Tourism industry development in Cameroon: Evaluating the influence of service quality and destination image on customer satisfaction among international tourists

A thesis submitted to the University of Wales Trinity Saint David
in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

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STATEMENT 1

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DEDICATION

To my honorable parents

NGABIAPSI Jean Claude and NGABIAPSI MAFANTEU Monique.

Thank you for your inducement and sacrifices.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ACSI: American Customer Satisfaction Index

ALUCAM: Compagnie camerounaise d'aluminium

ANOVA: Analysis of Variance

CIMENCAM: Cimenteries du Cameroun

CS: Customer Satisfaction

CSI: Customer Satisfaction Index

DMO: Destination Management Organisations

EC: European Commission

ECSI: European Customer Satisfaction Index

EDF: European Development Funds

EFA: Exploratory Factor Analysis

EPA: Economic Partnership Agreement

EU: European Union

CEMAC: Central African Economic and Monetary Community

CET: Common External Tariff

DI: Destination image

FDI: Foreign Direct Investments

GDP: Gross Domestic Product

GESP: Growth and Employment Strategy Paper

GSM: Global System for Mobile

HEREL: Human Elements Reliability

HERES: Human Elements Responsiveness

ICT: Information and Communications Technology

KMO: Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin

LISREL: Linear Structured Relationship

MBA: Master of Business Administration

MMSED : Mixed-methods sequential explanatory design

NGO: Non-Governmental Organisation

NHC: National Hydrocarbons Company

NHE: Non-Human Elements

OECD: Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development,

OLS: Ordinary Least Squares

P/A: Per Annum

PCA: Principal Component Analysis

PLS: Partial Least Squares

PQ: Perceived Quality

PV: Perceived Value

RATER: Reliability, Assurance, Tangibles, Empathy, and Responsiveness

REQUAL: Recreational services Quality

RM: Rasch Model

SBP: Service Blueprint

SCSB: Swedish Customer Satisfaction Barometer

SEM: Structural Equation Modeling

SERVPER: Service Performance

SERVQUAL : Service Quality

SPSS: Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

SQ: Service Quality

TCSI: Turkish Customer Satisfaction Index

TQM: Total Quality Management

TQTC: Total Quality Tourism Consortium

TVE: Total Variance Explained

UK: United Kingdom

USD: United States Dollar

UWTSD: University of Wales Trinity Saint David

VIF: Variance Inflation Factor

WTO: World Tourism Organisation

WTTC: World Travel & Tourism Council

YMCA: Young Men's Christian Association

XAF: Central African CFA franc

ABSTRACT

Cameroon is a Central African developing country, blessed with amazing natural attractions. Tourism may therefore be a great opportunity for the country to boost its economy. Our research examined how this can be achieved. Previous studies conducted in other developing countries identified three variables that mainly influence tourism impact on economy; namely service quality, destination image and customer satisfaction. This thesis established precisely the nature and significance of the relationship between those three variables; answering the research question, "what is the nature of the relationship between service quality, destination image and customer satisfaction amongst international tourists in Cameroon?"

The specific objectives were to determine the dimensions of service quality that influence international tourists' satisfaction in Cameroon; establish the difference in service quality dimensions between rural and urban Regions; identify the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction; determine the relationship between service quality and destination image; establish the relationship between destination image and customer satisfaction; and assess to what extent destination image meditates the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction. The research hypotheses were derived from those research objectives and the conceptual framework.

The research question and objectives influenced the researcher to adopt both qualitative and quantitative approaches to gain extremely valuable information about the phenomenon. In order to obtain high validity and reliability, data were collected via multiple methods including document analysis, focus group and semi structured interviews, participant observation and questionnaire survey. The survey instrument was scientifically designed based on the contributions from Londoners and tourism experts in the United Kingdom; tourism companies' managers, government officials and international tourists in Cameroon. The forty one item scale instrument, with specific focus on customer satisfaction, was self-administered in eight different Cameroonian cities to 397 international tourists. That survey was undertaken during a 25-week period (14 April – 28 June 2014 and 27 February – 11 April 2015).

Descriptive analysis was used to profile the respondents, while factor analysis helped determine potent service quality dimensions in the tourism industry. Analysis of Variance

test was performed in comparative analysis. The research hypotheses were tested via linear regression analysis, while hierarchical regression analysis was executed to ascertain the predictive power of service quality dimensions on customer satisfaction.

An examination of the first research objective revealed four dimensions of service quality namely human elements reliability, human element responsiveness, non-human elements and service blue print. Concerning the second objective, a one-way ANOVA test led to establishing that tourists satisfaction differ significantly between urban and rural Regions along all four service quality dimensions (hypothesis 9 confirmed). A factor analysis determined that rural tourists are mostly satisfied by human elements reliability; while urban tourists privilege non-human elements.

Given the multidimensionality of service quality, the third objective resulted in the formulation of the first four research hypotheses (H_1, H_2, H_3 and H_4). The results of linear regression analysis confirmed that a significant relationship exist between each service quality dimension and customer satisfaction. Another linear regression analysis showed a strong positive relationship between service quality, as one construct, and customer satisfaction (hypothesis 5 confirmed)

Testing hypothesis six and seven helped achieve respectively the fourth and the fifth research objectives. Simple regression analysis proved the existence of a strong positive relationship between service quality and destination image (hypothesis 6 confirmed), then between destination image and customer satisfaction (hypothesis 7 confirmed). Using hierarchical regression analysis, the study established that destination image significantly mediated the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction (sixth research objective / hypothesis 8 confirmed)

Arising from the study results, it has been established that international tourists in rural Regions experience different services from their counterparts in urban Regions. The research recommends that the regulatory authority - the Cameroonian ministry of tourism - must strive towards the standardisation of the service quality to ensure all tourists of equal value irrespective of where they experience the service. Prior notice should be given to tourism businesses to meet new policy requirements. Those which do not make necessary improvements at term should purely be stamped out. This research survey instrument having been tested and proven to be efficient, it can be adopted as a standard index of measuring tourist satisfaction all over the country.

Reliability being greatly related to tourist satisfaction, the government of Cameroon needs to put substantial efforts in boosting tourism spirit in people minds and habits; so that they will be even more enthusiastic to socialise with international tourists. Destination image having been revealed as a key factor influencing tourist satisfaction, Cameroon decision makers must therefore undertake necessary actions to boost the country's image worldwide.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The construct of service quality has spurred scholarly debate with extant literature revealing absence of consensus on the measurement of service quality, owing to service intangibility, heterogeneity and multidimensionality. Empirical review by Tan and Pawitra (2001) and Kang and James (2004) points a convergence in thought that the Service Quality (SERVQUAL) model pioneered by Parasuraman, Berry and Zeithaml (1985) is widely acceptable in the measurement of service quality. Despite its widespread use, scholars continue to question its completeness, operationalisation and conceptualisation (Sureshchandar, Rajendran and Anatharaman, 2002).

Interest in measurement of service quality is attributed to the relationship between service quality and costs; customer satisfaction and retention; and profitability (Cronin, Brady and Hult, 2000). Bell, Auh and Smalley (2005) evidenced a positive relationship between perceived quality and organisation's financial performance. In this regard therefore, Goetsch and Davis (2014) posit that service quality has emerged as an impetus to managerial strength and competitiveness.

1.1.1 The Construct of Service Quality

A service refers to any activity that one party offers to another which is essentially intangible and through some form of exchange satisfies an identified need Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1985). Service quality is considered by Cronin and Taylor (1992) as consumer's judgment about an entity's overall excellence or superiority. Unlike the quality of goods, which may be measured objectively by such indicators as durability and number of defects, service quality is an elusive construct that is difficult to measure (Brown, Churchill and Peter, 1993). MacKay and Crompton (1990, p.47) defined service quality as "the relationship between what customer's desires from a service and what they perceive that they receive". Additionally, service quality is also a way of thinking about how to satisfy customers so that they hold positive attitudes toward the service they have received (Brady and Cronin, 2001).

Caro and Garcia (2007) posit that service quality is the conformance of a service to customer specification and expectation; while Kuo, Wu and Deng (2009) elucidates that service quality is the degree of match between expected and actual service provided by the service giver and that the higher the fit, the higher the level of customer satisfaction. In contrast, Kang and James (2004) observed that the construct of service quality centers on the perceived quality, a position supported by Ladhari (2008), who described service quality as a form of attitude representing a long run overall evaluation. This study adopted the later position and defines service quality 'as a form of attitude representing customers long run overall evaluation of a service after a service encounter.'

The protagonists of quality management in organisations include: Joseph Juran (1950's), Edward Deming (1950's) and Philip Crosby (1980's) whose works culminated in the promulgation of the concept of Total Quality Management (TQM).

The heterogeneous nature of services, result in service differential between service providers or even within the same service context. Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1985) pioneered the gaps model that explains why customers experience quality differential. In a subsequent study, Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1988, p.5) gave the definition; "service quality is the degree of discrepancy between customers' normative expectations for the service and their perceptions of the service performance". They applied this conceptualisation in the construction of 22 item scale instrument (SERVQUAL model) shown in Appendix 5. The SERVQUAL battery has since been widely adopted as a tool for measuring service quality and customer satisfaction. Sureshchandar et al. (2002) acknowledges SERVQUAL forms the cornerstone along which all other works have been actualised.

1.1.2 Destination Image

Strategically speaking, marketing management requires a careful analysis of the brand image transmitted to the market, because it is precisely this image that will affect consumer choice. As such, brand management often relies on a medium-long term strategy, based on the objectives of the brand (Moutinho, 1987; Gallarza, Saura and Garcia, 2002; Rial, et al., 2008). In the context of modern marketing, brand image becomes a major factor in the success of any organisation (Aaker and Biel, 2013), and is

the result of sensory experiences and internal imitation created by perceptual processes (Choi and Cai, 2015).

The organisational reality is similar in the context of Tourism Marketing, given that the image tourists have of tourist destinations is an element of major importance there (Hunt, 1975; Chon, 1991; Echtner, Ritchie, 1991; Aaker, 1996, Gartner, 1996; Kapferer, 1997; Buhalis, 2000; Laws, Scott and Parfitt, 2002; Tasci and Gartner, 2007; Rial and Varela, 2008), ultimately influencing the final choice or behavioral intention (Chen, Ching-Fu 2007).

However, pioneering studies on the image of tourist destinations, dating from the 1970s and also the 1980s present some theoretical and conceptual limitations (Gartner, 1989; Fakeye and Crompton, 1991; Echtner and Ritchie, 1993).

Lawson and Baud-Bovy (1977) defined the concept of destination image as the expression of all objective knowledge, prejudices, imagination and emotional thoughts of an individual or group about a particular location. Other authors define the image as the sum of all beliefs, ideas and impressions that people associate with a destination (Crompton, 1979; Kotler, Haider and Rein, 1993).

Choi and Cai (2015) present a definition from the consumer's point of view, defining the brand image of a country as a set of consumer perceptions. Bigne, Sánchez and Sánchez (2001) defined destination image as the subjective interpretation of reality by the tourist. Therefore, the image tourists have of a destination is largely subjective because it is based on the perceptions each tourist has of all of the destinations they have been to or have heard of (Qu, Kim and Im, 2011). Its ambiguous, subjective and immaterial nature, and its large number of elements and attributes makes it complicated to define and no consensus has been reached about this yet (Ahsen, 1977, Aaker, 1991, 1996; Baloglu and McCleary, 1999; Aaker and Joachimsthaler, 2000; Beerli and Martin 2004; Hosany, Ekinci and Uysal, 2006; San Martín, Del Bosque and Ignacio, 2008; Molina, Gomez and Martin-Consuegra, 2010; Qu, Kim and Im, 2011; Zhang, et al., 2014; Chon, 2015; Kastenholz, Davis and Paul, 2015; JingRu, et al., 2015).

However, the latest guidelines for Tourism Marketing admit that the development of the image of a tourist destination is based on the consumer's rationality and emotionality, and as the result of the combination of two main components or dimensions (Baloglu and

Brinberg, 1997; Walmsley and Young, 1998; Baloglu and McCleary, 1999; Lin, et al., 2007; Chen and Phou, 2013; Veasna, Wu and Huang, 2013; Kim and Chen, 2015):

- Perceptual and cognitive: there is a primacy of the importance and value given to each attribute of tourist destinations. In other words, the destination image is evaluated by the attributes of its resources and attractions which motivate tourists to visit that destination (Gallarza, Saura and Garcia, 2002; Beerli and Martin, 2004; Govers, Go and Kumar, 2005; Veasna, Wu and Huang, 2013).

- Affective: referring to feelings and emotions raised by tourist destinations (Keller, 1993; Lin, et al., 2007; Veasna, Wu and Huang, 2013). This emotional component is also strongly affected by the motivations of tourists (Beerli and Martín, 2004).

It is also important to note that the cognitive component of the image has a considerable impact on the affective component (Russell and Pratt, 1980; Anand, Holbrook and Stephens, 1988; Stern and Krakover, 1993; Lin, et al., 2007; Lee and Xie, 2011; Gomez, Garcia and Molina, 2013).

The socio-demographic characteristics of tourists also greatly influence the cognitive and affective assessment of the overall image (Beerli and Martin, 2004). Therefore, the overall image of the destination is a combination of cognitive and affective components (Stern and Krakover, 1993; Li, et al., 2014), whereas the actual experience of having been on vacation at a tourist destination has an important effect on the destination image from a cognitive and emotional point of view (Beerli and Martín, 2004).

1.1.3 Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction has been one of the key areas of tourism research for more than four decades. Howard and Sheth (1969) said "satisfaction is the buyers' cognitive state of being adequately or inadequately rewarded for the sacrifices he has undergone". For Hunt (1977), it is "a kind of stepping away from an experience and evaluating it". Westbrook (1980) refers to "the favorability of the individual's subjective evaluation of the various outcomes and experiences associated with using or consuming a product or service". Oliver (1980) viewed satisfaction as an emotional reaction which influences attitude and is consumption specific. Day (1984) defined satisfaction as "the evaluative response to the current consumption event, the consumer's response in a particular consumption experience to the evaluation of the perceived discrepancy between prior expectations (or

some other norm of performance) and the actual performance of the product perceived after its acquisition". Anderson (1993) posited that customer satisfaction is the result achieved when service or product features respond to customer's need and when the company meets or exceeds customer's expectation over the lifetime of a product or service. Haistead, Hartman, and Schmidt (1994) stated that satisfaction is "a transaction-specific affective response resulting from the customer's comparison of product performance to some pre purchase standard". For Oliver (1997) it is "the consumer's fulfillment response. It is a judgment that a product or service itself, provided (or is providing) a pleasurable level of consumption-related fulfillment, including levels of under- or over-fulfillment". McAlexander, Kim and Roberts (2003) said "customer satisfaction is a post-purchase attitude formed through a mental comparison of the product and service quality that a customer expected to receive from an exchange". Kotler and Keller (2006) view customer satisfaction as a person's feelings of pleasure or disappointment resulting from comparing product's perceived performance (or outcome) in relation to his or her expectation. For Rego, Morgan and Fornell (2013), customer satisfaction is consumer's judgment that a product provided (or is providing) a pleasurable level of consumption-related fulfillment.

Tourist satisfaction is considered one of the prime variables to sustain competitive business in the tourism industry because it affects the choice of destination, consumption of products and services (Kozak and Rimmington, 2000). Understanding tourist satisfaction is of utmost importance for the tourism industry, especially because of its effect on their future economy (Petrick, 2003). Satisfied tourists tend to communicate their positive experience to others (word of mouth) and they tend to buy the product repeatedly (re-buy) (Beeho and Prentice, 1997; Kozak and Rimmington, 2000; Jamaludin, et al., 2012; Khan, Haque and Rahman, 2013; Huang, Weiler and Assaker, 2015).

1.1.4 Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction

The debate on the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction has been spurred by academicians including; Spreng and Singh (1993) who established that the higher the level of service quality the higher the level of customer satisfaction. Sureshchandar, Rajendran and Anantharaman (2002) deduced that service quality and customer satisfaction are distinct but related; while Pepur, Mihanovi and Pepur (2009)

posit that customer satisfaction is antecedent to service quality. Satisfaction is generally associated with one particular transaction at a particular time and has been described by Akbar and Parvez (2009) as an emotional reaction to a product or service experience. Service quality on the other hand is more congruent with a long term attitude. Overall, satisfaction is more experimental, transitory and transaction-specific, while service quality is believed to be more enduring.

Since customer satisfaction has been considered to be based on the customer's experience on a particular service encounter, it is in line with the fact that service quality is a determinant of customer satisfaction, because service quality comes from outcome of the services from service providers in organisations (Cronin and Taylor, 1992). In relating service quality and customer satisfaction, some researchers have been more precise about the meaning and measurements of satisfaction and service quality. Service quality and satisfaction have certain things in common, but satisfaction generally is a broader concept, whereas service quality focuses specifically on dimensions of service (Lee, et al., 2011). Although it is stated that other factors such as price and product quality can affect customer satisfaction, perceived service quality is a component of customer satisfaction (Zeithaml, Bitner and Gremler, 2006). This theory complies with the idea of Cronin and Taylor (1992).

1.1.5 Service Quality and Tourism

The quality of service involved with tourism plays an important role in the process of delivery (Williams and Buswell 2003) and thus is the standard used to assess the effectiveness of a particular leisure service agency, including the tourism service sector (Jones and Haven, 2005). Service quality is an intangible, but crucial, area of interest to travel service providers. As described above, the major service evaluation tool is SERVQUAL model, and Parasuraman et al. stated that this model could apply to various service contexts. Many tourism researchers use this model to evaluate the service quality provided in tourism and affiliated industries (Fick and Ritchie, 1991; LeBlanc, 1992; Ostrowski, O'Brien and Gordon, 1994; Vogt and Fesenmaier, 1995; Baker and Fesenmaier, 1997; Childress and Crompton, 1997). For example, SERVQUAL was tested by Mackay (1987) in the Canadian municipal parks, and he extracted the same five dimensions as Parasuraman et al.'s (1985) model (as cited in Fakeye and Crompton,

1991). In another study, Brown and Swartz (1989) expanded SERVQUAL and found that service providers do not understand the level at which customers evaluate their experiences. Bigne et al. (2003) also employed SERVQUAL to test the quality of service received from travel agencies, and they found that it is still a valid and reliable model with which to evaluate the service quality provided by travel agencies. Although SERVQUAL was designed to measure service quality, it provides only a framework or skeleton and thus has had to be adapted and modified to evaluate specific services (Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry, 1988, 1991; Backman and Veldkamp; 1995).

Mackay and Crompton (1988) proposed a conceptual framework for studying service quality in the recreation and leisure industries – the REQUAL model. In addition, Fakeye and Crompton (1991) stated that SERVQUAL cannot be used to evaluate service quality in the different types of recreation services sectors and suggested the need to develop a new scale to fit tourism or other recreation services sectors. Thus, in 1990, using SERVQUAL as a basis, Mackay and Crompton developed REQUAL, which is used to evaluate the quality of recreational services. In 1995, Backman and Veldkamp (1995) reviewed and offered empirical studies concluding that REQUAL can serve as a template for other researchers to use in their investigation of recreational service quality. After considering the settings and the context of this study, the REQUAL model, along with the performance based evaluation tool, SERVPER (Cronin and Taylor, 1992), will be utilised in this study to determine the service dimensions.

1.1.6 Cameroon tourism industry

Cameroon tourism is a growing but relatively minor industry wish stands out with a genuine identity expressing diversity and stability. It is also known for its modernity, traditional dynamism and relative calmness. Cameroon has all the beauties of Africa. That is the reason why some travel specialists say no explorer could really discover Africa without having visited Cameroon.

The country's melting and contrasting views provide tourists with unique spectacles, such as the ancestral land laying on the sea, deserts, waterfalls, the temperate climate in the south, and it great heat in the north. The different aspects of Cameroon such as the relationship between tribal societies and modern cities, the diversity in fauna and flora give tourists the impression that they are visiting different countries at the same time.

When tourists travel around the country, the feeling of harmony is created by arts, the nature of the people, and sometimes, the tourists go a long way to experience the soul of Africa. The unique and multiple aspects of Cameroon greatly represent the values of Africa.

It is in the 1970s that the government of Cameroon came to realise the importance of tourism which aimed at encouraging investment by airlines, hotels and travel agencies. In order to increase the investment in tourism began on 3 December 1974 when the former president Ahmadou Ahidjo issued an order that set the tourism industry aside as having special status. During this period, a General Commissariat of tourism was being established and in 1975, the president reconstituted the body as the General Delegation for tourism. The Ministry of Tourism was created in1987 and reformed in 2011 to become the Ministry of Tourism and Leisure. During the last 10 years, the Ministry worked a lot to raise the quality standards in the industry. Hotels stars' rating has been reviewed; some bad transport companies have been closed; many tourist sites have been restored; and a Department of Tourism and Hotel Management has been created, between 2006 and 2009, in each of the 4 most important state universities (Yaounde1, Douala, Dschang and Ngaoundere).

In 2014, Cameroon was ranked 23rd in terms of competitiveness among its fellow African countries (see Table 1.1).

