 1.00 | 7.00 | 5.06 | 1.22 |
| The use of ICT by tourism firms in the region                                  | 1.00 | 7.00 | 5.04 | 1.23 |
| Development and innovations of business tourism product                        | 1.00 | 7.00 | 5.02 | 1.19 |
| Human specialists for conference and business events                           | 1.00 | 7.00 | 4.93 | 1.26 |
| Education profile of employees in tourism                                      | 1.00 | 7.00 | 4.92 | 1.36 |
| Tourists' satisfaction management programs at the destination                  | 1.00 | 7.00 | 4.87 | 1.33 |
| Emphasis of community empowerment by the destination managers                  | 1.00 | 7.00 | 4.87 | 1.27 |
| Presence of foreign/international companies                                    | 1.00 | 7.00 | 4.84 | 1.28 |
| Availability of tourism promotion materials in foreign language                | 1.00 | 7.00 | 4.81 | 1.38 |
| Knowledge of foreign language among tourism employees                          | 1.00 | 7.00 | 4.79 | 1.48 |
| Tourism impact management and monitoring by the destination managers           | 1.00 | 7.00 | 4.73 | 1.39 |
| The potential for incentive trips  | 1.00 | 7.00 | 4.59 | 1.42 |
| Valid N (listwise)   | 282  |      |      |      |

*Note:* Min – Minimum, Max – Maximum, SD – Standard deviation

Scale: 1-Not at all important, 2-low importance, 3-Slightly important, 4-Neutral, 5-Moderately important, 6-Very important, 7-Extremely important

In this regard, the highest ranked item was safety and security at the destination ( $M = 5.81$ ,  $SD = 1.12$ ) followed by political stability ( $M = 5.81$ ,  $SD = 1.22$ ). The least ranked item was potential for incentive trips ( $M = 4.59$ ,  $SD = 1.42$ ). Generally, the respondents considered most items to be moderately important (Table 3a).

On subjecting the 36 items to principal axis factoring (PAF), four factors resulted, accounting for 60.09% of the total variance explained. All factor loadings were  $> .60$ . Based on literature review, the factors were named: *Core Resources Factor* (CRF) with 13 items accounting for 20.54%, *Support Resources Factor* (SRF) with 11 items accounting for 18.08%, *Qualifying and Amplifying Factor* (QAF) with 8 items accounting for 14.75%, and *Destination Management Factor* (DMF) with 4 items accounting for 6.72% of the total variance explained (see Table 3b). This supports a number of research findings on tourist pull motivations (Battour, Battor, & Ismail, 2012; Fieger, Prayag, & Bruwer, 2017; Nilplub, Khang, & Krairit, 2016; Pesonen, Komppula, & Peters, 2011; Pestana, Parreira, & Moutinho, 2019; Said & Maryono, 2018; Sato,

Kim, Buning, & Harada, 2018; Yousefi, 2015) who all agree that tourists are motivated to visit a destination by a set of external factors all related to the attributes of the destination. The factors are discussed in the succeeding section.

### **DESTINATION CORE RESOURCES**

Table 3a indicates that of the thirteen items, available information linked to tourism product offered at the destination had the highest mean ranking ( $M = 5.25$ ,  $SD = 1.19$ ) followed by destination reputation related to tourism ( $M = 5.23$ ,  $SD = 1.21$ ) in relation to core resource factors. Availability of tourism promotion materials in foreign language though registered the highest loading (.81) (see Table 3b), was ranked third from the lowest ( $M = 4.81$ ,  $SD = 1.38$ ) with respect to core resource factor (see Table 3a). Table 3b indicate that the thirteen items that loaded on core resource (CRF) factor account for 20.54% of the total variance explained in tourist pull motivations. This supports Hanafiah & Hemdi, (2017) who emphasize that a destinations' core resources are a fundamental reason why tourists chose one destination over the other.