Table 1.1: Travel and tourism competitiveness ranking of selected African countries

| | Overall Rank | | Regulatory | | | | | |
| | Region | World | Index | Pillars | | | | |
			Rank	Policy	Environ-mental	Safety/Security	Health/Hygiene	T&T Priority
Mauritius	1	40	24	13	53	40	60	1
Tunisia	2	44	31	22	17	31	75	15
RSA	3	61	82	36	44	128	94	60
Egypt	4	64	52	55	103	67	64	9
Morocco	5	75	64	50	36	79	100	30
Botswana	6	79	66	70	62	49	97	43
Namibia	7	82	71	79	26	60	102	62
Gambia	8	87	65	85	52	27	107	25
Kenya	9	97	93	90	16	121	121	12
Tanzania	10	98	102	89	32	98	127	33
Zambia	11	100	87	43	45	58	116	81
Senegal	12	101	101	103	67	43	120	70
Ghana	13	110	105	84	48	69	117	108
Uganda	14	111	115	105	28	109	123	93
Algeria	15	115	108	111	116	97	81	124
Madagascar	16	116	112	83	65	93	131	57
Malawi	17	117	106	106	60	53	108	123
Mali	18	119	114	116	70	77	124	76
Benin	19	120	117	124	38	68	125	115
Zimbabwe	20	121	125	133	94	94	106	96
Ethiopia	21	123	128	100	109	117	133	111
Mozambique	22	124	120	99	57	103	130	85
Cameroon	23	125	126	120	110	80	112	125
Burkina	24	126	118	110	71	83	122	110
Nigeria	25	128	132	113	61	133	129	122
Côte d'voire	26	130	131	115	102	124	119	132
Burundi	27	131	129	128	75	106	118	133
Chad	28	133	133	132	128	115	132	127

Source: World Economic Forum, 2014

1.2 Research Problem

The search for a measurement tool of service quality lays the backbone of service quality theory (Grönroos, 1982; Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry, 1985). This study is anchored on the consumer behavior theory fronted by Howard and Seth (1969). From the Howard

and Seth (1969) model, quality is antecedent to satisfaction. However, several organisations do not offer service quality that meets customers' needs, resulting in customer gaps. The Gap-model by Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1988) presents the service manager's dilemma of not knowing what customers want from the organisation. The search for a generic tool of measuring service quality and customer satisfaction has led to the emergence of two predominant models, SERVQUAL model and Service Performance (SERVPEF) model. Despite the widespread use of the SERVQUAL model, its dimensionality and operationalisation is ambivalent. The SERVPEF theorists have advanced a performance based measure and exemplified it over the disconfirmation model (Carman, 1990 and Cronin and Taylor, 1992). Limited empirical literature is available on the use of performance based models in the tourism sector in Cameroon.

The SERVQUAL model has five dimensions. Sureshchandar et al. (2002) amalgamated the dimensions of service quality into two factors and introduced three additional dimensions; core service, non-human elements and corporate social responsibility. In this study corporate social responsibility is replaced with destination image and guided by the critique of the dimensionality of SERVQUAL advanced by Buttle (1996). We proposed the consolidation of the original five dimensions of service quality into two factors; human elements (reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy) and non-human elements (physical evidence). Two other dimensions were introduced and tested; core service and service blueprint. The research therefore conducted an examination of an improved four factor service quality construct as antecedent to customer satisfaction.

Guided by a performance based measure, Williams and Buswell (2003) regrouped the dimension of service quality into two; technical qualities and functional qualities and linked them to customer satisfaction. Kang and James (2004) introduced image as a moderating variable between functional qualities, technical qualities and perceived service quality. While testing the mediating effect, Abd-El-Salam, Shawky and El-Nahas (2013) examined the role of corporate image and reputation in mediating the relationship between service quality and customer loyalty. In contrast, this study sought to examine the mediating role of destination image on the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction.

A variety of quality models have been customised for the tourism sector including; the recreation and leisure industries service quality model (REQUAL) by Mackay and

Crompton (1988). The emergent models have been tested and accepted in developed countries. The operationalisation of these models in the tourism industry in developing nations in Africa is yet to be tested. This study tested a performance based model.

The dimensions of service quality in tourism vary from one sector to another, from one country to another and even from culture to culture, posing a contextual debate (Hanlan and Kelly, 2005). In Cameroon, the rapid expansion of the tourism sector led to impecunious conditions and deteriorated quality of service (Onomo Etaba, 2005). Neba (2010) adds that the increasing number of arrivals has led to the quantity vis-a-vis quality debate and ultimately a phenomenon described as non-quality. Under those circumstances, the sustainability of service quality and customer satisfaction in the Cameroon tourism industry became questionable.

On the premise of this study background and emergent issues on the relationship between service quality, destination image and customer satisfaction, knowledge gaps were identified. While previous studies examined the three variables separately or in pairs, this research adopted an integrated approach and aimed at establishing the influence of service quality and destination image on international tourists' satisfaction. The study sought answers to the research question, "**what is the nature of the relationship between service quality, destination image and customer satisfaction amongst international tourists in Cameroon**?"

1.3 Research Objectives

Overall, the study sought to assess the relationship between service quality, destination image and customer satisfaction amongst international tourists in Cameroon. The specific objectives were to:

1- Identify the service quality dimensions that influence international tourists' satisfaction in Cameroon;

2- Determine if there is a significant difference in service quality dimensions between rural and urban Regions;

3- Examine the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction;

4- Establish the relationship between service quality and destination image;

5- Ascertain the relationship between destination image and customer satisfaction;

6- Assess the extent to which destination image mediates the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction.

1.4 Value of the Study

This research contributes to academicians by providing knowledge in service marketing theory on dimensions of service quality in the tourism industry not manifest in prevailing service quality models. One service quality dimension ignored by SERVQUAL, service blueprint was established and its significant effect on customer satisfaction proven. It was established that the five dimensions of SERVQUAL (predominant in literature) can be reduced to two – human elements and non-human elements. The study proposed a four dimension construct made up of: human elements, non-human elements, service blueprint and core service. Human elements were the dimension with the highest predictive power on customer satisfaction. Human elements are a multi-dimensional construct, defined by reliability, responsiveness and assurance. Service providers must keep improving them in order to maximise customer satisfaction and return on investment.

The direct beneficiaries of this study are Tourism stakeholders. The benefits include the development of a customer survey instrument for tourism companies and authorities. It can be adopted as a benchmarking device for competitive advantage. They have empirical evidence that service quality is perceived differently by international tourists, based on their nationality. Services therefore need to be tailored and delivered based on that fact. It was also established that service quality delivered vary between Cameroonians' owned and foreigners' owned tourism businesses. While this study has led to the derivation of a reliable instrument in measuring customer satisfaction in the context of Cameroon's tourism industry, other country's context might require tailored instruments.

1.5 Thesis structure

This study has five chapters; Chapter one provides a conceptual background on service quality, destination image and customer satisfaction. It further presents the historical development of the tourism industry in Cameroon; covers the problem statement, research objectives and the significance of the study.

The second chapter presents a comprehensive review of literature on the key research variables service quality, destination image, customer satisfaction and their relationship. It thereafter points out the knowledge gap which this study sought to fill. The chapter also presents the conceptual framework depicting the independent, dependent and mediating variables; and the research hypotheses. A total of nine hypotheses were formulated on the basis of the research objectives.

Chapter three covers the research methodology adopted in this study and provides an explanation of the research philosophy that guides the study, the underlying research design, the target population and the sampling procedure employed. The chapter explains the data collection methods used and includes the questionnaire design, the validity and reliability tests of the instrument, the operationalisation of the study variables. It also gives a prologue of the data analysis process.

In Chapter four, the results of data analysis are presented. The data was subjected to internal consistency/reliability test. Descriptive statistical tests were undertaken; followed by inferential statistics, which allowed hypotheses testing. Regression models were use to predict the influence of the independent and mediating variables on the dependent variable.

The last Chapter presents a summary of findings. It focuses on condensed version of the outcomes under each objective, followed by the conclusion and recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO: PRESENTATION OF CAMEROON

2.1 Introduction

The Republic of Cameroon is a central African country bordered by Nigeria to the west; Chad to the northeast; the Central African Republic to the east; and Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, and the Republic of the Congo to the south. Cameroon's coastline lies in part of the Gulf of Guinea and the Atlantic Ocean. The country is called "Africa in miniature" for its geological and cultural diversity. Natural features include beaches, deserts, mountains, rainforests, and savannas. The highest point is Mount Cameroon in the South-West Region, and the largest cities are Douala (economic capital), Yaoundé (political capital), and Garoua. Cameroon is home to over 200 different ethnic and linguistic groups. The country is well known for its native styles of music, particularly makossa and bikutsi, and its world-class athletes (Roger Milla, Samuel Eto'o, Patrick Mboma, Francoise Mbango, etc.). English and French are the official languages.

Compared to other African countries, Cameroon enjoyed relatively high political and social stability; before the arising of the Boko Haram terrorist group in early 2014. That stability has permitted the relative development of agriculture, petroleum and timber industries, roads and the railway network. Nevertheless, large numbers of Cameroonians live in the poverty as subsistence farmers.

The power lies firmly in the hands of the president, Paul Biya and his Cameroon People's Democratic Movement party (CPDM). The Anglophone community has grown increasingly alienated from the government, and Anglophone politicians have called for greater decentralisation and even the secession of the former British-governed territories.

Cameroon's per-capita GDP was estimated at 1,357.10 USD in 2016 (tradingeconomics.com), one of the fifteen highest in sub-Saharan Africa. Apart from diamond, gold and oil, the country has also large reserves of bauxite, cobalt and natural gas, though they have yet to be exploited. Hydroelectric power stations on Cameroon rivers, particularly the Sanaga, does not provide enough electricity to meet all of the country's needs.

Table 2.1: Cameroon summary presentation

Area	Total	475,442 sq km
	Land	469,440 sq km
	Water	6,000 sq km
Border countries	Nigeria 1,690 km, Chad 1,094 Km, Central African Republic 797 km, Republic of Congo 523 km, Gabon 298 km, Equatorial Guinea 189 km.	
Coastline	402 km	
Terrain	Diverse, with coastal plain in Southwest, dissected plateau in Centre, mountains in West and plains in North.	
Land use	Forest	42%
	Arable land	13%
	Permanent pastures	4%
	Permanent crops	3%
Irrigated land	260 sq km	
Population	23,436,675	
Population growth rate	2.19% (2015 est.)	

Source: Cameroon.opendataforafrica.org, 2016

Picture 2.1: Cameroon map

Source: Emapsworld, 2016

2.2 Cameroon facts

It is all about the economic situation, the political climate, foreign aid and foreign Investments, the investment climate, trade opportunities, the oil and gas sector, agriculture, forestry, threats and opportunities

2.2.1 The economy

Offshore oil deposits exploited since the early 1970s had made Cameroon one of the most prosperous nations in tropical Africa, but economic mismanagement along with overvalued currency has led to recession during last few years. The current account and fiscal deficits have widened, and foreign debt has grown. The government has now embarked upon a series of economic reform programs supported by the World Bank and the IMF.

The GDP growth rate was 2.3% in 2015 and 2.8% in 2016, with a forecast of 3.3% for 2017 by the IMF. The economic dynamism of the country is still fragile because on the one hand, the economy is largely dependent on international oil prices (considering that the oil production in the country is declining) and on the other hand, the budgetary deficit is affecting the industrial production. Furthermore, Cameroon is still not able to attract sufficient foreign investments; the country is suffering from insufficient infrastructure and is one of the most corrupt countries in the world. However, inflation remains under control at around 5.3% (2016 EST.).

Figure 2.1: Cameroon GDP growth rate (2014 – 2017)
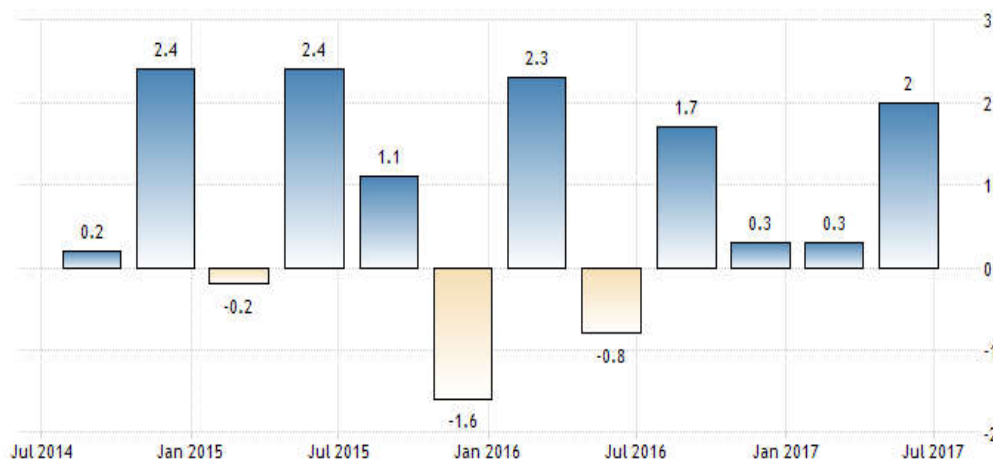
Source: National Institute of Statistics, Cameroon. 2017

Table 2.2: Cameroon economic Facts

Subject	Unit	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
GDP Constant Price	Annual percentage change	2.3	3.2	3.3	2.9	1.6	2.7	5.2
GDP Current Price[1]	Billion US dollars	16.593	17.957	20.691	23.243	20.38	21.332	-
GDP per Capita, current price[2]	US dollars	930.009	979.045	1,097.41	1,199.16	1,022.81	1,044.46	-
Inflation rate, consumer price	Annual percentage change	2.0	4.9	1.1	5.3	2.9	2.0	2.0
Current account balance[3]	Billion US dollars	0.1491	0.039	0.419	0.325	0.013	-	-
Current account balance	Percentage of GDP	-3.4	0.6	-0.8	-1.0	-7.2	-4.6	-2.7

[1] http://www.economywatch.com/economic-statistics/Cameroon/GDP_Current_Prices_US_Dollars/

[2] http://www.economywatch.com/economic-statistics/Cameroon/GDP_Per_Capita_Current_Prices_US_Dollars/

[3] http://www.indexmundi.com/Cameroon/current_account_balance.html

2.2.1.1 Political climate

There is a degree of political tension in the country. The problem firstly originates from 1972 when the nature of the country's political structure was changed from that of a decentralised federal structure to a unitary state. In the middle of the 90s, there are two groups that have appealed for the restoration of the federal state. One in its original form, while the other group has asked for the secession of the two english-speaking Regions (Nort-west and South-west). The government did not accept either of these options.

Cameroon's Anglophones make up 20% of the population. Most live in former British territories in the North-West and South-West regions. Their anger was sparked off in 2016 by the government's refusal to respond to Anglophone lawyers who were aggrieved at the nomination of magistrates who neither spoke English well enough nor were trained in British common law. After demonstrations were met with sometimes brutal force,

teachers and students joined the growing movement, adding similar concerns about a way of life being progressively taken over by Francophone practices. When negotiations broke down in January 2017, the government imprisoned the most prominent Anglophone activists alongside many others caught up in protests. They also cut off the internet in Anglophone areas for three months, causing huge damage to the economy.

The other contributing factor is the huge amount of political parties that exist in the country. This is as a result of legislation enacted in 1991, legalising the formation of political parties. As a result there are more than 150 political parties. Many of them are dissatisfied with the government's management policies as well as the rate at which democracy is progressing in the country. While their fears may indeed be grounded, there are many parties that do not have significant supporter bases. Parties tend to support the same ideals of multi-party democracy and also share the ideals of restricted government intervention and the pursuit of private entrepreneurship. The result is often confusing for voters and could prevent their participation in a meaningful democracy as they are not always able to vote for clear democratic principles.

Sparked by a combination of political and economic frustrations, violent unrest gripped Douala, Yaoundé, and dozens of other cities in February 2008. During the February 2008 riots and the subsequent government crackdown, members of the security forces shot and killed demonstrators and rioters.

Since 2014, Cameroon has confronted the insurgents of the Nigeria-born group Boko Haram. The conflict has already caused 1,500 deaths, and led to 155,000 displaced persons and 73,000 refugees. Although the first attacks occurred in March 2014, the jihadist group's presence in Cameroon's Far North region dates back to at least 2011. It has benefited from a network of local collaborators and has exploited vulnerabilities that the region shares with north-eastern Nigeria. While the first eighteen months of conflict were characterised by conventional warfare, the group has now switched to an asymmetric mode of attack. The Cameroonian government's focus on a military response has been partly successful, but the structural problems that allowed this threat to arise have not been addressed yet. We are talking about providing a better education system, developing agriculture and creating more jobs in order to alleviate hefty poverty in that part of the country

2.2.1.2 Foreign Aid

As of September 2016, the World Bank's portfolio in Cameroon comprises 20 projects: 13 International Development Association (IDA) and Global Environment Facility-financed projects, 3 regional operations, and 4 trust fund projects. The value of this portfolio is estimated to be US$659.5 million equivalent.

In the governance sector, the support of the European Commission (EC) will contribute to consolidating the rule of law and management of public finances. In addition it will serve to improve forestry governance and the sustainable management of natural resources as well as to improve the reliability and transparency of elections. With regard to trade and regional integration, assistance will contribute to boosting growth by improving competitiveness and facilitating trade, strengthening production and exports as well as improving the road network.

The EC's total allocation foreseen for Cameroon under 10th European Development Funds (EDF) funding (2010-2016) amounts to €245.9 million to address these priorities[1].

2.2.1.3 Foreign Investments

Cameroon is open to international trade. It is a member of the Commonwealth and the Franc Zone. The share of foreign trade in country's GDP is nearly 50%. Its top three export partners are: France, Italy and Spain. The commodities mainly exported are mineral fuels and oils, wood and charcoal, cocoa, cotton, and aluminum. The top three import partners of Cameroon are: Nigeria, France and China. It mainly imports mineral fuels and oils, cereals, vehicles, machinery, and electric and electronic equipment.

Cameroon's main trading partners include suppliers such as France (40%), Nigeria (16%), Belgium (7%), Italy (5%), US (5%), and buyers such as France (41%), Italy (10%), Spain (9%) and Belgium (7, 5%).

Cameroon receives very little Foreign Direct Investments (FDI). Between 2013 and 2016, the recorded net FDI flow was approximately 1.2% of the GDP for each year. The most targeted sector remains that of extraction industries, particularly oil drilling. The United States and France are the country's primary investors.

The country is ranked at the 101st position in the world, in terms of FDI attractiveness (over 141). Cameroon has to improve and simplify its administrative procedures in order

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[1] http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/where/acp/country-cooperation/cameroon/cameroon_en.htm

to revive company creation. In effect it has a number of natural resources (oil, forestry and fishing) on which it can depend.

The business climate in the country deteriorated in 2013 and 2014. According to the World Bank Doing Business in 2014 classification, which is based on the ease of doing business indicator, Cameroon is on the 164th position, over 181 economies[2].

2.2.1.4 Investment climate

The investment image of Cameroon is made somewhat attractive by the country's oil and agricultural sectors. However, there are certain features that serve to discourage potential investors from pursuing opportunities in the country. This means that the bureaucracy in the country is at a high level thus slowing down the process time of transactions in the country.

But the government is keen to attract FDI to the country. They have cited various reasons that should prove attractive to potential investors. These include the fact that the country is well situated for entry into the Central African market. The government has also claimed that the country's human resources are of a high standard and that they also have abundant natural resources. .

The government of Cameroon was one of the first in Africa to take active steps towards the encouragement of FDI. This was the enactment of the Investment Code in the early nineties. It was aimed at investment liberalisation. There are various benefits under the code for firms operating (as well as those wanting to) in the country. These benefits are for firms whose operations involve processing goods for export as well as those that use imports from the Central African Customs and Economic Union. There are also various investment regimes that a firm may choose to be part of. This is done according to specific criteria laid out by the Code. It is advised to contact Cameroon trade authorities for the exact details regarding the criteria. The Investment Code Management Unit is an authority created especially for the implementation of the Investment Code.

The right to private ownership is recognised in Cameroon, but some analysts have stated that a dysfunctional judiciary cannot guarantee this for potential investors. Corruption is said to feature in this area. Despite this, foreign investors are allowed to own and establish companies in the country. Preferences for companies originating from France

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[2] http://www.egypt-import-export.com/en/country-profiles/cameroon/investing2

exist as part of a convention that was signed between the two countries. While this is not to the overall detriment of investors from other countries, those from France do enjoy some privileges above their foreign counterparts.

2.2.1.5 Trade

Oil and its related products make up the country's most important export commodities. The country's export partners include Italy, France and the Netherlands.

The European Union remains Cameroon's main trading bloc, accounting for 36.6% of total imports and 66.1% of exports. France is Cameroon's main trading partner, but the United States is the leading investor in Cameroon (largely through the Chad-Cameroon pipeline and energy provider ENEO). According to press reports, China recently became the number one importer of Cameroonian exports, especially unprocessed timber.

Cameroon is also part of the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC) zone which maintains a common external tariff on imports from non-CEMAC countries. In theory, tariffs have been eliminated within CEMAC, and only a value added tax should be applied to goods traded among CEMAC members. There has been some delay in achieving this goal, and currently both customs duties and value added taxes are being assessed on trade within CEMAC.

Cameroon applies CEMAC's common external tariff (CET), which is entirely ad valorem and has five tariff rates: duty-free for certain pharmaceutical preparations and articles, books and brochures, and aircraft; 5 percent for essential goods; 10 percent for raw materials and capital goods; 20 percent for intermediate goods; and 30 percent for consumer goods.

Table 2.3: Top export partners of Cameroon

Global Exports by Cameroon		Market Value : 10,183 (millions)	
Exports To	Trade Value	Share	Growth
	(thousands)	(%)	(% 5yr)
Spain	2,775,579	27.26	NA
Italy	2,319,618	22.78	NA
France	1,137,763	11.17	NA
United States	681,092	6.69	NA
Netherlands	674,808	6.63	NA
China	364,260	3.58	NA
Belgium	360,664	3.54	NA
Congo Kinshasa	291,510	2.86	NA
United Kingdom	208,563	2.05	NA
Portugal	172,053	1.69	NA

Source: http://globaledge.msu.edu/countries/cameroon/tradestats/

Table 2.4: Top import partners of Cameroon

Global Imports by Cameroon		Market Value: 9,193 (millions)	
Imports From	Trade Value	Share	Growth
	(thousands)	(%)	(% 5yr)
Nigeria	2,205,873	23.99	NA
France	1,618,298	17.60	NA
China	599,363	6.52	NA
Belgium	382,933	4.17	NA
Equatorial Guinea	326,377	3.55	NA
Germany	323,602	3.52	NA
United States	270,983	2.95	NA
Japan	258,834	2.82	NA
Brazil	258,192	2.81	NA
Italy	249,961	2.72	NA
India	181,920	1.98	NA
Cameroon	172,983	1.88	NA
Mauritania	131,728	1.43	NA
South Africa	127,327	1.39	NA
Netherlands	127,024	1.38	NA
United Kingdom	125,555	1.37	NA

Source: http://globaledge.msu.edu/countries/cameroon/tradestats/

Table 2.5: Top import products of Cameroon

Top Products Imported by Cameroon	Market Value : 5,778 (millions)		
Product	Trade Value	Share	Growth
	(thousands)	(%)	(% 5yr)
8431 - Parts For Fork Lifts, Bulldozers & Graders	87,409	1.51	67.60
3004 - Medicines in Doses	85,024	1.47	29.51
6309 - Worn Clothing	55,847	0.97	77.34
1001 - Wheat	52,135	0.90	41.27
8703 - Passenger Vehicles	51,711	0.89	17.68
2710 - Non Crude Oil	49,230	0.85	127.70
1006 - Rice	46,928	0.81	3,671.62
8525 - Cel Phones, Video Recorders & Radio Transcievers	39,930	0.69	181.39
8704 - Trucks	33,227	0.58	(16.27)
8517 - Telephone, Fax & Switching Apparatus	30,054	0.52	208.24

Source: http://globaledge.msu.edu/countries/cameroon/tradestats/

Table 2.6: Top export products of Cameroon

Top Products Exported by Cameroon	Market Value : 13,148 (millions)		
Product	Trade Value	Share	Growth
	(thousands)	(%)	(% 5yr)
2709 - Crude Oil	2,641,976	20.09	230.67
4407 - Wood Sawn > 6 mm	295,835	2.25	5.81
0803 - Bananas	281,836	2.14	83.00
7601 - Aluminum	197,013	1.50	272.50
1801 - Cocoa	191,213	1.45	68.39
2710 - Non Crude Oil	158,769	1.21	356.58
4001 - Natural Rubber	128,272	0.98	200.93
5201 - Cotton	124,026	0.94	89.31
0901 - Coffee	60,254	0.46	71.83
4403 - Lumber	60,053	0.46	(57.00)

Source: http://globaledge.msu.edu/countries/cameroon/tradestats/

2.2.2 Oil and Gas sector in Cameroon

Despite being the smallest oil producer in Sub-Saharan Africa, and with declining production levels, the oil sector in Cameroon is the third largest sector in terms of GDP. In 2016 the oil sector accounted for 38% of overall state revenue up from 33% in the 2015 fiscal year. Oil has been extracted in Cameroon since 1977 and both its production and exploitation are controlled by the state through the National Hydrocarbons Company (NHC), a state-owned company that guarantees the interests of the state through concessions, apportionment, production and hybrid contracts.

Cameroon has oil reserves estimated at 400 million barrels in January 2004. The country has gas reserves, estimated at 110 billion cubic meters that are still unexploited. The upstream oil industry is an important part of Cameroon's economy. Reserves are located offshore in the Rio del Rey Basin of the Niger Delta, offshore and onshore in the Douala/Kribi-Camp basins on Cameroon's western coast, and onshore in the Logone-Birni basin in the northern part of the country.

The downstream oil industry in Cameroon is also an important sector of the country's economy. Consumption of liquid fuel products is currently about 900,000 tonnes per annum excluding smuggling from Nigeria, estimated to be 30% of this figure. With the building of the Chad to Cameroon oil pipeline, and the siting of the export terminus at Kribi, Cameroon has the potential to become a notable oil transport centre.

The Chad/Cameroon Petroleum Development and Pipeline Project were approved by the Executive Directors of the World Bank Group on June 6, 2000. The project, which is the single largest private sector investment in Sub-Saharan Africa, will develop three oil fields (Kome, Miandoum, and Bolobo) in the Doba region of southern Chad and construct an export system consisting of a 1,070 km pipeline to offshore oil-loading facilities in Cameroon's Atlantic Coast.

Opportunities

Also to boost the hydrocarbon sector, the Cameroonian authorities have also issued a Code of gas, which should enable the exploitation of natural gas from the peninsula whose potential is estimated at some 300 million m^3, excluding gas flared on the oil platforms. According to official figures, the natural gas reserves found are assessed at 156

billion m^3. This represents at least thirty years of operation. What we must add 110 billion m^3 additional estimated by specialised firms. Key players are TOTAL, Perenco and Shell.

2.2.3 Agriculture

Cameroon's economy is predominantly agricultural. The main crops are cocoa, coffee, tobacco, cotton and bananas. Agriculture can be rightly regarded as the mainstay of the economy in Cameroon. With occupancy of 70% of the workforce, it contributes approximately 42% of the workforce. Unemployment help, many people fall back into the business of the earth to find something to live or survive. It is divided into several components, including cash crops and food crops, cotton, palm, the cocoa-coffee, rubber industry, the sugar industry, the banana and even the downstream sector.

2.2.3.1 Cotton: from raw material to finished product

The cotton industry, one that is not liberalised, knows the difficulties due to a continued decline in output and prices in the international market. The 350,000 producers have seen the purchase price fell from 195 to XAF175 2012-2013 to 2014-2015. At this price, the producer tends to save on fertilizer, which has the consequence of not ensuring the quality of returns. Production of 125,000 tons of cotton fiber in 2012-2013 (from 200,000 tons of seed cotton processed locally) fell to 113,000 t in 2014-2015.

SODECOTON, whose capital is owned almost 60% by the government buys the entire production of cotton seed and sells. It reflects an operating loss of several billion XAF francs in 2005. Cameroon has pledged to privatise after the failures of the late 90s. Cameroon has many companies and weaving filiature (such as CICAME, Cotonerie Industrial Cameroon, specialises in the manufacture of garments in local tissue wrappers), but with a very insufficient capacity considering the material available and the demand for processed products is increasing every year. The end of quotas and permission to import second-hand clothes were dealt a blow to the clothing sector, now overwhelmed by imports from Asia and Europe.

2.2.3.2 Cocoa-Coffee: a necessary effort quality

Liberalised for almost 15 years, the cocoa sector is doing badly despite the hopes that had arisen in the Ivorian crisis and has experienced a surge of production from 120,000 to

190,000 tons between 2010 and 2015. Great rival of Cameroon for many decades, Côte d'Ivoire has seen its place and cocoa production plummet during the crisis years. It is clear that Cameroon is now a major world cocoa producer, despite the relatively poor performance of this sector.

The Cameroonian market is dominated by three companies: Barry Callebaut and Cargill. Chococam (part of Barry Callebaut) is the leader in the manufacture of confectionery. The coffee chain is known for its similar difficulties. A development fund was created in 2006 to promote the sector.

2.2.3.3 Banana: exploring new markets

Two major groups dominate the banana sector in Cameroon: the Fruit Company of Marseilles (Dole group, 46%) and Crown Corporation (in partnership with Del Monte Cameroon, 41%). A third operator, Société des Plantations de Mbanga (SPM group, 13%) moved more recently and is growing. Banana plants are spread on 10,000 hectares. The main destination is the European Union, whose imports were based on a licensing system (abolished in January 2006), based on historical data unfavourable to Cameroon: it had only 150,000 tonnes for export capacity of 250,000 tonnes (leading exporter in Africa). It had to then purchase the rights from Caribbean countries (whose production was down significantly), 220 € per tonne in 2005, which absorbs much of the export revenue. Cameroon should make serious efforts to increase yields and quality to diversify its sales (50,000 tonnes already go to the Maghreb) and reduce production costs (packaging and fertilizers are imported) to make the sector more competitive.

2.2.3.4 Incentive

Tax exemption on input import duties has enabled easier access to the relevant seeds and fertilizers needed to improve fundamentals.

The EU and Cameroon signed an economic partnership agreement (EPA) allowing Cameroonian exports preferential access to EU markets similar to the deal whereby African countries can export banana to former colonial powers duty-free.

2.2.4 Agro Industries

There are few agro- industries that process products like coffee, cotton, cocoa, palm oil, sugar, maize, rubber, palm kernel oil and Soya beans. Investment opportunities in these

sectors are therefore in agri-business, food processing, packaging, storage, input manufacture, production extension in capacity (modern large scale farming), marketing, rehabilitation of existing capacities and agricultural machinery.

Most of the food processed is the usual traditional foodstuffs like cassava, maize, and potato. But the process of consumable food products is still artisanal. This is the case with palm nut fruits into palm oil and kernel oil. Investment opportunities are available in this food sub sector and also for meat and dairy products and fish. There is need also adequate equipment and maintenance, modern processing methods, packaging, storage and packaging.

With the transformation of cotton, more Cameroonians are involved in the cloth sector. The products are of high quality and are appreciated on the international market but the percentage for export is very insignificant. Investors can come in for joint venture purposes to improve on design, quality, and increase capacity to meet increasing demand

2.2.5 Forestry

The fourth largest sector in Cameroon is the forestry sector, accounting for 10% of GDP. The sector pertains to the Ministry of Forests and Wildlife which deals with the coordination and oversight of the exploitation, conservation and promotion of forests. A number of initiatives and structures have been created with the purpose of combating mismanagement and corruption in the forestry sector. Yet, the sector continues to be very corrupt, and a November 2014 article in Mutations issue 1289 estimated the losses caused by corruption at nearly USD 217 million annually.

It should also be noted that, Cameroon has the second largest forest in Africa, more than 18 million hectares of exploitable closed forest, representing 40% of the land area. About 80 different species are marketed; ayous (wood white light) and sapele (wood heavy red) account for one third of exports, but also operates mahogany, moabi, azobe. The state seeks to maximise local value added of the sector, which has led in 1999 to prohibit the export of logs, it is also necessary that there be creditworthy investors, reliable and professional to take over.

2.2.6 Opportunities and threats

2.2.6.1 Opportunities

Cameroon is credited why many reasons to invest in:

- A stable currency;

- A well educated and bilingual workforce;

- Dynamic business entrepreneurs available for profitable partnerships with foreign investors

- Dynamic microeconomic and macroeconomic policies delivering a growth rate of about 3% GDP.

- Major investments being carried out in the energy sector to boost industrial activity by providing enough energy to sustain development.

- Availability of strong ICT companies providing internet services, networking solutions, mobile phone services, etc…

- Availability of the nationwide optical fiber network to interconnect businesses locally and internationally.

2.2.6.2 Threats

The main factors that could hinder Cameroon development are:

- Insufficient electric power. Prior electricity subsidies distort the market. Hydropower makes gains but a great amount of it goes to industrial players in the market (ALUCAM, CIMENCAM, etc).

- Red tape. The Cameroon government often grants exclusive exploitation contracts in particular industries or regions to some companies for many years. Other businesses struggle to navigate the inner workings of the government and walk away dismayed. But those who persevere reap unimaginable gains.

- Insecurity. Prior to the advent of Boko Haram attacks and threats especially in the northern part of the country, Cameroon was largely danger free as far as terrorist attacks are concerned. But with the increasing threats from the activities of this radical sect, especially in the northern part of Cameroon, there has been a reasonable degree of risk of attacks in main cities.

2.3 Tourism in Cameroon

Tourism in Cameroon has been shaped among other things by its history, land, economic and socio cultural traditions. The country is full of natural scenes and tourist attractions but due to deficiency of resources, it is unable to completely benefit from these natural gifts. Cameroon is a land of tourist attractions for lovers of culture and adventure including mountains, lakes, and seaside resort. The country concentrates all the beauties of Africa; which explains why people ponder that nobody could really discover Africa without having visited Cameroon. Its ancestral land counts on a relationship between sea and desert, waterfalls and Sahara area, temperate climate in the South and great heat in the North. The cohabitation of traditional societies and modern cities, the exceptional variety of the flora and fauna, these always give tourists the impression they are visiting several countries at the same time. During the trip, they feel in harmony with art, nature and people.

Cameroon has many factors and trends to promote tourism in Cameroon such as seaside tourism, ecotourism, safari tourism, mountain tourism, sport tourism and cultural heritage that make it a captivating destination.

2.3.1 Main types of tourism in Cameroon

2.3.1.1 Seaside Tourism

Cameroon has what it takes to attract lovers of sea and beach. The 400 km long coastline of the Atlantic Ocean is very suitable for tourism, with a lot of attractions like colourful bays, rich sandy beaches, a variety of small islets, mangrove vegetation and waterfalls that plunge directly into the ocean. Fishing goes on in all the settlements along the coastline, carried out by individual and commercial fishermen. Any visitor can take a try at fishing. A wide variety of fishes can is also to be found in the many rivers which can be found throughout the country. Kribi and Limbe are the two main poles of tourist attraction. The temperate climate is very pleasant.

Picture 2.2: Limbe beach

Source: The researcher, April 2014.

2.3.1.2 Ecotourism

Cameroon is characterised by a variety of ecosystems which offer her the possibility of developing her ecotourism. Coastal and marine ecosystems for a main part made of mangrove swamps; multifaceted forests ecosystems made up of various national parks and reserves which are fit for ecotourism for example watching of animals, birds, and flora. In these ecosystems, there are also pygmies who are mainly ancient people of the forest with habits and customs peculiar to them. Moreover, mountain ecosystems with a variety of wildlife, flora and populations are characterised by crater lakes and wonderful waterfalls. Ecotourism can be enjoyed in places like the vast plains bordering the Logone River in the Far-North and the Benoue in the North, Waza national park, Mobombe Waterfall, de Korup national park and the Ebogo ecotourism site.

Picture 2.3: The researcher at the Mefou national park
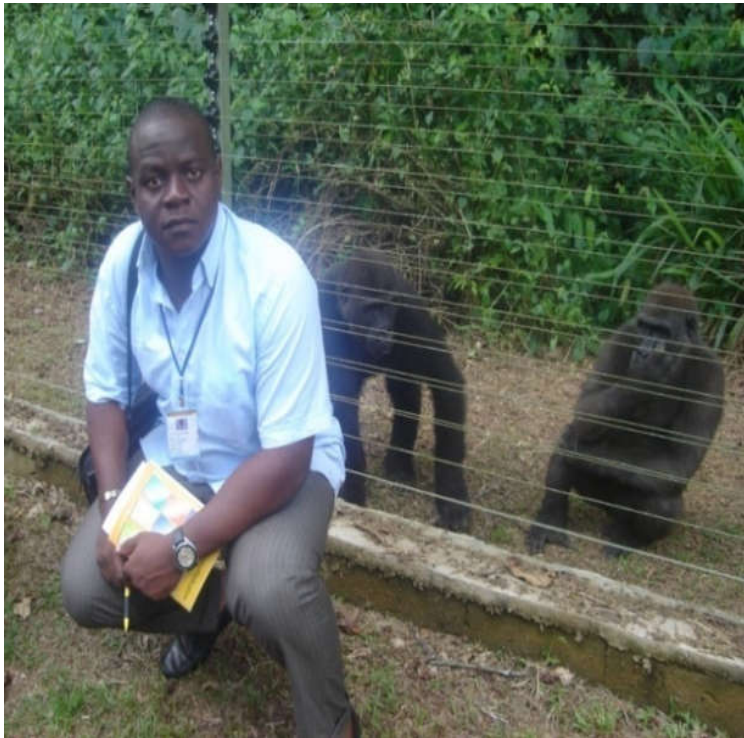
Source: The researcher, April 2014.

Picture 2.4: A tourist at the Mefou national park
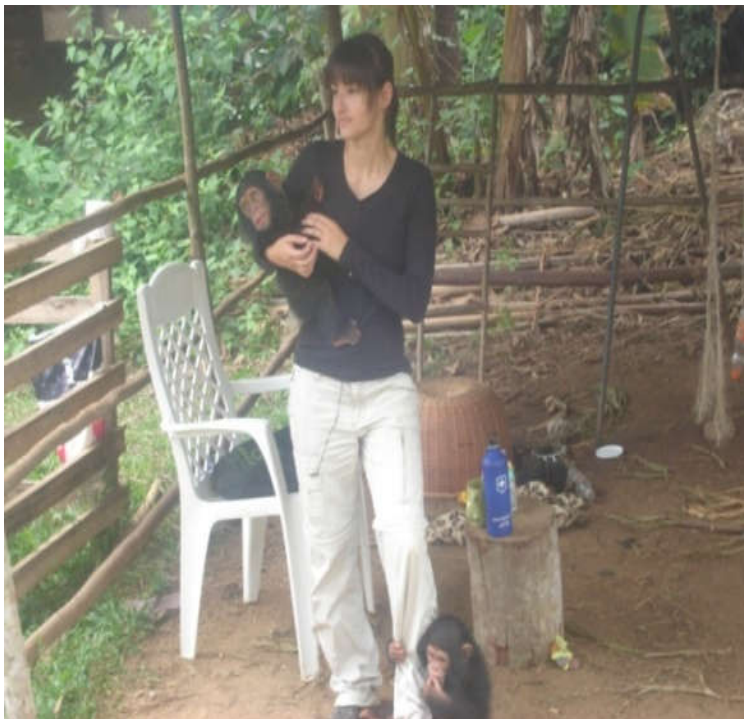
Source: The researcher, April 2014.

3.3.1.3 Cultural Tourism

Cameroon's cultural potential reflects the ethnic diversity of its people, made of over 200 different ethnic groups. This cultural variety is illustrated in the lifestyle, folklore, dressing and handicraft. A unique quality for Cameroon is its chiefdoms. They offer visitors a hint of culture and folklore. The most renowned chiefdom is Bamoun in Foumban in the western region. Its history dates back to the 16th century and is made of the Sultan and his court. One most famous and interesting festival in this region is the Ngon festival, where the king is judged by his subjects. This event takes place every two years. There is also one of the chiefdom in the north called "Oudjilla" known for its king with 40 women and its little round boxes hung on the mountain side. Travelling around the country to visit the many chiefdoms of the West and North lead to the discovery of a fabulous mountainous area.

Picture 2.5: Foumban royal palace

Source: The researcher, April 2014.

Picture 2.6: Traditional dancer in Bafut

Source: The researcher, April 2014.

2.3.1.4 Safari and hunting

The environment and biodiversity protection policy put in place by the Cameroonian government following the country's independence led to the creation of many protected areas. This protected areas situated mostly in northern Cameroon are the zones par excellence for safari photos. There are seven national parks in Cameroon, with the most interesting and properly maintained one being the Waza Park in the Far North Region. These parks have a large number of the various animal species found in Africa (elephants, lions, giraffes, rhinoceros, panthers, buffalos, antelopes, hippopotamus, hyenas, gorillas, cheetahs, etc.). Besides the national parks wherein hunting is prohibited, there are 14 hunting zones in the northern part of the country with more than 500 km of motorable roads. Cameroon is the place of choice in West and Central Africa for safari tourism as

the national parks and other animal reserves like Bouba Ndjida in the Adamawa Region are properly preserved.

Picture 2.7: Bouba Ndjida reserve

Source: F. Mensah.

2.3.1.5 Mountain Tourism

The chains of mountains with unique beauty charms attract tourists. Most famous mountains in Cameroon are mount Cameroon, mount Mandara and mount Manengouba. Mount Cameroon is prone to volcanic eruption with the most recent on May 28, 2000. The "Mount Cameroon Race of Hope is an annual" is a televised footrace held at Mount Cameroon in Buea in January or February. The characteristic of mountain tourism in Cameroon refers to activities like hiking, trekking, rock climbing and mountaineering.

Picture 2.8: Mount Cameroon in Buea

Source: The researcher, May 2014.

Tourism industry is known for generating income, employment, and developing investments opportunities; in addition to satisfying human needs.