### **DESTINATION SUPPORT RESOURCES**

Table 3b indicate that the 11 items that loaded on support resources (SRF) factor account for 18.08% of the total variance explained implying that these were key attributes forming tourists' pull motivations. This corroborates previous research findings (Chugh, 2018; Fathabadi, Reza, Nejad, & Alizadeh, 2017; Rajesh, 2017; Vengesai, Mavondo, & Reisinger, 2013; Styliadis & Cherifi, 2018; Tanford & Jung, 2017) who postulated that destination support services played a significant role in attracting tourists to a destination. Table 3a indicate that of the 11 items, Quality of hotel services in relation to support resources had the highest mean ranking ( $M = 5.68$ ,  $SD = 1.01$ ) followed by the climate of the region ( $M = 5.46$ ,  $SD = 1.12$ ). Although Table 13b indicate that attractions of cultural heritage in the area registered a higher loading (.74) it ranked fourth ( $M = 5.39$ ,  $SD = 1.06$ ) with respect to support resources attributes of tourist pull motivation (see Table 3a). Chugh (2018) reported that indigenous culture, art and handicrafts lay the foundation of a long lasting relationship between the host community and tourists based on mutual understanding and respect. Fathabadi et al., (2017) also point out that cultural differences and social characteristics of a tourist destination influence the destination brand equity. It is further pointed out by Tanford & Jung (2017) that festivals provide economic, social and cultural benefits to the communities in which they occur, and contribute to event tourism and destination marketing. The findings, however unlike other existing research findings (Fathabadi et al., 2017; Rajesh, 2017; Styliadis & Cherifi, 2018) suggest that the quality of hotel services will be more critical in attracting tourists to the Lake Victoria Region Tourist Circuit, Kenya. This is because of the amount of time a tourist would spend at the hotel as compared to the time they spend at an attraction for example in a game drive or at the museum. For instance, a tourist visiting the destination for a business meeting, a conference, or to enjoy the local gastronomy will most likely spend a larger portion of their time at a Hotel thus the concern about the quality of hotel services.

## DESTINATION QUALIFYING AND AMPLIFYING RESOURCES

Table 3b indicate that the eight items loaded on the qualifying and amplifying (QAF) factor account for 14.75% of the variance explained. The findings generally support the propositions that tourists make their decision to visit a destination based on a number of qualifying and amplifying attributes of a destination. The study findings support various studies (Li, Wen, & Ying, 2018; Loi, So, Lo, & Fong, 2017; Peattie, 2010; Tegegne, Moyle, & Becken, 2018) that have investigated the role of qualifying and amplifying resources in a tourists' decision making process. Table 3a indicate that of the eight items, Safety and security at the destination had the highest mean ranking ( $M = 5.81$ ,  $SD = 1.12$ ) with the least ranked item being Online booking facilities available ( $M = 5.39$ ,  $SD = 1.14$ ) with respect to qualifying and amplifying factor. This is in line with most study findings (Li et al., 2018; Prayag, Hosany, Muskat, & Del Chiappa, 2017; Rajesh, 2017) that reported tourists' safety and security as a critical factor in the decision to visit a destination. Specifically, the study by Loi et al., (2017) revealed that the quality of tourist shuttles predicts intention to revisit through two mediators - destination satisfaction and image. The results of that study also show that destination image predicts intention to revisit through destination satisfaction thereby suggesting that destination marketers should strive to maintain high quality tourist shuttle service, specifically in the areas of staff service, efficiency, punctuality, and safety. This is because personal safety and security is an important factor to tourists, destination employees and the host community. Other attributes for example hotel prices, cost of transport, overall destination image, value for money, are likely to change if the safety and security of the tourist is not guaranteed.

## DESTINATION MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

Table 3b indicate that the four items that loaded on destination management (DMF) factor account for 6.72% of the total variance explained. This support other similar studies (Kong & Loi, 2017; Rajesh, 2017; Reitsamer, Brunner-Sperdin, & Stokburger-Sauer, 2016) that have investigated the various factors of destination management that affect tourist destination loyalty. Table 3a indicate that of the four factors, Accessibility of the destination ranked highest ( $M = 5.29$ ,  $SD = 1.14$ ) while Presence of foreign/international companies ranked lowest ( $M = 4.84$ ,  $SD = 1.28$ ) with respect to destination management factor. This is in line with the majority of previous study findings (Kong & Loi, 2017; Reitsamer et al., 2016) that reported access to the destination as a critical factor of destination management that influence destination loyalty. Specifically, the study by Kong & Loi, (2017), while investigating the importance of accessibility factors from the point of view of both the PwDs (persons with disabilities) and their family members, found out that PwDs and their families will be encouraged to undertake more tourism activities through recognition and awareness of equal travelling opportunities. This implies that destination managers must always ensure ease of access to the destination and its attractions to all intending tourists in order to remain competitive.