2.3.2 Travel and Tourism's contribution to GDP

Travel and Tourism is an important economic activity in most countries around the world. As well as its direct economic impact, the sector has significant indirect and induced impacts. The UN Statistics Division-approved Tourism Satellite Accounting methodology (TSA: RMF 2016) quantifies only the direct contribution of Travel and Tourism. WTTC recognises that Travel and Tourism's total contribution is much greater however, and aims to capture its indirect and induced impacts through its annual research.

2.3.2.1 Direct contribution

The direct contribution of Travel and Tourism to GDP reflects the 'internal' spending on Travel and Tourism (total spending within a particular country on Travel and Tourism by

residents and non-residents for business and leisure purposes). It is calculated to be consistent with the output, as expressed in national accounting of tourism-characteristic sectors such as hotels, airlines, airports, travel agents and leisure services that deal directly with tourists. The direct contribution of Travel and Tourism to GDP is calculated from total internal spending by 'netting out' the purchases made by the different tourism industries. This measure is consistent with the definition of Tourism GDP, specified in the 2008 Tourism Satellite Account: Recommended Methodological Framework (TSA: RMF 2016).

The direct contribution of Travel and Tourism to Cameroon's GDP in 2015 was XAF431.0bn (2.8% of GDP). This is forecast to rise by 4.8% to XAF451.8bn in 2016. This primarily reflects the economic activity generated by industries such as hotels, travel agents, airlines and other passenger transportation services. But it also includes, for example, the activities of the restaurant and leisure industries directly supported. The direct contribution of Travel and Tourism to GDP is expected to grow by 5.9% pa to XAF800.7bn (3.0% of GDP) by 2027.

Figure 2.2: Direct contribution of travel and tourism to Cameroon's GDP
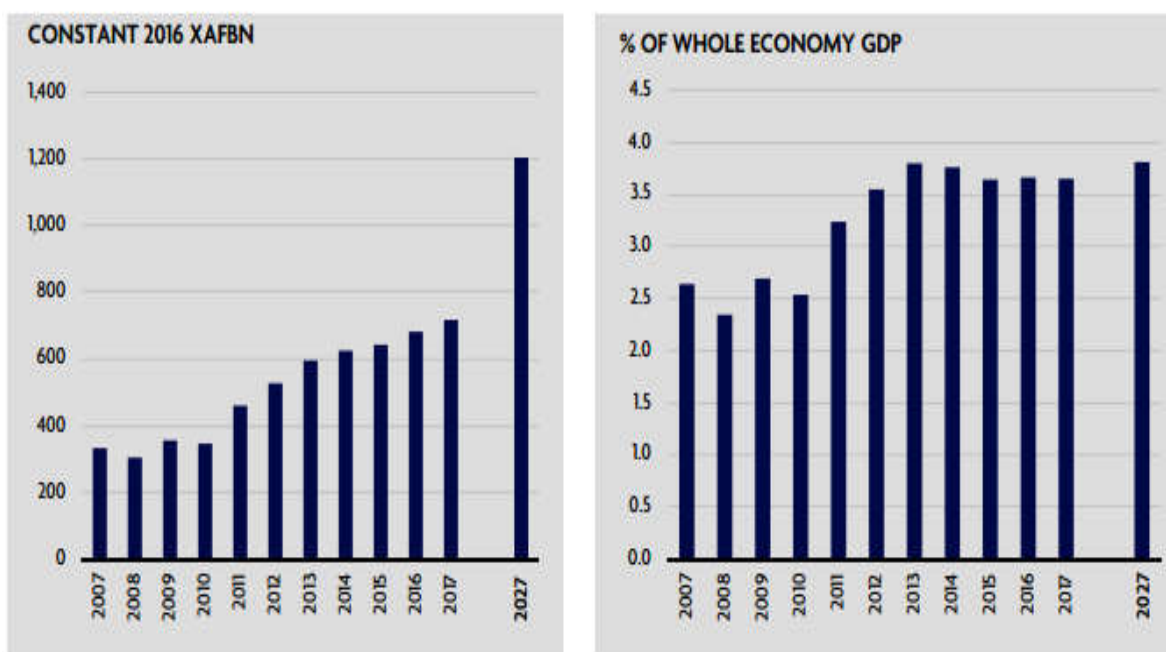
Source: WTTC Travel and Tourism Economic Impact 2017

Figure 2.3: Country ranking - Absolute contribution, 2016

TRAVEL & TOURISM'S DIRECT CONTRIBUTION TO GDP		2016 (US$bn)
	World Average	19.1
39	Egypt	8.7
40	South Africa	8.7
42	Morocco	8.3
67	Tunisia	2.7
69	Kenya	2.5
78	Tanzania	2.1
100	Cameroon	1.2
	Sub-Saharan Africa Average	1.0

Source: WTTC Travel and Tourism Economic Impact 2015

Figure 2.4: Country ranking - Relative contribution, 2016

TRAVEL & TOURISM'S DIRECT CONTRIBUTION TO GDP		2016 % share
27	Gambia	9.0
33	Morocco	8.1
41	Tunisia	6.6
59	Senegal	4.8
62	Tanzania	4.7
86	Kenya	3.7
87	Cameroon	3.7
107	Egypt	3.2

Source: WTTC Travel and Tourism Economic Impact 2017

Figure 2.5: Country ranking - Real growth, 2017

TRAVEL & TOURISM'S DIRECT CONTRIBUTION TO GDP		2017 % growth
19	Senegal	7.9
38	Namibia	7.1
57	Kenya	6.0
81	Cameroon	5.2
	Sub-Saharan Africa	4.4

Source: WTTC Travel and Tourism Economic Impact 2017

Figure 2.6: Country ranking - Long term growth, 2017 - 2027

TRAVEL & TOURISM'S DIRECT CONTRIBUTION TO GDP		2017 - 2027 % growth pa
1	Namibia	7.9
9	Tanzania	6.8
28	Kenya	6.0
37	Senegal	5.7
42	Egypt	5.6
53	Cameroon	5.3
68	Gambia	5.0
	Sub-Saharan Africa	4.8

Source: WTTC Travel and Tourism Economic Impact 2017

2.3.2.2 Total Contribution

The total contribution of Travel and Tourism includes its 'wider impacts' (ie the indirect and induced impacts) on the economy.

The 'indirect' contribution includes the GDP and jobs supported by:

- Travel and Tourism investment spending – an important aspect of both current and future activity that includes investment activity such as the purchase of new aircraft and construction of new hotels;

- Government 'collective' spending, which helps Travel and Tourism activities in many different ways as it is made on behalf of the community at large (tourism marketing and promotion, aviation, administration, security services, resort area security services, resort area sanitation services, etc.);

- Domestic purchases of goods and services by the sectors dealing directly with tourists - including, for example, purchases of food and cleaning services by hotels, of fuel and catering services by airlines, and IT services by travel agents.

The 'induced' contribution measures the GDP and jobs supported by the spending of those who are directly or indirectly employed by the Travel and Tourism sector.

The total contribution of Travel and Tourism to Cameroon's GDP (including wider effects from investment, the supply chain and induced income impacts) was XAF 1,501.1bn (8.1% of GDP) in 2016 and is expected to grow by 4.7% pa to XAF 2,632.3bn (8.0% of GDP) in 2017

It is forecast to rise by 5.3% pa to XAF 2,632.3bn by 2027 (8.3% of GDP).

Figure 2.7: Total contribution of Travel and Tourism to Cameroon's GDP
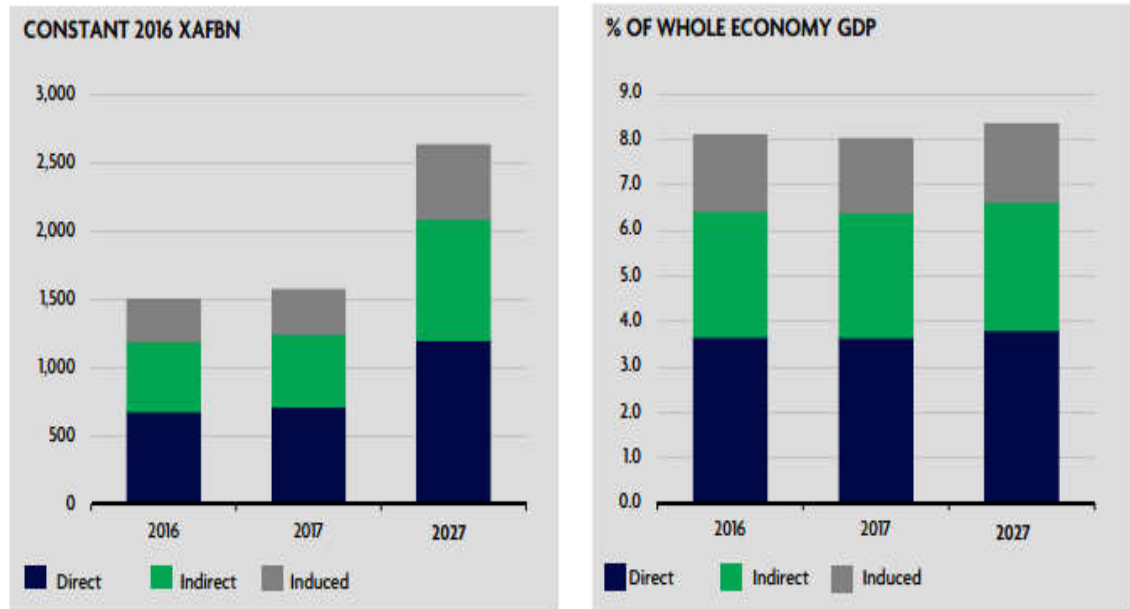
Source: WTTC Travel and Tourism Economic Impact 2017

Figure 2.8: Country ranking - Absolute contribution, 2016

TRAVEL & TOURISM'S TOTAL CONTRIBUTION TO GDP		2016 (US$bn)
	World Average	57.3
35	South Africa	27.3
46	Egypt	19.4
48	Morocco	19.0
72	Kenya	6.7
75	Tanzania	5.9
76	Tunisia	5.7
	Sub-Saharan Africa Average	2.6
108	Cameroon	2.5
125	Namibia	1.6

Source: WTTC Travel and Tourism Economic Impact 2017

Figure 2.9: Country ranking - Relative contribution, 2016

TRAVEL & TOURISM'S TOTAL CONTRIBUTION TO GDP		2016 % share
32	Gambia	21.9
41	Morocco	18.5
51	Namibia	14.9
58	Tunisia	13.7
63	Tanzania	13.3
74	Senegal	11.0
	World	10.2
92	Kenya	9.8
99	South Africa	9.3
116	Cameroon	8.1
129	Egypt	7.2
	Sub-Saharan Africa	7.1

Source: WTTC Travel and Tourism Economic Impact 2017

Figure 2.10: Country ranking - Real growth, 2017

TRAVEL & TOURISM'S TOTAL CONTRIBUTION TO GDP		2017 % growth
14	Senegal	7.7
46	Kenya	5.9
70	Namibia	5.1
81	Cameroon	4.7
105	Morocco	4.1

Source: WTTC Travel and Tourism Economic Impact 2017

Figure 2.11: Country ranking - Long term growth, 2017 - 2027

TRAVEL & TOURISM'S TOTAL CONTRIBUTION TO GDP		2017 - 2027 % growth pa
7	Tanzania	6.8
13	Namibia	6.5
19	Senegal	6.3
27	Egypt	6.1
34	Gambia	5.8
45	Kenya	5.6
58	Cameroon	5.3
	Sub-Saharan Africa	4.8

Source: WTTC Travel and Tourism Economic Impact 2017

Figure 2.12: Domestic vs foreign spendings, 2016
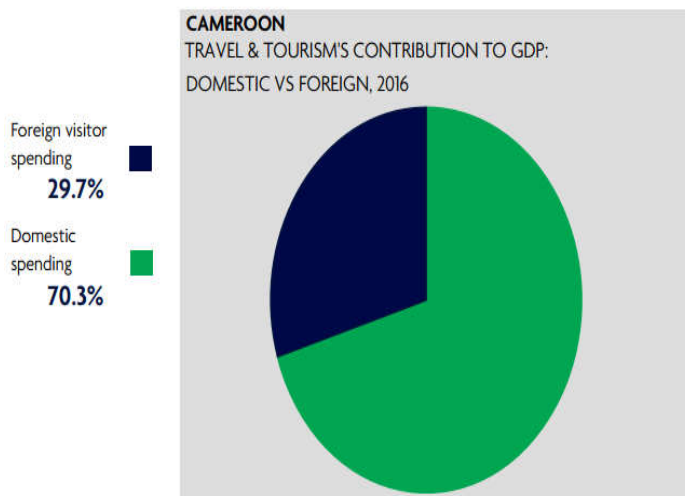
Source: WTTC Travel and Tourism Economic Impact 2017

Domestic travel spending generated 70.3% of direct Travel and Tourism GDP in 2016 compared with 29.7% for visitor exports (foreign visitor spending or international tourism receipts).

Domestic travel spending is expected to grow by 6.3% in 2017 to XAF 940.9bn, and rise by 5.2% pa to XAF 1,556.3bn in 2027. Visitor exports are expected to grow by 3.7% in 2017 to XAF 388.3bn, and rise by 5.2% pa to XAF 645.3bn in 2027.

Figure 2.13: Breakdown of Travel and Tourism's Total Contribution to GDP, 2016
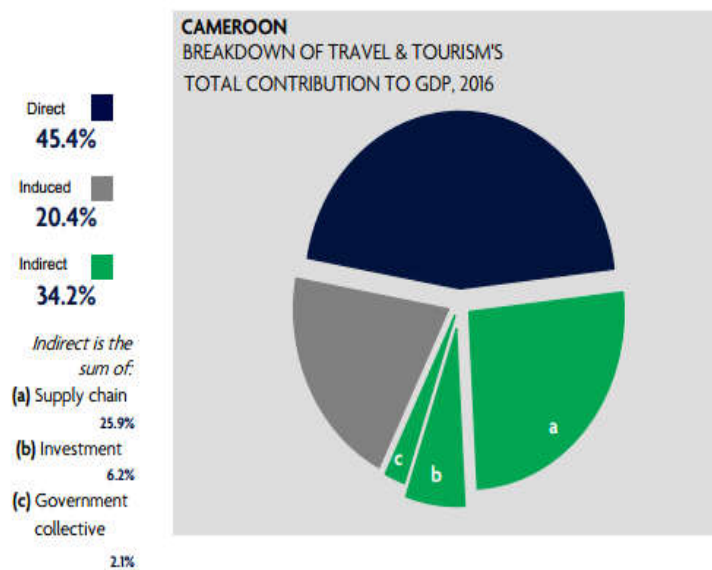
Source: WTTC Travel and Tourism Economic Impact 2017

The total contribution of Travel and Tourism to GDP is twice as large as its direct contribution.

2.3.3 Travel and Tourism's contribution to employment

2.3.3.1 Direct contribution

Travel and Tourism generated 289,500 jobs directly in 2016 (3.1% of total employment) and this is forecast to grow by 3.2% in 2017 to 280,500 (2.9% of total employment). This includes employment by hotels, travel agents, airlines and other passenger transportation services (excluding commuter services). It also includes, for example, the activities of the restaurant and leisure industries directly supported by tourists. By 2027, Travel and Tourism will account for 411,000 jobs directly, an increase of 3.9% pa over the next ten years.

Figure 2.14: Direct contribution Travel and Tourism to employment in Cameroon

Source: WTTC Travel and Tourism Economic Impact 2017

Figure 2.15: Country ranking - Absolute contribution, 2016

TRAVEL & TOURISM'S DIRECT CONTRIBUTION TO EMPLOYMENT		2016 '000 jobs
	World Average	843.9
20	Morocco	819.0
22	Egypt	773.0
23	South Africa	716.3
34	Tanzania	470.4
41	Kenya	399.2
48	Cameroon	289.7
54	Senegal	246.3

Source: WTTC Travel and Tourism Economic Impact 2017

Figure 2.16: Country ranking - Relative contribution, 2016

TRAVEL & TOURISM'S TOTAL CONTRIBUTION TO EMPLOYMENT		2016 % share
38	Gambia	18.8
46	Morocco	16.6
51	Namibia	14.9
64	Tunisia	12.6
72	Tanzania	11.6
85	South Africa	9.8
	World	9.6
89	Senegal	9.6
97	Kenya	9.2
124	Cameroon	7.1
130	Egypt	6.6
	Sub-Saharan Africa	6.0

Source: WTTC Travel and Tourism Economic Impact 2017

Figure 2.17: Country ranking - Real growth, 2017

TRAVEL & TOURISM'S DIRECT CONTRIBUTION TO EMPLOYMENT		2017 % growth
47	Tanzania	5.2
58	Namibia	4.7
67	Senegal	4.2
	Sub-Saharan Africa	3.8
76	South Africa	3.6
99	Kenya	3.0
	World	2.1
127	Tunisia	2.0
154	Gambia	0.8
165	Morocco	-0.09
179	Cameroon	-3.22
185	Egypt	-8.42

Source: WTTC Travel and Tourism Economic Impact 2017

Figure 2.18: Country ranking - Long term growth, 2017 - 2027

TRAVEL & TOURISM'S DIRECT CONTRIBUTION TO EMPLOYMENT		2017 - 2027 % growth pa
13	Namibia	4.5
17	Egypt	4.3
19	South Africa	4.1
20	Tanzania	4.0
24	Cameroon	3.9
43	Kenya	3.3
	Sub-Saharan Africa	3.3

Source: WTTC Travel and Tourism Economic Impact 2017

2.3.3.2 Total contribution

The total contribution of Travel & Tourism to employment (including wider effects from investment, the supply chain and induced income impacts) was 658,500 jobs in 2016

(7.1% of total employment). This is forecast to fall by 2.5% in 2017 to 642,500 jobs (6.7% of total employment).

By 2027, Travel and Tourism is forecast to support 922,000 jobs (7.4% of total employment), plus an increase of 3.7% pa over the period.

Figure 2.19: Total contribution Travel and Tourism to employment in Cameroon
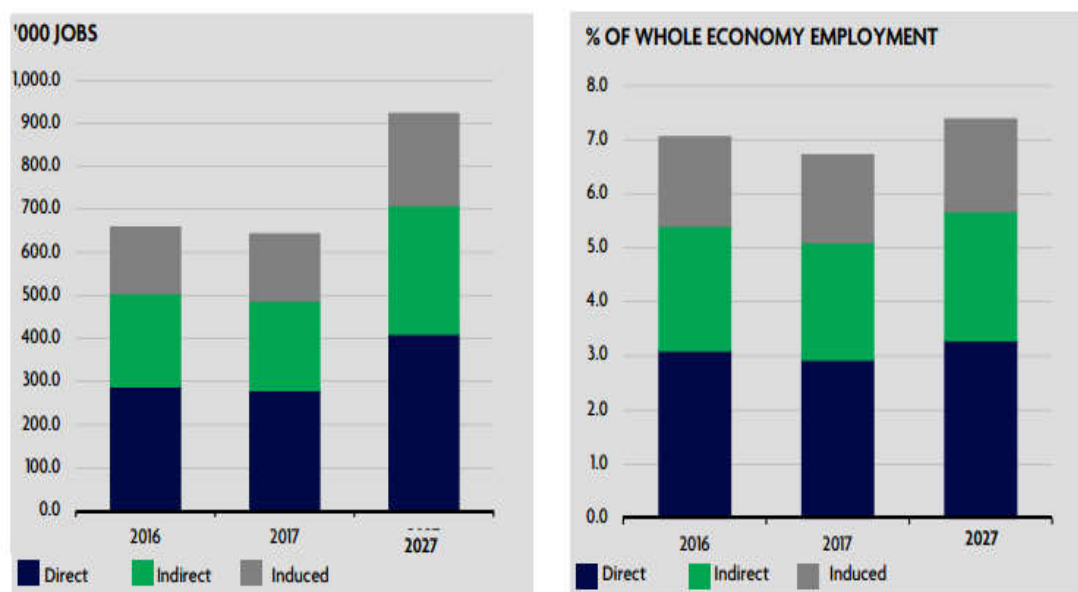
Source: WTTC Travel and Tourism Economic Impact 2017

Figure 2.20: Country ranking - Absolute contribution, 2016

TRAVEL & TOURISM'S TOTAL CONTRIBUTION TO EMPLOYMENT		2016 '000 jobs
	World Average	2152.9
21	Morocco	1902.4
23	Egypt	1763.1
28	South Africa	1533.2
31	Tanzania	1388.8
37	Kenya	1072.4
52	Cameroon	658.7
59	Senegal	576.8

Source: WTTC Travel and Tourism Economic Impact 2017

Figure 2.21: Country ranking - Relative contribution, 2016

TRAVEL & TOURISM'S TOTAL CONTRIBUTION TO EMPLOYMENT		2016 % share
38	Gambia	18.8
46	Morocco	16.6
51	Namibia	14.9
64	Tunisia	12.6
72	Tanzania	11.6
85	South Africa	9.8
	World	9.6
89	Senegal	9.6
97	Kenya	9.2
124	Cameroon	7.1
130	Egypt	6.6

Source: WTTC Travel and Tourism Economic Impact 2017

Figure 2.22: Country ranking - Real growth, 2017

TRAVEL & TOURISM'S TOTAL CONTRIBUTION TO EMPLOYMENT		2017 % growth
10	South Africa	6.7
43	Tanzania	4.6
62	Senegal	3.9
76	Namibia	3.4
	Sub-Saharan Africa	3.3
89	Kenya	3.0
	World	1.9
128	Gambia	1.7
151	Tunisia	0.9
161	Morocco	0.3
176	Cameroon	-2.46
184	Egypt	-7.04

Source: WTTC Travel and Tourism Economic Impact 2017

Figure 2.23: Country ranking - Long term growth, 2017 - 2027

TRAVEL & TOURISM'S TOTAL CONTRIBUTION TO EMPLOYMENT		2017 - 2027 % growth pa
5	Egypt	4.6
10	South Africa	4.2
17	Gambia	3.9
19	Tanzania	3.8
23	Namibia	3.7
24	Cameroon	3.7
	Sub-Saharan Africa	3.2

Source: WTTC Travel and Tourism Economic Impact 2017

2.3.4 Visitor exports and investment

2.3.4.1 Visitor Exports

Money spent by foreign visitors to a country (or visitor exports) is a key component of the direct contribution of Travel and Tourism. In 2016, Cameroon generated XAF 374.6bn in visitor exports. In 2017, this is expected to grow by 3.7%, and the country is expected to attract 1,107,000 international tourist arrivals. By 2027, international tourist arrivals are forecast to total 1,679,000, generating expenditure of XAF 645.3bn, an increase of 5.2% pa.

Figure 2.24: Visitor exports and international tourist arrivals in Cameroon
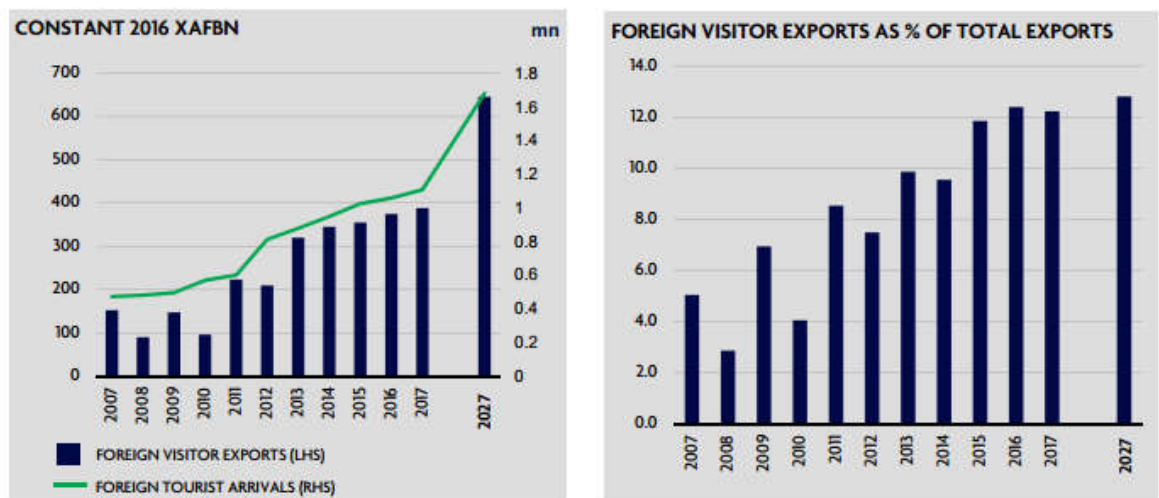
Source: WTTC Travel and Tourism Economic Impact 2017

Figure 2.25: Country ranking - Absolute contribution, 2016

VISITOR EXPORTS		2016 (US$bn)
37	South Africa	8.7
40	Morocco	7.8
	World Average	**7.6**
64	Egypt	3.0
73	Tanzania	2.4
86	Tunisia	1.7
88	Kenya	1.7
	Sub-Saharan Africa Average	0.7
123	Cameroon	0.6
131	Senegal	0.4

Source: WTTC Travel and Tourism Economic Impact 2017

Figure 2.26: Country ranking - Relative contribution, 2016

VISITOR EXPORTS CONTRIBUTION TO EXPORTS		2016 % share
24	Gambia	46.5
52	Morocco	22.1
53	Tanzania	21.4
65	Kenya	16.5
74	Senegal	13.3
76	Cameroon	12.4
80	Egypt	11.4

Source: WTTC Travel and Tourism Economic Impact 2017

Figure 2.27: Country ranking - Real growth, 2017

VISITOR EXPORTS		2017 % growth
20	Senegal	10.3
24	Namibia	10.1
	Sub-Saharan Africa	6.1
108	Kenya	5.2
	World	4.5
125	South Africa	4.4
130	Morocco	4.2
133	Tunisia	4.0
138	Cameroon	3.7
166	Tanzania	2.0

Source: WTTC Travel and Tourism Economic Impact 2017

Figure 2.28: Country ranking - Long term growth, 2017 - 2027

VISITOR EXPORTS CONTRIBUTION TO TOTAL EXPORTS		2017 - 2027 % growth pa
1	Egypt	10.0
13	South Africa	7.3
23	Tanzania	6.9
31	Kenya	6.5
	Sub-Saharan Africa	5.9
52	Namibia	5.8
73	Cameroon	5.2
96	Gambia	4.6

Source: WTTC Travel and Tourism Economic Impact 2017

2.3.4.2 Investment

Travel and Tourism is expected to have attracted capital investment of XAF 99.7bn in 2016. This is expected to rise by 3.8% in 2017, and rise by 3.8% pa over the next ten years to XAF 150.4bn in 2027. Travel and Tourism's share of total national investment will fall from 2.4% in 2017 to 2.2% in 2027.

Figure 2.29: Capital investment in Cameroon's Travel and Tourism industry
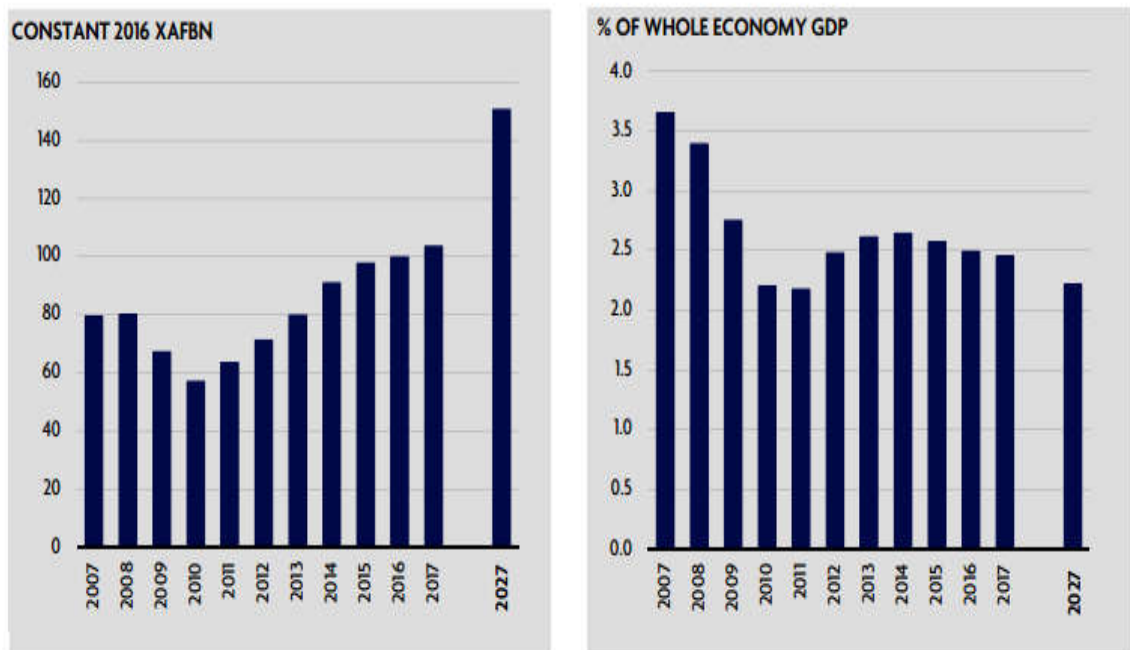
Source: WTTC Travel and Tourism Economic Impact 2017

Figure 2.30: Country ranking - Absolute contribution, 2016

TRAVEL & TOURISM INVESTMENT		2016 (US$bn)
28	South Africa	4.7
29	Egypt	4.6
	World Average	**4.4**
34	Morocco	4.1
64	Tanzania	1.2
73	Kenya	0.8
74	Tunisia	0.8
91	Namibia	0.4
	Sub-Saharan Africa Average	0.4
129	Cameroon	0.2
142	Senegal	0.1

Source: WTTC Travel and Tourism Economic Impact 2017

Figure 2.31: Country ranking - Relative contribution, 2016

TRAVEL & TOURISM CONTRIBUTION TO TOTAL CAPITAL INVESTMENT		2016 % share
33	Morocco	12.8
38	Gambia	11.9
39	Egypt	11.9
40	Namibia	11.6
52	Tunisia	9.9
56	Tanzania	8.7
63	South Africa	8.1
84	Kenya	5.7
	Sub-Saharan Africa	5.6
	World	4.4
130	Senegal	3.6
162	Cameroon	2.5

Source: WTTC Travel and Tourism Economic Impact 2017

Figure 2.32: Country ranking - Real growth, 2017

TRAVEL & TOURISM INVESTMENT		2017 % growth
13	Egypt	8.4
41	Kenya	6.6
54	Morocco	6.2
59	Namibia	5.8
65	Senegal	5.5
79	Gambia	4.9
91	Tanzania	4.1
	World	4.1
98	Cameroon	3.8
136	Tunisia	2.1

Source: WTTC Travel and Tourism Economic Impact 2017

Figure 2.33: Country ranking - Long term growth, 2017 - 2027

TRAVEL & TOURISM CONTRIBUTION TO TOTAL CAPITAL INVESTMENT		2017 - 2027 % growth pa
5	Gambia	8.9
17	Tanzania	6.6
22	Senegal	6.4
23	Egypt	6.4
31	Namibia	6.1
	Sub-Saharan Africa	4.9
	World	4.5
97	Kenya	4.0
100	South Africa	4.0
107	Cameroon	3.8
112	Morocco	3.7

Source: WTTC Travel and Tourism Economic Impact 2017

2.3.5 Measures to encourage tourism businesses development

To boost the tourism industry, the government of Cameroon has taken in 2012 a series of measures including the establishment of a progressive legal and institutional framework particularly conducive to the growth of this sector and which establishes:

- The commitment of the state to develop tourism and to ensure the safety of tourists;

- Streamlining and facilitating procedures for obtaining licenses, approvals and other authorisations in the tourism sector (construction, opening and operation of facilities and tourism agencies);

- Permission to operate charter flights from all foreign destinations as part of travel packages;

- The opening of tourist information offices abroad. The Paris office is already open and others will be phased;

- The creation of a National Tourism Council, chaired personally by the Prime Minister - Head of Government to take all necessary measures to develop tourism and to counter any difficulties that hinder the promotion of tourism. To this end, several

recommendations for improving the reception of tourists at airports in the facilitation of visa and improving the quality of service in the tourism establishments have already been done. Also as part of promoting the destination Cameroon, aggressive actions are undertaken to publicise the Cameroon as a country where the tourist is safe wherever he is and thereby maintain the dynamism of this sector. Moreover, the Charter Investment Incentive was adopted. It guarantees not only freedom and security of investment but also the safety of people and goods, which are the main factors conducive to tourism investment.

2.4 Summary

Growth remained strong in 2016 at 5.3%, but was still below the 6% average growth target set in the 2010-20 Growth and Employment Strategy Paper (2010-20 GESP), which aims to incorporate Cameroon into the group of emerging countries by 2035. Cameroon's economy has been resilient in the face of security and humanitarian crises at the northern borders with Nigeria and the eastern borders with the Central African Republic (CAR) and despite stagnant economies in the OECD countries and a slowdown in growth among the emerging economies. Cameroon's growth was driven by the secondary sector and a larger supply of energy and agricultural goods. According to projections, growth is set to remain strong in 2017 (5.4%) and 2018 (5.7%) thanks to a diversification policy aimed at developing value chains in agriculture and developing the construction sector and the supply of energy.

In addition to pursuing a moderately expansionary fiscal policy, the authorities have sought to mobilise tax revenue and improve the returns on public expenditure. They have significantly reduced poorly targeted subsidies on petroleum products and made improvements to projects. The 2016-17 budget aimed at maintaining the existing line of fiscal policy in 2017. However, the drop in oil prices during the second half of 2016 and the additional security and humanitarian expenses resulting from the Nigeria and CAR crises forced the government to introduce proactive fiscal consolidation measures to prevent the deficit from widening.

The 2010-20 GESP provides a framework for territorial development in Cameroon, but translating it into a proactive spatial inclusion policy is taking a long time. Underlying tensions and a sense of exclusion in some regional communities have been heightened by

the demographic upheaval brought about by the arrival of refugees from neighbouring countries. In addition, although major infrastructure projects are beneficial in terms of regional planning and development, they place great pressure on arable land and lead to transfers in the ownership of productive capital in rural areas. These shifts greatly threaten Cameroon's long-standing peace and social cohesion. The most concerned areas are those around the Lom Pangar and Memve'ele dams, the deep-water port in Kribi and the Mbalam iron mines in the East region.

Handling of tourists by Cameroonian officials has improved as the role of tourism as a source of revenue has been emphasised by the government. Tourists once faced long, thorough searches upon arrival in the country, but these have become rare.

CHAPTER THREE: LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a review of literature on the evolution of service quality measurement models overtime. The theoretical foundation is provided, followed by a critique of the SERVQUAL model. An empirical analysis of the measurement of service quality, destination image and customer satisfaction is done; leading to the derivation of a summary of knowledge gaps. A conceptual framework is proposed and research hypotheses presented.

3.2 Theoretical foundations of the Study

The study is anchored on the service quality theory advanced by Grönroos (1982) and promulgated by Parasuraman et al. (1985). It is premised on the consumer behavior theory fronted by Howard and Seth (1969). Figure 2.1 encapsulates the Howard Sheth model's four steps as encompassing the stimulus inputs, hypothetical constructs, response outputs and exogenous variables.

The model shows that consumers get stimulated to think about buying by quality, price, distinctiveness, service and availability from the significative and symbolic aspects. The hypothetical constructs have been classified in two, the perceptual constructs and the learning constructs. The perceptual constructs explain the way people perceive and respond to the information from the input variables. All the information that is received may not merit attention. Its intake is subject to the perceived uncertainty and the lack of meaningfulness of information received (stimulus ambiguity). This ambiguity may lead to an overt search for information about the product. Finally, the information that is received may be, according to the buyer's own frame of reference and pre-disposition, distorted (perceptual bias). The learning constructs explains the stages - from when the buyer develops motives to his satisfaction in a buying situation.

The purchase intention is an outcome of the interplay of buyer motives, choice criteria, brand comprehension, resultant brand attitude and the confidence associated with the purchase decision. The motives are representative of the goals that the buyer seeks to

achieve in the buying exercise; these may originate from the basis of learned needs. The existence of brand alternatives is in the buyer's evoked set. It results in the arrangement of an order of preference regarding those brands: Brand comprehension – "the knowledge about the existence and characteristics of other brands which form the evoked set". The degree of confidence that the buyer has about the brand comprehension and the choice criteria converge to the intention to buy. As a feedback component of learning, the model includes another learning construct - satisfaction which refers to the post purchase evaluation. It results in reinforcing the brand comprehension, attitudes etc. (shown by broken lines in Figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1: Howard Sheth Model
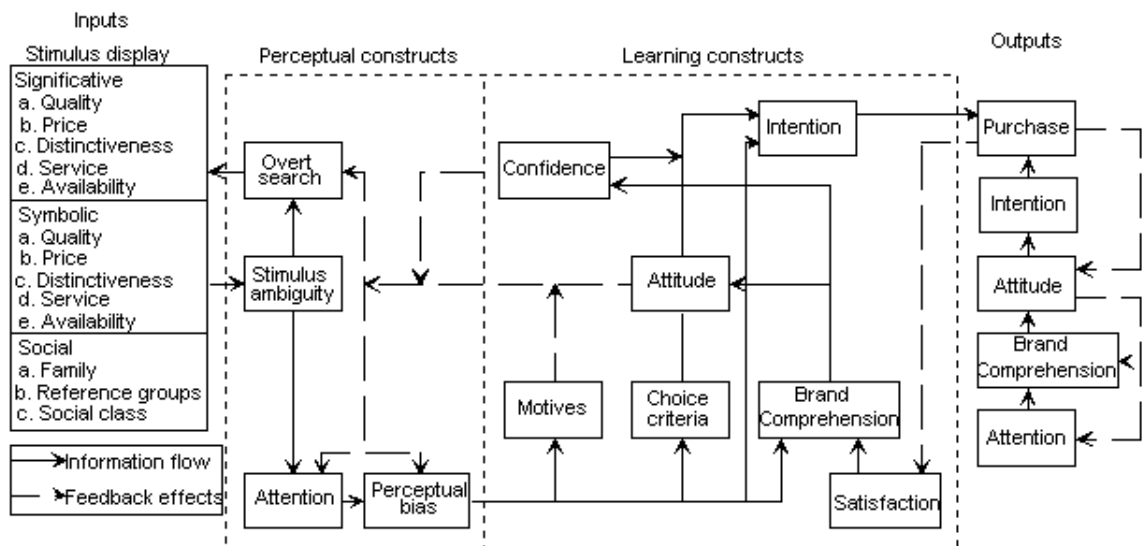
Source: Howard and Sheth. 1969. *The Theory of Buyer Behaviour*, John Winley and Co.

The output variables consist of a set of possible hierarchical responses from attention to purchase. The purchase act is the actual overt act of buying and is the sequential result of the attention (buyer's total response to information intake), the brand comprehension (a statement of buyer knowledge in the product class), the brand attitude (referring to the evaluation of satisfying potential of the brand) and the buyer intention (a verbal statement made in the light of the above externalising factors that the preferred brand will be bought the next time the buying is necessitated). The model also includes exogenous variables which are not defined but are taken as constant. These influence all or some of the

constructs explained above and through them, the output. Some of the exogenous variables are the purchase importance, the time at the disposal of the buyer, personality traits and the financial status.

Service quality traces its theoretical background to the pioneering works of Juran (1950) who laid the foundry works on the measurement of quality in manufacturing plants, paving way to the contemporary subject of total quality management and specifically service quality. The construct of service quality, as conceptualised in the literature, centers on SERVQUAL model that posits that service quality depends on the nature of the discrepancy between Expected Service (ES) and Perceived Service (PS). When ES is greater than PS, service quality is less than satisfactory; when ES is less than PS, service quality is more than satisfactory; and when ES equals PS, service quality equals satisfaction (Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry, 1985).

The generic determinants of service quality are presented by Parasuraman et al. (1985) as encompassing reliability, responsiveness, competence, access, courtesy, communication, credibility, security, understanding the customer and tangibles. Subsequently, Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1988) discovered a high degree of correlation between some of the elements and consolidated them into five determinants: reliability, assurance, tangibles, empathy and responsiveness (Appendix 5). Studies by Carman (1990) and Cronin and Taylor (1992) confirmed convergence of the variables into those five factors. They are acronymed RATER (reliability, assurance, tangibles, empathy, and responsiveness) by Buttle (1996).

Service reliability is the ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately (Hu, Kandampully and Juwaheer, 2009). This dimension of service quality examines the ability of the service provider to perform right the first time and keep service promises.

Buttle (1996) posits that responsiveness is the willingness to help customers and provide prompt service. A service provider is responsive if he is prompt in service delivery, is willing to help customers and has service staffs who respond to customer requests.

Tan and Pawitra (2001) and Jones and Haven (2005) both agree that assurance is knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to convey trust and confidence. The service provider must instill confidence in customers in the process of transacting. He has to make customer feel safe and display courtesy consistently.

Robledo (2001) suggests that empathy is the approachability, ease of access and effort taken to understand customers' needs. Empathy is the individual attention given to customers including showing care and empathy in handling claims and accidents.

Tangibility is the physical evidence of the service, meaning physical facilities, appearance of personnel, tools or equipment used to provide the service (Sureshchandar, Rajendran and Anantharaman (2002).