**Table 3b. Principal axis factoring of pull motivation factors**

| Measures of pull motivating factor                              | Motivating Pull Factors |     |     |     | Communalities |            |
|---|-------------------------|-----|-----|-----|---------------|------------|
|   | CRF                     | SRF | QAF | DMF | Initial       | Extraction |
| Attractions of cultural heritage                                |                         | .74 |     |     | .66           | .62        |
| Entertainment   |                         | .73 |     |     | .69           | .65        |
| Festivals and events in the area                                |                         | .72 |     |     | .64           | .59        |
| Availability of conference and business meeting facilities      |                         | .71 |     |     | .65           | .58        |
| Sport-recreation activities available                           |                         | .69 |     |     | .60           | .56        |
| Climate of the region   |                         | .69 |     |     | .70           | .63        |
| Unspoiled nature  |                         | .69 |     |     | .63           | .60        |
| Shopping opportunities  |                         | .69 |     |     | .64           | .56        |
| Availability of up-to-date audio-visual equipment               |                         | .68 |     |     | .62           | .56        |
| Gastronomy offered in the area                                  |                         | .67 |     |     | .64           | .59        |
| Quality of hotel services                                       |                         | .65 |     |     | .66           | .58        |
| The hospitality of the local people                             |                         |     |     | .69 | .68           | .67        |
| Accessibility of the destination                                |                         |     |     | .69 | .66           | .67        |
| Presence of foreign/international companies                     |                         |     |     | .67 | .69           | .64        |
| Local transportation quality                                    |                         |     |     | .61 | .69           | .66        |
| Value for money   |                         |     | .76 |     | .64           | .64        |
| Safety and security at the destination                          |                         |     | .73 |     | .68           | .61        |
| Hotel prices  |                         |     | .72 |     | .65           | .62        |
| Overall destination image                                       |                         |     | .72 |     | .69           | .65        |
| Cost of transport   |                         |     | .70 |     | .64           | .61        |
| Political stability   |                         |     | .70 |     | .65           | .59        |
| Cleanliness of the destination                                  |                         |     | .70 |     | .59           | .56        |
| Online booking facilities available                             |                         |     | .67 |     | .66           | .57        |
| Availability of tourism promotion materials in foreign language | .81                     |     |     |     | .75           | .68        |
| Knowledge of foreign language among tourism employees           | .78                     |     |     |     | .75           | .64        |
| Education profile of employees in tourism                       | .77                     |     |     |     | .71           | .64        |
| Tourism impact management and                                   | .73                     |     |     |     | .73           | .62        |

|  |        |        |        |        |     |
|--|--------|--------|--------|--------|-----|
| monitoring by the destination managers   |        |        |        |        |     |
| Tourists' satisfaction management programs at the destination                  | .72    |        |        | .73    | .61 |
| The available interpretation and education services at the destination         | .71    |        |        | .64    | .60 |
| Emphasis of community empowerment by the destination managers                  | .71    |        |        | .63    | .54 |
| Development and innovations of business tourism product                        | .69    |        |        | .69    | .60 |
| Human specialists for conference and business events                           | .69    |        |        | .62    | .55 |
| Available information linked to the tourism product offered at the destination | .69    |        |        | .63    | .57 |
| The potential for incentive trips  | .65    |        |        | .68    | .53 |
| The use of ICT by tourism firms in the region                                  | .64    |        |        | .55    | .50 |
| Destination reputation related to tourism                                      | .62    |        |        | .62    | .51 |
| Variance explained   | 20.54% | 18.08% | 14.75% | 6.72%  |     |
| Total Variance accounted for   |        |        |        | 60.09% |     |