Figure 3.2: Model of service quality gaps
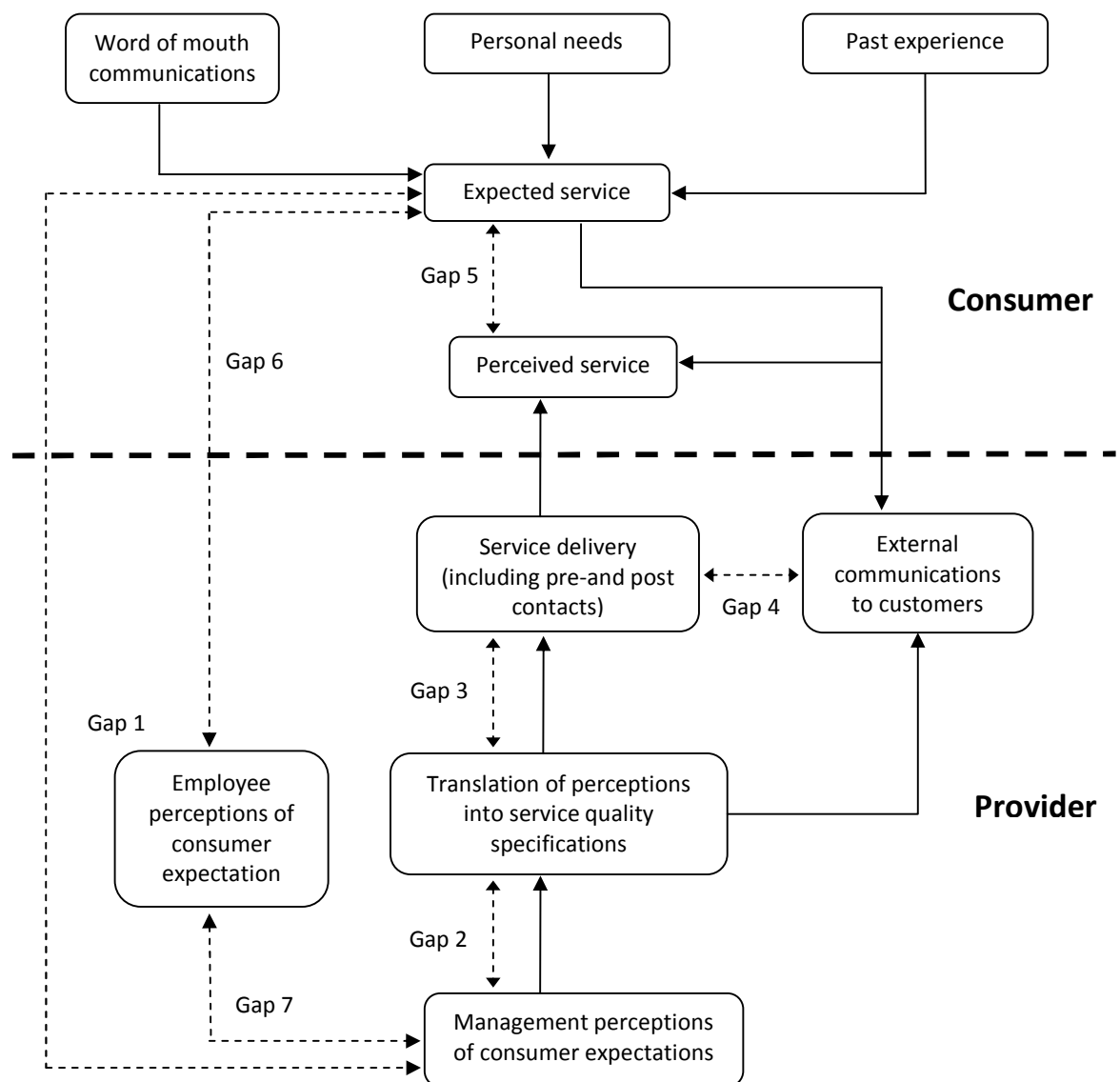
Source: Parasuraman et al., 1985; Luk and Layton, 2002.

Gap 1: Customers' expectations versus management perceptions as a result of the lack of a marketing research orientation, inadequate upward communication and too many layers of management.

Gap 2: Management perceptions versus service specifications as a result of inadequate commitment to service quality, a perception of unfeasibility, inadequate task standardisation and an absence of goal setting.

Gap 3: Service specifications versus service delivery as a result of role ambiguity and conflict, poor employee-job fit and poor technology-job fit, inappropriate supervisory control systems, lack of perceived control and lack of teamwork.

Gap 4: Service delivery versus external communication as a result of inadequate horizontal communications and propensity to over-promise.

Gap 5: The discrepancy between customer expectations and their perceptions of the service delivered as a result of the influences exerted from the customer side and the shortfalls (gaps) on the part of the service provider. In this case, customer expectations are influenced by the extent of personal needs, word of mouth recommendation and past service experiences.

Gap 6: The discrepancy between customer expectations and employees' perceptions as a result of the differences in the understanding of customer expectations by front-line service providers.

Gap 7: The discrepancy between employee's perceptions and management perceptions as a result of the differences in the understanding of customer expectations between managers and service providers.

Despite the popularity of SERVQUAL model, Grönroos (1982) and Lehtinen and Lehtinen (1982) posit that SERVQUAL does not account for three dimensions, technical, functional and image. Carman (1990) notes that SERVQUAL is not generic and needs to be customised to the service in question. He suggests that service quality has more than five dimensions. Brown, Churchill and Peter (1993) contest the measurement of service quality using a difference score. A test of dimensionality focused on managerial perception led Johnston (1995) to establish 12 dimensions including: access, appearance, availability, cleanliness, comfort, communication, competence, courtesy, friendliness, reliability, responsiveness, and security. Buttle (1996) identified the shortfalls of

SERVQUAL as including paradigmatic objection, gaps model, process orientation, dimensionality, expectations, item composition, polarity and scale points. According to Lee et al. (2011), service quality is best described by the customer because the customer is the receiver and subsequent user of the service.

Cronin and Taylor (1992) took issue with the conceptualisation of SERVQUAL. In their study, the perception components of SERVPERF outperformed SERVQUAL; which led them to conclude that the disconfirmation paradigm was inappropriate for measuring perceived service quality. A position questioned by Robledo (2001), who exemplifies SERVPEX model over other models. The SERVPEX formulation has 26 items and a three factor structure that define quality in airline service as highly dependent on tangibles, reliability and customer care.

In analysing the scale item of SERVQUAL, Sureshchandar, Rajendran and Anantharaman (2002) observed that most of the items in SERVQUAL focus on human interaction in the service delivery and the rest of the tangible facets of the service. They added that the instrument failed to address the systemisation of a service. They therefore modified the determinants into five factors: core service product, human element of service delivery, systematisation of service delivery (non-human element), tangibles and social responsibility. Using the grey system theory, Dabholkar (2015) suggest that service quality is a different concept from customer satisfaction. The researchers regrouped the 10 factors in Parasuraman et al. (1985) formulation into two; technical qualities and functional qualities. While the grey system was preferred by Jones and Haven (2005), literature points at the prominence of Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). Kang and James (2004) proposed a five factor model comprising functional quality, technical quality, image, overall service quality and customer satisfaction. They employed SEM in confirming the significance of the proposed five factor structure. The researchers demonstrated that functional and technical qualities influence the service quality perception. However that influence is moderated by the service provider's image. They also proved that the effect of functional quality on image was larger than the effect of technical quality.

3.3 Service Quality measurement in the tourism industry

3.3.1 Quality in tourism

Tourism is a highly competitive industry, and tourism enterprise sector can no longer compete on the basis of cost alone. Quality is, therefore, a key element for the competitiveness of the tourism industry. It is also important for the sustainable tourism development of the industry and for creating and improving jobs. Therefore, promoting quality in tourism and tourist products is a priority in different tourism activities.

However, the main reasons behind the complexity of measuring quality in tourism could be summarised as follows (OECD and WTO 2001):

- First there is the continuation of significant growth in tourism demand and the volume of tourism in tourist destinations, along with diverging developments in the various types of tourism. An appropriate response to these changes may be found only through the emergence of new types of tourism and control mass tourism for the sake of quality.

- The lack of skilled manpower for certain jobs, mainly because of the working conditions that may not encourage creativity and innovation; the development of transport and its effect on flows, service quality, sustainable development and environmental protection; and the adoption and incorporation of new information and communication technologies as a factor of competitiveness.

- Tourism is a service sector with a particularly complex product which depends on an extremely fragmented supply. Each link in the tourism value chain (travel agencies, tour operators, carriers, hoteliers, restaurateurs, etc.) offers one element in the overall product. Together, these components determine tourists' experiences and their appreciation of the quality of the service. The tourist destination is the main place of consumption of tourist services and, therefore, the location and place of activity of tourist businesses. Tourists identify the product with both the businesses providing a service and the destination visited.

- For a large number of people tourism activities do not meet a vital need. Tourist behaviour is particularly volatile and subject to psychological and social influences, personal sensitivities and short-term reactions. If the image of just one link in the chain is affected, it is the whole tourism value chain that suffers the consequences. The cholera

outbreak and the various terrorist attacks / political crisis that have affected some African countries in the recent past have already shown the negative effect of a current event on the image of a tourist destination or region, to the immediate detriment of the tourism industry.

- The tourism product is extremely diverse. Natural and cultural resources, tourist facilities, the communications infrastructure, accommodation and restaurants are the basic resources of a tourist destination. The combination of local tourism resources and the services offered determines the type of tourism to which a destination belongs, such as coastal or mountain tourism, sport or religious tourism, thermal or gastronomic tourism and, of course, business tourism.

- In addition, vertical interdependence between tourism businesses is more pronounced than in most other sectors of the economy. Such interdependence, which also exists at world level, results in what are sometimes complex structures and trends in commercial relations. Apart from businesses and their representative organisations, destinations, with their different activities, combining public and private interests, are important stakeholders.

- Because of its diversity and fragmented nature, the tourism sector has no clear identity. This may, in part, explain why tourism has featured little at a political level, compared with its economic and social importance.

- The diversity of the business environment and the public and private stakeholders involved in tourism, its effect on many other economic activities, its very wide social and emotional dimension and the geographically dispersed and very variable consumption of the product mean that tourism is of a very pronounced horizontal nature. A large number, if not the majority, of political fields may directly affect it considerably, such as those for enterprise, transport and regional development. The annual report on community measures affecting tourism, which the commission drew up at the same time as this communication, provides detailed information on this subject.

For tourism organisation, to deal with these challenges successfully and to be able to measure quality in tourism, it is necessary to take the following factors into consideration when deciding tourism quality strategy:

- The fundamental role of information, knowledge and its dissemination;

- The need for competent human resources motivated by medium and long-term prospects;

- The integration of environmental policy and the promotion of sustainable tourism;

- Recognition of the need for European harmonisation of the concept of quality of tourism services and infrastructures, and its assessment and monitoring;

- The need to speed up the integration of information society tools and services in all tourism activities and businesses, in particular SMEs;

- The need for a network of the stakeholders involved and a generalised partnership, particularly between those in the field to ensure implementation of all the recommendations; and overall, the quality and satisfaction levels are average. Education for managers and service personnel is the main proposal for the improvement in service quality and consumer satisfaction.

3.3.2 Tourism quality requirements

According to the World Tourism Organisation program, quality in tourism could be defined as the result of a process which implies the satisfaction of all the legitimate product and service needs, requirements and expectations of the consumer, at an acceptable price, in conformity with the underlying quality determinants such as safety and security, hygiene, accessibility, transparency, authenticity and harmony of the tourism activity concerned with its human and natural environment.

This definition could be summarised in what is called consumer value equation (Fitzsimmons and Fitzsimmons, 2001):

$$\text{Value} = \frac{(\text{Results produced for the customer} + \text{Process quality})}{(\text{Price to the customer} + \text{Costs of acquiring the services})}$$

The analysis of each term used in this definition suggests concrete actions which can be evaluated from the perspective of quality criteria (WTO, 2016):

- "Result" implies that quality is attained and perceived at a given time.

It cannot be in place without harmonious and active engagement of all the factors intervening in tourism experience. The "result" can be measured by consumer satisfaction as well as by social, environmental and economic effects of the tourism activity concerned.

- "Process" means that a single undertaking is not sufficient to attain quality.

Work towards quality always has to be in place, it cannot discontinue because of the temporarily attained quality result. It also implies a seamless or flawless process in which it is possible to identify and do away with the constrain of a supply which spoil the tourism product and are responsible for direct and indirect losses to the company or destination. Also it is necessary to note that because the customer is a participant in the service delivery, improvement in process quality must be acceptable to customers.

- "Satisfaction" introduces the elements of subjectivity in quality perception.

According to their characteristics, customers have different requirements and expectations. Informed quality-driven marketing caters to these characteristics and attempts to identify consumers according to the different types and levels of perceived quality. This should be achieved with suitable prices levels.

- "Legitimate" brings into the analysis the elements of rights and entitlement.

Consumers cannot expect to receive more than what they remunerate by payment or what has been determined by social and environmental limits. The role of tourism planners and entrepreneurs is to relate quality types and levels to remuneration and external limitations, taking into consideration the private and social costs relating to providing or offering tourism services.

- The notion of "needs" follows on the concern for legitimacy and looks for satisfying people's basic and vital needs which should never be overlooked while bringing into tourism projects and plans the other aspects with a view to introducing attractions, strengthening experiences, etc. The needs are primarily related to the underlying quality determinants, although over time the expectations related to the type and volume of "basic needs" change and usually increase. Basic needs of the past are not exactly the basic needs of today.

- The notion of "product requirements" emphasises the need to relate a single service and facility use to the whole product and the total tourism experience.

One good quality service is not sufficient to give rise to tourism product quality perception, although an excellent service may positively impress the consumer to make him or her close their eyes to shortcomings and defects experienced elsewhere in the tourism product.

- The term "service requirements" relates quality to its human, personal and personnel dimensions which are often intangible and apparently difficult to measure, evaluate and quantify in contrast with the physical attributes of tourism facilities which are used primarily in facility classifications or grading. However, certain service elements are quantifiable, for example, waiting time, frequency of service (e.g. cleaning), the number and type of services included in the basic price, etc.

- The term "expectations" relates to the requirement of positive communication and perception of the product characteristics to the potential consumer. There should be no negative surprises at the time of delivery of a service or supply of a product, the consumer must receive what has been promised (or even more). Expectations should also be legitimate, there are limits to expectations, some expectations cannot be fulfilled even at a very high price which can be offered.

- The term "consumer" relates to individual (end) consumers, who may include groups of people (e.g. a family), corporate consumers (e.g. a company purchasing an incentive trip) and commercial intermediaries (e.g. a tour operator). The latter may request that the product quality be assessed and certified by its own representative or a recognised external third party.

- "Acceptable price" suggests that the client's expectations reflected in the price cannot be attained at any cost, and that "positive surprises" should not be too generous, otherwise this may imply excessive allocation of resources which do not receive adequate remuneration. If quality is guaranteed and the product is exceptional, there should be no expectation that it should be sold cheap.

- "The underlying quality determinants" suggest that there should be common, irrevocable criteria of quality which are vital for the consumer independently of category or class of the product, establishment, facility or service sophistication. They establish the minimum level of consumer protection under which quality, or total quality, is impossible to achieve, or when failing to meet any of such determinants will significantly reduce the quality of tourism experience.

3.3.3 Value creation management

The creation of value is managed through what is called supply chain or value chain (Dumond, 2000), which refers to a series of integrated, dependent processes and activities

within/outside a tourism business enterprise through which value is transferred to the final customers. This new managerial system for managing the value creation processes concentrates on:

- Creating improvements in the tourism product or service that increase the tourist's sense of its worth; or

- Reducing operation costs through the chain.

It is necessary to involve the customer in internal operations by incorporating customer feedback into improving tourism product/service or process quality, placing customers on internal teams or linking them into the company's information system.

Also, involving suppliers in the tourism company's operations is equally essential in value management. These procedures give the tourism enterprise/destination the opportunity to gain a competitive advantage and improve its product/service quality by:

o Responding quickly to customers' needs and requirements with new ideas and technologies;

o Anticipating and tailoring product/service according to what exactly customers' demand characteristics are;

o Personalising the tourism product/service provided.

However, meeting customer expectations is not enough to be a world class organisation. A world class organisation expands on these expectations to the levels that competitors find difficult to meet. Management is proactive in promoting higher standards of performance and identifying new business opportunities by listening to customers. World class service organisation such as Disney, Marriott, and American Airlines define the quality standards by which others are judged.

3.3.4 Quality system management

Quality has become a major interest of public and private tourism business enterprises, according to the tourism market evolution, in terms of both supply of new tourism services and the increasing complexity of tourists' demand. Such a crucial issue requires a comprehensive approach and a more definite integration among all the factors involved in tourism.

Policies improving the quality of tourism services production and delivery should be matched with both the features of the destination and the explicit/implicit customers'

expectation. It is only through this synergy that competition, rising from the value of global supply and its perception and evaluation by clients, can be met and challenged.

An integrated approach to quality management is necessary because so many different elements affect the tourist's perception of a destination (such as transport, accommodation, information, attractions, the environment, etc.). Integrated quality management needs to take into account tourist businesses, tourists' interests, the local population and the environment, and to have a positive impact on all of them.

It is not sufficient to inspect, control, or assure quality in order to achieve customer satisfaction. TQM requires the application of quality management rules and principles to every component and at every level of the organisation. Everyone should be committed to continuous improvement in their part of the operation. Through this participation and commitment, with the use of different tools and techniques that the TQM concept has adopted or developed, quality can be managed effectively. As a result the quality system will be capable to minimise errors, to ensure continuous improvement leading to excellence and to delight the customer (Creech, 1994; Augustyn and Ho, 1998). Recent researchers and experts have proved that the concept of TQM is currently the best possible strategy for building quality management system to achieve or gain competitive advantage through achieving customer satisfaction (Wang, Chen and Chen, 2012; Conti, 2012; Bon and Mustafa, 2013; Oakland, 2014). However, from the view points of relationships between the quality system's subsystems, there are some shortages which include:

- Lack of advanced processes. As a result they are based on the use of basic quality management methods that have been developed at the lowest level of inspection and quality control by setting basic quality objectives and standards depending on basic statistics. In some cases quality assurance instruments techniques have been applied like certificates and rewards.

- Lack of comprehensiveness. Because quality management techniques are applied in a selective manner without taking TQM concepts as a comprehensive philosophy. These quality-management processes have inadequate tools of monitoring and feedback.

- Lack of consistency. Inconsistency results from the incompatibility of subsystems' objectives with the quality objectives of the whole system.

For example, a room of top quality standard as a hotel X' objective, is not in a position to compensate the unfriendly and inhospitable behaviour of the hotel staff. Several small tourism enterprises base their processes on the concept of inspection or quality control, independently of the national or regional quality requirements.

In view of the fact that the great majority of public and private tourism organisations is aware of and interested in quality improvement in tourism, the employment of inappropriate tourism quality systems has been associated with the major source of current quality problems in tourism. These problems are reflected in an increasing number of customers dissatisfied with their total tourism experience.

The lack and incapability of securing an advanced, comprehensive, and consistent quality-management process constitutes the major weakness of tourism quality systems. Shortcomings in the systems' inputs and its relations with the suppliers make it impossible for the quality systems of individual tourism enterprises to close the quality perception gap and quality control gap. None of the existing tourism quality systems is in a position to introduce the required changes that would enable them to conform to the conditions of tourism quality enhancement. Therefore, a new tourism quality system, based on co-operative links among private, public and voluntary organisations and operating within a tourism destination area, has been proposed. The establishment of a total quality tourism consortium, TQTC, within the framework of this system enables quality enhancement inasmuch as the TQTC is in a position to:

- Secure adequate inputs and close the tourism quality perception gap;

- Develop an advanced, comprehensive and consistent quality-management process that converts the inputs into outputs (total quality tourism products);

- Manage effectively the relationships with the external environment and the suppliers in particular with the result of bridging the tourism quality control gap.

The conceptual model of service quality (SERVQUAL), developed by Zeithaml, Parasuraman and Berry (1990), is regarded as an important tool for identifying quality improvement areas within individual service organisations in relation to enhancing customer satisfaction.

The model measures tangible and intangible elements of the service and investigates gaps in the customer-supplier chain to highlight target areas where quality may be improved. These gaps include the gap between:

- Customers' expectations and management's perceptions of customers expectations;

- Management's perceptions of customers' expectations and service quality specifications;

- Service quality specifications and service delivery;

- Service delivery and external communications to customers;

- Customers' expectations and perceived services.

The success of SERVQUAL as a concept depends, however, on circumstances in which a tourism destination area attempts to survive, grow and improve the quality of tourist products or services.

3.3.5 Policies for tourism quality continuous improvements

Quality is the perception by the tourist of the extent to which his expectations are met by his experience of the product. Quality is not to be equated to luxury, and must not be exclusive, but must be available to all tourists, including those who are with special needs. The tourist product should be seen as the destination and process resulting in the tourist's overall experience. The key stakeholders are organisations fulfilling the roles of: policy makers, destination management and quality control; suppliers of tourist sub-products; commercial intermediaries; training suppliers; the guests, and the host population.

The assessment of the contribution of relevant community policies and programs to quality in tourism revealed the following policy areas as particularly relevant to quality development: structural policies; consumer protection; environmental policies; transport and enterprise policies. Of these, the structural funds offered the most potential to directly influence quality improvement in tourism.

There are four priority areas requiring specific efforts, they are:

1- Indicators for the measurement of the quality improvement process. Quality improvement is a cyclical and continuing process, and as such must be measurable. A list of appropriate indicators is regarded as a management tool for use by those who are responsible for the different aspects of quality improvement, e.g. destination management.

2- Benchmarking. Benchmarking of destinations will help to ensure quality improvement and could benefit from common quality indicators. It should be a voluntary exercise, led by the destinations, supported by information-exchange procedures based on networking.

3- Non-financial support for tourism SMEs implementing quality systems. E.g. consultancy, business advice, flora and fauna, etc. should be improved to encourage adoption of a quality approach, this in preference to direct financial aid, which risks distorting local competition.

4- More intensive use of structural funds to improve the quality of tourist products. The structural funds should concentrate resources on creating the framework for tourism business development, rather than supporting individual enterprises or destinations, (e.g. through training, infrastructure improvement, non-financial business support). Tourism authorities should be actively integrated into the implementation and operation of structural fund programs. There is a need for better dissemination of information on the operation of structural funds programs throughout the tourism industry.

3.3.6 Tourism quality standards

The World Tourism Organisation (WTO) has designed in 2003 six standards for tourist product or service that have to be put into consideration when tourism enterprise/destination management is taking decision related to tourism product design and marketing. These standards could be summarised as follows:

1- Safety and security. A tourism product or service cannot represent danger to life, damage to health and other vital interests and integrity of the consumer (even if we talk about "adventure tourism"). Safety and security standards are normally established by law (e.g. by fire prevention regulations) and should be considered as quality standards per se.

2- Hygiene. For example, an accommodation facility just has to be safe and clean, one cannot pretend that such requirements are more important to high-class establishments. Food safety standards (often also established by law) must be met and be common to all types of food outlets, from street vendors to luxury gourmet restaurants to airline catering.

3- Accessibility. This determinant requires that physical, communication and service barriers must be done away with to allow, without discrimination, the use of mainstream

tourism products and services by all people irrespective of their natural and acquired differences, including people with disabilities.

4- Transparency. It is a key element to provide for legitimacy of expectations and consumer protection. It relates to providing and effectively communicating truthful information on the characteristics and coverage of the product and its total price. It includes stating what is covered by the price and what is not in the product on supply.

5- Authenticity. In a commercial world, authenticity is the hardest and most subjective quality determinant to attain. It also has marketing and competition dimensions. Authenticity is culturally determined and one of its results is making the product markedly distinct from other similar products. Authenticity must meet consumer expectations. It diminishes and eventually terminates when the product loses its links with its cultural and natural background. In this sense, a "genuine" ethnic restaurant can never be entirely authentic in a place distinct from its original setting. This does not mean that such an establishment cannot be an attraction and that it cannot be assessed from the viewpoint of quality with respect to production (content and design), marketing, distribution, sale and delivery of the service concerned. A theme park representing other lands and far away cultures is a good example of an initially artificial tourism product which may create an authenticity and a quality image of its own. On the other hand, an authentic product can also develop and adapt to needs and expectations.

6- Harmony. Harmony with the human and natural environment pertains to sustainability which is a medium- and long-term concept. "Maintaining the sustainability of tourism requires managing environmental and socio-economic impacts, establishing environmental indicators and maintaining the quality of the tourism products and tourist markets" (WTO Guide for Local Authorities on Developing Sustainable Tourism, 2003). There can be no sustainability without quality.

Quality should be implemented through a comprehensive system under the condition of consistency and harmony for the quality system components or its subsystems (value chain components).

3.3.7 Tourism service quality measurement

According to the Gap-model, the perceived service quality is "the degree and direction of the discrepancy between consumers' perceptions and expectations" (Parasuraman,

Zeithaml and Berry, 1988, p.17). The introduction of the SERVQUAL model stimulated the search for a general scale and instrument for the measurement of service quality by both scholars and industry practitioners. Robledo (2001) observed that the SERVQUAL model has since been improved on, promulgated and promoted by researchers resulting in new models across the globe. However, Bhat (2012) content that the most widely used and debated tool of measuring service quality remains the SERVQUAL instrument. The concept that underpins all these instruments is that customers' assessment of service quality is a key determinant of customer satisfaction (Robledo, 2001).

In contrast to tangible goods whose quality dimensions are easier to identify and describe, articulation of service quality is challenging. Zeithaml, Bitner and Gremler (2006) identified two schools of thought or paradigms applied in measurement of service quality as the disconfirmation measures and performance only measures. Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1988) formulated the expectation minus performance measure, popularly known as the disconfirmation paradigm. The authors posit that, Quality = Expectation – Perception.

Service quality has been increasingly identified as a key factor in differentiating service products and building a competitive advantage in tourism. The process by which customers evaluate a purchase, thereby determining satisfaction and likelihood of repurchase, is important to all marketers, but especially to services marketers because, unlike their manufacturing counterparts, they have fewer objective measures of quality by which to judge their production (Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry, 1988; Brown and Swartz, 1989). The issue of measuring service quality has received increasing attention in recent years in the tourism and recreation literature (Atilgan, Akinci and Aksoy, 2003; Caro and Garcia, 2007; Erdil and Yildiz, 2011; Välimaa and Niemi, 2012; Babakus and Inhofe, 2015).

Shonk and Chelladurai (2008) demonstrated that service quality expectations can also be used as a segmentation variable in the tourism market. They first used the k-means method to form homogeneous tourist groups in terms of their expectations, and then carried out multiple regression analyses to probe the relationship between customer satisfaction and customer perceptions of the service received. They concluded that the expectations of different groups influence their overall satisfaction - which lends support to expectation-based market segmentation. Devi Juwaheer and Lee Ross (2003) used the

standard SERVQUAL procedure on 39 attributes to measure service quality in the hotel industry in Mauritius. Using factor analysis, t-tests, and ANOVA, they identified nine dimensions in which assurance and reliability emerged as the main determinants of service quality. Gabbie and O'Neill (1997) compared the service-quality performances of two hotels that adopted different total-quality perspectives. The success of the higher scoring hotel was attributed to its commitment to the total-quality programme.

Another application of the SERVQUAL model in the tourism sector was reported by O'Neill and Charters (2000) who studied five tour operators in Australia. Examining descriptive statistics only, the authors claimed that assurance was the most prominent indicator of overall service performance.

Quality in tourism is an important factor and ultimately dictates the success of the tourism business. As Kandampully and Suhartanto (2000) has stressed, quality will be the main driving force as tourism firms strive to meet the competitive challenges of the future.

The World Tourism Organisation (2003) has defined quality in tourism as: the result of a process which implies the satisfaction of all the legitimate product and service needs, requirements and expectations of the consumer, at an acceptable price, in conformity with the underlying quality determinants such as safety and security, hygiene, accessibility, transparency, authenticity and harmony of the tourism activity concerned with its human and natural environment.

The quality of service involved with tourism plays an important role in the process of delivery (Bhat, 2012) and thus is the standard used to assess the effectiveness of a particular leisure service agency, including the tourism service sector (Manhas and Dogra, 2013). Service quality is an intangible, but crucial, area of interest to travel service providers. As described above, the major service evaluation tool is SERVQUAL model, and Parasuraman, Berry and Zeithaml (1991) stated that this model could apply to various service contexts. Many tourism researchers used this model to evaluate the quality of services provided in tourism and affiliated industries (Fick and Ritchie, 1991; Vogt and Fesenmaier, 1995; Childress and Crompton, 1997; Bigne et al., 2003; Shonk and Chelladurai, 2008; Bhat, 2012). For example Bigne et al. (2003) also employed SERVQUAL to test the quality of service received from travel agencies, and they found that it is still a valid and reliable model with which to evaluate the service quality provided by travel agencies.

Although SERVQUAL was designed to measure service quality, it provides only a skeleton and thus has had to be adapted and modified to evaluate specific services (Parasuraman, Berry and Zeiyhaml; 1988; 1991; Backman and Velfkamp, 1995). Mackay and Crompton (1988) proposed a conceptual framework for studying service quality in the recreation and leisure industries – the REQUAL model. In addition, Fakeye and Crompton (1991) stated that SERVQUAL cannot be used to evaluate service quality in the different types of recreation services sectors and suggested the need to develop a new scale to fit tourism or other recreation services sectors. Thus, in 1990, using SERVQUAL as a basis, MacKay and Crompton developed REQUAL, which is used to evaluate the quality of recreational services. In 1995, Backman and Veldkamp reviewed and offered empirical studies; they concluded that these findings from current empirical studies suggest that the new model in the YMCA project, REQUAL, can serve as a template for other researchers to use in their investigation of recreational service quality.

Quality is gaining in importance in all areas of life. In tourism too, guests require "products" where they are guaranteed of getting high-quality, value-for-money services. The further reasons for organised quality in tourism are widely documented: growing competition, lack of willingness to provide a service, growing loss of individuality by standardisation of products.

Measuring service quality has received increasing attention in recent years in the tourism literature (Hudson, Hudson and Miller, 2004). Literature including service quality in the hospitality industry can be categorised into three major groups: human resource related, strategy and management related, and service quality measurement issues. Some examples of service quality articles related to the measurement of service quality using the SERVQUAL or modified instrument to identify the perception of service quality in the hospitality industry (Akbaba, 2006; Ramsaran-Fowdar, 2007; Wilkins, Merrilees and Herington, 2007; Ladhari, 2009; Markovic and Raspor, 2010; Razi, et al., 2012; Tamwatin, Trimetsoontorn and Fongsuwan, 2015; Stefano, et al., 2015). Another group concerns the constructs of service quality measurement combined with those using other techniques. This group includes Yuan and Wu, 2008; Lovelock, Wirtz and Chew, 2009; Chen and Lin, 2012; Mohsin and Lockyer, 2010; Chen, 2013; Gummesson, 2014; Borkar and Koranne, 2014; Martín, Mendoza and Roman, 2014; Kam, Sha and ChaoHua, 2015; Brochado, et al., 2015; .

The conceptualisation and measurement of service quality perceptions have been the most debated topics in the services marketing literature to date. This debate continues today, as is marked from the on-going and largely failed attempts either to mix the SERVQUAL/SERVPERF conceptualisation into new industries (Bayraktaroglu and Atrek, 2010; Al Khattab and Aldehayyat, 2011; Wu and Cheng, 2013; Tripathi and Dave, 2014; Attallah, 2015) or to repeat its conceptual structure (Salazar, Costa and Rita, 2010; Berezina, et al., 2012; Wong, Wu and Cheng, 2014; Uddin, 2015). Indeed, perceived service quality has proved to be a difficult concept to understanding. A call for research that specifically examines the "dimensionality" of the service quality construct (Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry, 1994) has yet to be successfully addressed.

Given the importance of customers' perceptions of quality in a service context, it is no surprise that numerous studies have been devoted to its measurement (Ladhari, 2008). Examples of service quality models include the Nordic model (Grönroos, 1984; 2007); SERVPERF (Cronin and Taylor, 1992); and SERVQUAL (Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry, 1988). SERVQUAL is probably the most commonly used model applied and examined across a variety of tourism and leisure contexts (Bigne, et al., 2003). It is generally accepted today that service quality is a multi-dimensional construct (this assumption will be tested in the current study through exploratory factor analysis). The SERVQUAL model consists of 22 items on service attributes developed by Parasuraman et al. (1988) which are grouped along the five dimensions of tangibility, reliability, assurance, responsiveness, and empathy to measure customers' expectations (E) and perceptions (P). Four or five numbered items are used to measure each dimension. The SERVQUAL was a questionnaire that examined customers' perceived service quality by measuring customer expectation in the first portion, and their perceived service performance in the second portion (Narangajavana, 2007). However, despite its growing popularity and widespread application, SERVQUAL has been subjected to a number of criticisms Buttle (1996). Additionally, in spite of the fact that the SERVQUAL model might be an excellent instrument for measuring service quality, several researchers comment on the SERVQUAL model, indicating that there are some shortcomings and defects associated with SERVQUAL. The SERVQUAL model was criticised for its predictive power, and length. Hoffman, et al. (2006) argued about the length of the SERVQUAL questionnaire because it consists of 44 questions to measure customer

expectations and perceptions. This may result in respondent fatigue. Cronin and Taylor (1992) and Brady, Cronin, and Brand (2002) preferred the use of only perception of service performance to measure service quality (Narangajavana, 2007). Tao (2011) mentioned the critique about the predictive power of the SERVQUAL (measuring both expectation and perception): that its ability to predict customer purchase intention was less than the modified instrument that measured only the perception of service performance. Service quality required customer satisfaction as a mediating variable that affected purchase intention. Cronin and Taylor (1992) stated, "service quality is an antecedent of consumer satisfaction and that consumer satisfaction exerts a stronger influence on purchase intentions than does service quality". They suggested for managerial purpose the customer satisfaction program should be more emphasised than strategies that focused exclusively on service quality (Narangajavana, 2007). Concerning the measurement of expectations, Bhat (2012) stress that the timing of expectation measurements is of crucial importance. In SERVQUAL, respondents must rate their expectations and perceptions of a particular service on the same scale for each of 22 items. Moreover, respondents are often interviewed only once and questioned to rate both their expectations and perceptions on one occasion. If respondents are using these retrospective expectations in their post-purchase evaluations, the initially measured expectations are disputable by biased experience of the respondents (Markovic and Raspor, 2010). These above-mentioned criticisms and other criticisms led Cronin and Taylor (1992; 1994) to conclude that it is much better to use questions about performance (perception) and delete all the questions on expectations. That is the essence of their SERVPERF model. In fact, the SERVPERF model is based on the perception items in SERVQUAL. One of the arguments is that the predictive validity of using only the perceptions component is higher than in using the difference (perception-expectation) scores (Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry, 1994; Välimaa and Niemi, 2012). It has also been argued that the performance-only measure proposed by Cronin and Taylor (1994), the SERVPERF, explains more variance in an overall measure of service quality than SERVQUAL instrument (Jain and Gupta, 2004). Since 1990's there have been many literatures on the service quality, especially on the factors which affect customer satisfaction, loyalty, and behaviour intention in various industries and developing recommendations to increase service performance (Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry,

1988; Cronin and Taylor, 1992; Asubonteng, McCleary and Swan, 1996; Santos, 2003; Kotler and Keller, 2006; Abd-El-Salam, Shawky and El-Nahas, 2013). There has also been studies done on the airline industry (Han, et al., 2012; Ford, Paparoidamis and Chumpitaz, 2015), hotels industry (Ladhari, 2009; Razi, et al., 2012; Borkar and Koranne, 2014; Stefano, et al., 2015), and banking services (Ladhari, Ladhari and Morales, 2011; Dabholkar, 2015). The empirical research of Cronin and Taylor (1992) suggested that measuring service quality from only the perceptions of the service experience. For more consistent results of the analysis of a structural model, they recommended using SERVPERF. The five dimensions of SERVQUAL scale (Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry, 1988) include the physical facilities, equipment and the appearance of the staff (Tangibles); the dependability and accuracy of the service provider (Reliability); the ability to know and willingness to cater to customer needs (Responsiveness); the ability of staff to instill confidence and trust in the company (Assurance); and finally, the ability of the staff in providing a caring service to customers (Empathy). Instead of measuring both customer expectations and perceptions as in the SERVQUAL, the SERVPERF was operationalised by only one part of the perceived performance. It did not assess the gap scores between expectation and perception as the expectation does not exist in the SERVPERF. Therefore, by excluding the measurement of customer expectation, a total of only 22 items remained in the new measure. Cronin and Taylor (1992) concluded that the SERVPERF was a superior service quality measurement in comparison to the SERVQUAL. In addition, the results demonstrated that the new measure had more predictive power on the overall service quality judgment than the original instrument (Narangajavana, 2007). Moreover, while it seems logical that identifying the gaps is the best way to define quality, identify possible problems and predict loyalty, there have been some researchers (e.g. Cronin and Taylor, 1992; Shahin and Samea, 2010; Renganathan, 2011; Jain, 2015), who questioned the gap model, suggesting that measuring perceptions alone might be a better indicator of service quality, than measuring the differences between expectations and perceptions (Zeithaml, Berry and Parasuraman, 1996; Robledo, 2001). From a methodological point of view, it is not always easy to adopt the gap approach, since in a real life setting it requires to collect data twice (before and after using the service) from the same customers and compare their answers. In the same vein, the study conducted by Lee, Lee and Yoo (2000) showed that performance only

(SERVPERF) explains more variance in overall service quality than does the difference between expectation and performance (SERVQUAL). Additionally, the Jain and Gupta (2004) research supports the above assumption. It makes a comparative assessment of the SERVQUAL and the SERVPERF scales in the Indian context in terms of their validity, ability to explain variance in the overall service quality. It also checks their diagnostic ability to provide insights for managerial interventions in case of quality shortfalls. In the same context, Cronin and Taylor (1994) defended that the SERVPERF also provides practical values to managers. They supposed that the performance-based measure of service quality could offer a longitudinal index of the service quality perceptions, relative to time and customer subgroups. Their final thoughts did not commit them to be supportive to the SERVQUAL, yet remained confident of their SERVPERF.

Different from SERVQUAL, the SERVPERF model collects opinions on service quality based on the perceptions of the tourists after experiencing or using the services or products. A perception study is based on the argument that tourist satisfaction is a consequence of service quality (Shing, Koh and Nathan, 2012). This means that tourist satisfaction can be explained by the positive perception a visitor gains as a result of his or her experience after using a service or product (Lee, 2009). The perception data are collected at the end of a trip (Jin and Pearce, 2011; Garavaglia, et al., 2012; Srivastava, Ali and Kaushal, 2015). Therefore, the SERVPERF model is said to consider performance attributes of Parasuraman's SERVQUAL model. According to Rajesh (2013) in cases where technical measurements of the services or products received by the tourists is difficult to obtain, tourist perception can serve as a valuable tool to assess the quality of services or products. A perception study (SERVPERF) is argued to be relatively easy to conduct , as opposed to a service gap study (SERVQUAL) that involves data collection before the tourists leave for their trips (tourist expectation) and after the tourists complete the trips (tourist perception) (Shing, Koh and Nathan, 2012) . Unlike the SERVQUAL model, which faced much criticism because of its use of expectations in measuring service quality, the SERVPERF model is argued to be capable of explaining higher variances (Cronin and Taylor, 1992) and yielding better results (Asubonteng, McCleary and Swan, 1996; Jain and Gupta, 2004)

Table 3.1: Examples of application of the SEVPERF scale in leisure, tourism and hospitality

Lee, Lee and Yoo (2000)	Entertainment park	Modified SERVQUAL scale and SERVPERF (15 items)
Soliman and Alzaid (2002)	Rihayds hotels	SERVQUAL scale and SERVPERF
Johns, Avci and Karatepe (2004)	Travel Agents Northern Cyprus	SERVQUAL scale and SERVPERF
Hudson, Hudson and Miller (2004)	Tour Operating Sector	SERVQUAL scale and SERVPERF
Qin and Prybutok (2008)	Fast-Food Restaurants Modified	SERVPERF scale (21 items)
Mey and Mohamed (2010)	Museum in Malaysia	Modified SERVPERF scale (35items)
Al Khattab and Aldehayyat (2011)	Jordanian Hotels	SERVPERF model
Abdullah, Jan and Manaf (2012)	Airline industry of Malaysia	SERVPERF model
Bhat and Qadir (2013)	Kashmir tourism destination	SERVPERF model
Leong, et al. (2015)	Airline industry	SERVPERF model

Source: Literature review, 2015.

3.4 Measuring Customer Satisfaction in the tourism industry

3.4.1 Definition

Customer satisfaction has always been considered an essential objective in all market sectors, because it is assumed that satisfied customers would repurchase the product/service and are more likely to develop product loyalty. Customer satisfaction is determined by overall feelings or attitudes a person has about a product after it has been purchased (Radojevic, Stanisic and Stanic, 2015). It is often found to be at the heart of firms' marketing activities (Lau and Ahmad, 2015), because it helps them achieving their desired strategic objectives. A higher level of consumer satisfaction can increase customer loyalty (So, et al., 2014; Kim, Vogt and Knutson, 2015; Parvez and Akbar, 2015; Caruana, Ramasashan, Krentler, 2015), reduce price elasticity (Aligholi, Heydari

and Shahbazi, 2014; Kaura, et al., 2015), lower transaction costs (Yang and Peterson, 2004; Blut, et al., 2015), improve the capacity of attracting new customers (Eisingerich, Auh and Merlo, 2014), help developing a strong reputation in the marketplace (Walsh, et al., 2009; Caruana, Ramasashan and Krentler, 2015; Sengupta, Balaji and Krishnan, 2015) and have a direct impact on the customer retention (Gustafsson, Johnson and Roos, 2005; Sun, Wilcox and Zhu, 2014; Ennew, Binks and Chiplin, 2015). Thus, customer satisfaction is considered as an essential indicator of a company's overall performance.

The core concepts within the research stream of customer satisfaction are assumed by the "service quality" (Zhao, et al., 2012) and the "value of the product/service", which in turn depends on the price paid for it (Morgeson III, et al., 2011). The higher is the quality in relation to the price paid, the greater is the value perceived by consumers (Flint, Blocker and Boutin, 2011; Razi, et al., 2012; Karjaluoto, et al., 2015). Furthermore, it is important to underline that customer satisfaction is a post consumption evaluation that disappoints, meets or exceeds expectations and is based on the overall experience (Srivastava and Kaul, 2014). Expectations are defined as the individual's beliefs about how a product is likely to perform in the future (Chaiprasit, et al., 2011). The direct effect of expectations can be explained by the Assimilation Theory (Sherif and Hovland, 1961): individuals suffer a psychological conflict when they perceive discrepancies between performance and prior beliefs. Subsequently, consumers tend to adjust perception to their expectations in order to minimise or remove that tension (Abd-El-Salam, et al., 2013). Thus, the assimilation effect can be described as a tendency to process new consumption experiences in terms of existing beliefs. Under these circumstances, satisfaction will be led by expectations (Flint, Blocker and Boutin, 2011). In this perspective, customer satisfaction is defined by customer's post-purchase assessment of service delivered and comparison of customer's expectations and the actual service experience (Del Bosque, San and Collado, 2006). It is important to underline that in the social network era, this ex post stage can also take place in real time. Indeed, social networks allow the customers to post comments about the experienced service/product both in a post consumption phase and in real time. The satisfaction, being an attitudinal measure (Grissemann Stockburger-Sauer, 2012) and not a temporal one, has not a precise moment in which it can be expressed by the customer. However, these new tools make the process extremely fast, becoming by far more influential for firms' management.