**Note:** CRF- Core resource factor, SRF – Support resource factor, QAF – Qualifying and amplifying factor, DMF – Destination management factor  
 Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy = .94; Bartlett's Test of Sphericity: Approx. Chi-Square = 7606.86; df = 630, Sig. = .00  
 Extraction method: Principal Axis Factoring; Rotation: Varimax. Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring.  
 Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

## CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to identify pull motivational factors influencing tourists' destination loyalty in the Lake Victoria Region Tourism Circuit, Kenya. Based on the results, four pull motivational factors were identified namely; (1) destination core resources (*availability of tourism promotional materials in foreign languages, knowledge of foreign language among tourism employees, education profile of tourism employees, tourism impact management and monitoring by destination managers, tourist satisfaction management programmes at the destination, availability of interpretation and educational services at the destination, availability of tourist information at the destination, the use of ICT by tourism firms, destination reputation*

*related to tourism, and, emphasis of community empowerment by destination managers), (2) destination support resources (attractions of cultural heritage, entertainment, festivals and events at the destination, conference and business meeting facilities, sport-recreation activities available, climate, nature, shopping opportunities, audio-visual equipments, gastronomy, and, hotel services), (3) destination qualifying and amplifying resources (value for money, safety and security at the destination, hotel prices, overall destination image, cost of transport, political stability, cleanliness of the destination, and, the availability of online booking facilities), and, (4) destination management factors (the hospitality of the host community, accessibility of the destination, presence of international companies, and the quality of local transportation facilities). Therefore, destination managers should at all the time endeavor to understand and satisfy the pull motivations of tourists to enhance destination competitiveness.*

### **CONTRIBUTION TO PRACTICE AND POLICY**

The findings of this study illuminate on several outstanding issues and concerns in destination competitiveness research particularly in the Lake Victoria Region Tourism Circuit and in Kenya in general. Given the increased competition from destinations in the neighboring countries and globally, local tourism destination managers need to understand the critical factors that may enhance destinations' competitive advantage and the relationships among the factors. While there exists volumes of literature on destination competitiveness attributes and models, (Abreu-Novais, Ruhanen, & Arcodia, 2016; Abreu Novais, Ruhanen, & Arcodia, 2018; Armenski, Gomezelj, Djurdjev, Ćurčić, & Dragin, 2012; Dwyer, Dragičević, Armenski, Mihalič, & Knežević Cvelbar, 2016; Dwyer, Mellor, Livaic, Edwards, & Kim, 2004; Dwyer & Kim, 2003; Enright & Newton, 2005; Fuchs, Peters, & Weiermair, 2002; Gursoy, Baloglu, & Chi, 2009; Hudson, Ritchie, & Timur, 2004; Kock, Josiassen, & Assaf, 2016; Mazanec, Wöber, & Zins, 2007) there lacks outright proposals on how the competitiveness can be ascertained while considering all the factors involved. The study findings points to the need by destination managers to take into consideration tourist pull motivation factors and destination loyalty while assessing destination competitiveness.

Pull motivation factors include; destination core resources, destination support resources, destination qualifying and amplifying resources, and destination management practices.

Based on the study findings the researcher makes the following suggestions:

- i. With regard to destination core resources, the research suggests that destination managers should constantly avail information linked to tourism to any intending traveler. Providing tourism related information to the visitors will enhance the visitors' knowledge about the destination, other attractions as well as how and when to enjoy them, thereby optimizing their levels of satisfaction.
- ii. Destination managers should also ensure high quality hotel services as regarding destination support resources. This is because tourists spend more time in the hotels and largely depend on the hotels for food, drink and accommodation while touring the destination. Therefore the quality of hotel services is critical to the decision to choose and be loyal to the destination.

- iii. Further, the research suggests that, destination managers pay close attention to the safety and security of tourists in the destination as regarding destination qualifying and amplifying resources.
- iv. Moreover, destination managers are urged to constantly pay close attention to the accessibility of the destination for all intending clients with regard to the destination management practices. Accessibility of the destination would determine the level of visitation to a great extent, thereby giving a competitive advantage to destinations that are easy to access.

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