Customer satisfaction is often defined in the marketing literature as a customer's overall evaluation of his or her purchase and consumption experience of a good or service (Flint, Blocker and Boutin, 2011); it is critically important because it reflects subjective customer evaluations, an emotional response associated with the consumption experience (Grewal, Levy and Kumar, 2009). Similarly, Oliver and Swan (1989) established that emotions deriving from evaluations will determine the individual's overall response in the consumption process. This cognitive-affective approach is of great value for application in this study since emotional responses are essential components of the destination experiences (Bigné, Andreu and Gnoth, 2005).

The importance of emotions in the consumer behavior models has increased significantly during the last few years (Mazaheri, Richard and Laroche, 2012). In particular, it should be emphasised that the cognitive system and emotional states play an important role in satisfaction formation. The higher mental processes of understanding and evaluation would be performed by the cognitive system, whereas emotions would be related to the individual's feelings towards the service (Van Dolen, De Ruyter and Lemmink, 2004). Finally, loyalty or commitment with respect to a brand is conceived as the main consequence of satisfaction (Araceli, Ignacio and Jose, 2014). Based on this discussion, it is clear that customer satisfaction depends on the existence of overlapping elements such as the indicators and the ex-ante expectations. This expresses the multifaceted nature of the topic of customer satisfaction.

In recent years, the role of the consumer has changed from a passive purchaser to an active protagonist of the products/service creation (Solomon, et al., 2014). The centrality of the "experience" concept has been reinforced by the technological innovations in the fields of goods purchase and consumption. The consumer wants to be more involved and be one of the main actors in product/service creation.

Concerning this perspective, the experiential approach focuses on the affective and emotional component of the consumption process. The concept of "experience" is strictly connected with the entertainment aspect and implies the consumer participation and interaction during the product/service creation. Building an experience means bring the product/service to life and underline its identity through the sensorial involvement of the consumer (Schmitt and Zarantonello, 2013). Pine and Gilmore (2011) define the

experience as the main subject of exchange with the consumer: it can be considered as a new type of supply, along with tangible products and intangible services.

The existing literature demonstrates that customer satisfaction can depend on a series of elements that belong to the subjective sphere of the customer and to the objective quality of the product/service experienced. Some works concentrate their attention on the individual components influencing the satisfaction (customer perspective), while others focus on the intrinsic features of the product/service and on the way through which it is delivered (firm perspective). Hence, customer satisfaction is the result of an overlapping perspective. Actually, it is possible to add another perspective to the already existing two. This is the systemic perspective that is verified when it is dealt with complex products such as the tourist product one.

3.4.2 Customer satisfaction in tourism

In the tourism context the concept of tourist satisfaction is particularly relevant as well as difficult to deal with as the tourist product is "complex" by definition (Damiannah, et al., 2014). Furthermore, due to the global competition destinations and, more precisely, Destination Management Organisations (DMOs) are facing the competition at global level. In this scenario destination competitiveness acquires a strategic role in order to determine the actual and future success of destination itself. According to Ayikoru (2015) some attributes can contribute to the real destination competitiveness. These attributes refer to the variables that influence the satisfaction or dissatisfaction of tourists during their vacation. This is the reason why this section analyses the issue of tourist satisfaction. Indeed, it can be easily noticed that the contemporary tourist wants to live a unique experience and is not interested anymore in purchasing a standardised product/service. In order to meet the new needs of the demand, tourist destinations must give top priority to the achievement of tourist satisfaction.

The literature concerning this subject is limited due to the several aspects defining this issue and the consequent lack of a holistic perspective. This holistic vision should include the cognitive, affective and systemic constructs of tourist satisfaction and the attributes that characterise the destination (Yuksel, Yuksel and Bilim, 2010). In other words, tourist satisfaction has to be analysed according to an overlapping perspective that contemplates

both the demand and the offer side where this latter, in the wider meaning, also includes the systemic perspective.

The importance of the topic of tourist satisfaction is testified by many academic contributions, whose literary production started in the 1960s, and by the increasing attention that practitioners have given to this research issue (Ryan, 1995). Numerous scholars have questioned on what tourist satisfaction depends and, hence, have challenged themselves to the research of those elements that could influence the generation of tourist satisfaction. Within these studies, there is a research stream supporting the vision that the destination image affects the tourist satisfaction (Jamaludin, et al., 2012; Coban, 2012; Aliman, et al., 2014; Ramseook-Munhurrun, Seebaluck and Naidoo, 2015).

Actually, one of the main gaps is that most of works that analyse this bond between destination image and tourist satisfaction do not linger on behavioral consequences of tourists "such as loyalty and positive word-of-mouth" (Veasna, Wu and Huang, 2013) related to the destination. Indeed, "destination image is defined as an attitudinal concept consisting of the sum of beliefs, ideas and impressions that a tourist holds of a destination" (Hosany, Ekinci and Uysal, 2006). The destination image plays a key role for the choice of the destination, for the consecutive evaluation and for the future intentions to return and recommend it (Bigne, Sanchez and Sanchez, 2001; Assaker, Vincenzo and O'Connor, 2011; Chew and Jahari, 2014).

The explosion of contributions that conceive destination image as an antecedent of tourist satisfaction represents a clear gap in literature. This vision, indeed, appears fairly reductive and static since it does not consider that destination image can be influenced by the experience itself (Del Bosque and San Martin, 2008; Smith, et al., 2015). The modification of destination image, hence, can also be conceived as consequence of satisfaction. In the light of these observations, this study is developed on the existence of a clear relationship between destination image and tourist satisfaction.

If tourism literature has mostly focused the attention on tourist satisfaction, this is due to the fact that from it a series of concepts descends such as loyalty (Lee, Jeon and Kim, 2011; Song, et al., 2012) or tourist complaints (Chang, 2014). With reference to the tourism sector, a review of the literature on motivation reveals that people travel because they are ''pushed'' into making travel decisions by internal, psychological forces, and ''pulled'' by the external forces of the destination attributes (Crompton, 1979; Uysal and

Jurowski, 1994; Pearce, 2011; Li, Pearce and Zhou, 2015). Accordingly, satisfaction with travel experiences, based on these push and pull forces, contributes 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 (Oppermann, 2000). Thus, information about tourists' loyalty is important to destination marketers and managers.

The complexity of the theme of tourist satisfaction depends on its richness in terms of contents. The satisfaction, in general, is a latent variable (Chi and Qu, 2008; Song, et al., 2012; Mao and Zhang, 2014) that, in order to be defined needs to consider what are the antecedents determining it as well as the consequences and the relative relationships among the indicators that are the expression of tourist satisfaction.

Literature on this subject measures the tourist satisfaction in different ways. These differences can depend on the use of various methodologies and indicators. Since satisfaction derives from a post-purchase analysis (Yoon and Uysal, 2005; Meng, Liang and Yang, 2011, Han and Yoon, 2015), studies have indicated innumerable measures to evaluate travel experience (Cutler and Carmichael, 2010; Pavesi, Gartner and Denizci-Guillet, 2015). This experience implies an encounter with the service and the relative judgment expressed by tourists after their experience that can determine satisfaction or dissatisfaction. The theme is dealt with the perspectives of overall satisfaction (Chung and Petrick, 2013).

According to a destination management approach (Alegre and Garau, 2010), destination attributes are of fundamental importance for the valuation of the experience. The evaluation is also the result between the attributes and the ex ante tourist's expectation (Correia, Kozak and Ferradeira, 2013). Within this theoretical context, several authors (Ekinci and Hosany, 2006; Usakli and Baloglu, 2011; Chon, 2015) have adopted the concept of destination image; in order to achieve the desired outcomes, the building of a coherent brand image. The way the destination is perceived by actual and potential tourists are considered as the principal factors upon which depends the success of the destination itself (Voase, 2012).

The image could be defined as the "set of values, ideas and impressions a destination is able to stimulate in the minds of the actual and potential tourists" (Corte and Micera, 2007). The peculiarity of this vision focuses on the impressions the destination could and must induce both in the potential tourist (induced marketing level), both in the effective

visitors (organic marketing level). During the transmission process of the positive associations, it is important to avoid stereotypes and be able to create and to manage a unique brand image, specially if the destination has a multiple tourist vocation and deals with a variety of different products/services (Qu, Kim and Im, 2011). The procedure is even more complicated when the destination is characterised by contradictory factors (Ruzzier and De Chernatony, 2013), between which some are able to transmit positive images (such as artistic or natural beauties etc.), some are completely negative (like traffic, criminality, etc.). In addition to this, it is important to underline that the contemporary market is unpredictable and in constant expansion. This makes it difficult to build and coordinate an image able to reach the entire target, constituted by both the loyal and the new customers (Ferns and Walls, 2012; Ekinci, Sirakaya-Turk and Preciado, 2013).

Table 3.2: Items of tourist satisfaction

Item	Literature on tourist satisfaction using these items	6As Model
Easy access through different modes of transportation	Vetter, 1985; Kozak and Rimmington, 1998; Kozak, 2001; Wan and Chan, 2013; Larsen, 2015.	Access
Accommodation	Hui, Wan and Ho, 2007; Smith, 2012; Teigeiro and Diaz, 2014; Law, et al., 2015; Michailidou, Vlachokostas and Moussiopoulos, 2015.	Accommodation
Quality of streets and road-signs	Tasci and Boylu, 2010; Wan and Chan, 2013; Jokela, 2014; Saha, 2014.	Access
Restaurants' quality and diversity	Hui, Wan and Ho, 2007 ; Kandampully, Juwaheer and Hu, 2011; Tripathi and Dave, 2014; Alonso-Almeida, Bremser and Llach, 2015	Amenities
Entertainment	Mikulić and Prebežac, 2011; Wan and Chan, 2013; Hughes, 2013; Divandari, Ekhlassi and Rahmani, 2014; Maneenetr, Tran and Sangsrirueng, 2014; Hudson and Tung, 2015	Amenities/Ancillary services
Price and value	Stevens, 1992; Oh, 2003; Masiero and Nicolau, 2012; Ye, et al., 2014; Forsyth, et al., 2014; Alakoski and Tikkamen, 2015	Access, Attractions, Amenities, Ancillary services, Assemblage, Accommodation
On stage information accessibility	Ortega and Rodriguez, 2007; Hai-yan, 2012; Lam and McKercher, 2013; Llodrà-Riera, et al., 2015	Access
Local transport	Schofield and Thompson, 2007; Albalate and Bel, 2010; Brida, Deidda and Pulina,	Access

	2014; Stanford and Guiver, 2015	
Perceived security	Mansfeld and Pizam, 2006; Tasci and Boylu, 2010; Kovari and Zimanyi, 2011; Hall, Timothy and Duval, 2012; Tarlow, 2014; Amir, Ismail and See, 2015; Baker, 2015; Williams and Balaz, 2015	Access, Attractions, Amenities, Ancillary services, Assemblage, Accommodation
Disabled friendly infrastructures	Burnett and Baker, 2001; Yates, 2007; Arola, Cooper and Cooper, 2011; Sanz, Ferrandis and Ferrer, 2013; Page, Innis and Cutler, 2014; Sanmargaraja and Wee, 2015; Frye, 2015; Edusei, et al., 2015	Access, Attractions, Amenities, Ancillary services, Assemblage, Accommodation
Cleanliness of the city	Merrilees, Miller and Herington, 2009; Kamal, 2012; Schuhmann, 2012; Maunier and Camelis, 2013; Amblee, 2015.	Amenities
Hospitable (local) people	Freire, 2009; Do Valle, 2011; Liu, Shen and Gao, 2015	Amenities
Organization of cultural events	Langen and Garcia, 2009 ; Cuccia and Rizzo, 2011; Hussain, 2012; Alan, et al., 2015; Eizenberg and Cohen, 2015	Amenities/Ancillary services
Activities	Littrell, Paige and Song, 2004; Bowen and Schouten, 2008; Masiero and Nicolau, 2012; Hamilton and Ferreira, 2013; Liang, 2014; Mohamed Shaffril, et al., 2015; Suchet, 2015	Amenities/Ancillary services

Source: Litterature review, 2015

Working on the brand and the image means dealing with the process of connection between induced and organic level: it is important to keep strong the coherence with the reality of the local supply, in order not to cause a "boomerang effect" and a negative word of mouth (Hudson and Ritchie, 2009). In the destination customer satisfaction pyramid it is underlined the centrality of the quality of the tourist products and services truly provided in the destination (Correia, Kozak and Ferradeira, 2013). The organic level marketing, hence, is an essential component of the customer satisfaction and retention (Radojevic, Stanisic and Stanic, 2015).

3.4.3 Tourist satisfaction measurement

Satisfaction is a latent variable that cannot be observed (Jamaludin, et al., 2012). Analysis of satisfaction can only be performed indirectly by employing proxy variables. As a result, the measurement of satisfaction has remained debatable amongst scholars. Several analytical methods of measuring customer satisfaction have been proposed including; SEM using Linear Structured Relationship (LISREL), Partial Least Squares (PLS), factor

analysis using principal component analysis method, non-linear regression model with latent variables, monotonic regression model and logistic regression.

The original interest in customer satisfaction research was on the customer's experience with a product episode or service encounter (Oliver and Swan, 1989). More recent studies have focused on cumulative satisfaction, where satisfaction is defined as customer's overall experience to date with a product or service provider. This approach to satisfaction provides a more direct and comprehensive measure of a customer's consumption utility, subsequent behaviors and economic performance (Zeithaml, Bitner and Gremler, 2006). The European Customer Satisfaction Index (ECSI) was built upon a cumulative view of satisfaction. The ECSI was developed by European organisation for quality and European foundation for quality management, was first introduced in 1999 across 11 European countries (Kristensen, Martensen and Gronholdt, 2000). The ECSI model is a structural model based on the assumptions that customer satisfaction is caused by some factors such as Perceived Quality (PQ), Perceived Value (PV), expectations of customers, and image of a firm. These factors are the presumed antecedents of overall customer satisfaction. The model also estimates the results when a customer is satisfied or not. Each factor in the ECSI model is a latent construct which is operationalised by multiple indicators (Johnson, et al., 2001).

Swedish Customer Satisfaction Barometer (SCSB), reported in 1989 by Fornell (1992) was the first national Customer Satisfaction Index (CSI). It was applied to 130 companies from 32 Swedish industries. In 1992, the German customer barometer was introduced. The study was conducted for 52 industry sectors in Germany (Meyer and Dornach, 1996). The original SCSB model contained two primary antecedents of satisfaction perceived performance and customer expectations. These two antecedents were expected to have a positive effect on satisfaction.

The American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) was developed in 1993. Fornell et al. (1996) observed that the ACSI survey was conducted for seven main economic sectors, 35 industries, and more than 200 companies with revenues totaling nearly 40 percent of the US Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The ACSI model build upon the original SCSB model specifications adapted in the distinct characteristics of the US economy. The main differences between the original SCSB model and ACSI model was the addition of a PQ component, as distinct from PV, and the addition of measures for customer expectations.

The ACSI model predicts that as both PV and PQ increase, customer satisfaction should also increase (Deng, Yeh and Sung, 2013). There are two fundamental differences between the ACSI and ECSI models. First, the ECSI model does not include the complaint behavior construct as a consequence of satisfaction. Second, the ECSI model in destinations company image as a latent variable in the model. In the ECSI model, company image is expected to have a direct effect on customer expectations, satisfaction and loyalty (Askariazad and Babakhani, 2015).

The first national model, Turkish Customer Satisfaction Index (TCSI), was reported as a pilot study in the fourth quarter of 2005 by Turkish Quality Association (Kal-Der) and KA Research Limited. Since, the measurement model of TCSI is same as ACSI model, it included customer expectations, PQ, PV, customer satisfaction, customer loyalty and customer complaints constructs. Aydin and Ozer (2005) developed and tested a new model for Turkish Global System for Mobile (GSM) users. The structural model they used included some new constructs, such as switching cost, trust, and complaint handling. They collected the data from 1,662 GSM users in four Turkish cities using a face-to-face survey. In their study, the model was estimated using maximum likelihood based covariance structure analysis method namely LISREL. Lonial et al. (2010) concluded that the main influencers of customer satisfaction in the Turkish CSI were, image, perceived quality, perceived value respectively.

The Rasch Model (RM) has been endorsed by De Battisti, Nicolini and Salini (2010) as particularly appropriate when analysing quality and satisfaction levels together. The RM was first proposed in the 1960s to evaluate ability tests by Rasch (1960). This technique allows for the identification of a set of quantitative measures that are invariable and independent of any subjective and objective traits. The Rasch analysis supplied two sets of coefficients which allowed for the simultaneous evaluation of the subjective feature related to the degree of satisfaction and the objective feature related to quality. Instead of the output being a synthetic measurement of the two aspects, the RM provides a score assigned to each individual and each item along a continuum. Through these scores it is then possible to carry out descriptive analyses on the sample/population according to the judgments expressed. These tests were based on a set of items and the assessment of a test subject's ability depended on two factors: relative ability and the item's intrinsic difficulty. In recent years RM model has been employed in the evaluation of services

(Boone, Staver and Yale, 2014); in this context the two factors become the subject's (the customer) satisfaction and the item's quality.

Smith, Bolton and Wagner (1999) presented the Kano's model of customer satisfaction with service encounter involving service failure and recovery. Using a set of hypotheses, the study described the effects of service recovery efforts in various failure contexts on customers' perceptions of justice and judgments of satisfaction. The model provided a framework for considering how service failure context (type and magnitude) and service recovery attributes (compensation, response speed, apology, initiation) influenced customer evaluations through disconfirmation and perceived justice, thereby influencing satisfaction with the service failure/recovery encounter.

A service failure/recovery encounter can be viewed as an exchange in which the customer experiences a loss due to the failure and the organisation attempts to provide a gain, in the form of a recovery effort, to make up for the customer's loss. This notion is adapted from social exchange and equity theories (Hatfield, et al., 1978). Service failure/recovery encounters can be considered mixed exchanges with both utilitarian and symbolic dimensions. Utilitarian exchange involves economic resources, such as money, goods, or time, whereas symbolic exchange involves psychological or social resources, such as status, esteem, or empathy (Bagozzi, 1975). A service failure/recovery encounter is viewed as a series of events in which a service failure triggers a procedure that generates economic and social interaction between the customer and the organisation, through which an outcome is allocated to the customer.

Kano's model, demonstrates that for both restaurants and hotels, positive perceptions of distributive, procedural, and interactional justice significantly enhance customer satisfaction. As expected, disconfirmation also has a positive and complementary influence on satisfaction. The model also suggests that, in managing relationships with customers, organisations should consider perceptions of justice, especially after service failures occur (Smith, Bolton and Wagner, 1999). In both service contexts, customers are less satisfied after a process failure than after an outcome failure. This implies that, in face-to-face service encounters, process failures (such as inattentive service), which are directly attributable to the behavior of frontline employees, may detract more from satisfaction than outcome failures (such as unavailable service), which result from behind-the scenes events. In the tourism context, both compensation and a speedy

response had a greater incremental impact on customers' justice evaluations when the failure was less severe. The added value of these recovery resources was reduced as the tourist's loss gets larger (the magnitude of the failure increases). Kano's model provides insight into how customers value recovery efforts, which can help organisations gauge whether they are unnecessarily overcompensating customers.

3.5 Destination image constructs

Destination image plays an important role in tourist behaviour during the various moments which make up a tourist's experience; in the decision-making process of choosing a destination (a priori); in the process of comparing expectations with experience, which precedes the state of satisfaction and perceived quality (in loco); and in the process of revisiting, spreading word of mouth and recommending the destination to friends and family (a posteriori) (Prayag and Ryan, 2012).

3.5.1 Definition

Destination image has been one of the key areas of tourism research for more than four decades (Kim and Chen, 2015). Image is defined as "the people feelings of anything that they aware" (Boulding, 1956). Image is further defined as "the sum of beliefs, impressions, ideas and perceptions that people hold of objects, behaviors and events" (Crompton, 1979); the image is "the sum of beliefs, attitudes, impressions that a person or group has of an object and impressions may be true or false, real or imagined" (Barich and Kotler, 1991); "an internalised, conceptualised and personalised understanding of what one knows" (Ahmed, 1996).

Destination image is "an expression of knowledge, impressions, prejudices, imaginations and emotional thoughts an individual has of a specific place" (Lawson and Baud Bovy, 1977); "the overall perception of the destination that is formed by processing information from various sources over time" (Assael, 1984); "Ideas or perceptions held individually or collectively about a destination by people" (Embacher and Buttle, 1989); "the perception of groups of people" (Jenkins, 1999); "Perceptions or impressions of a destination held by tourists with respect to the expected benefit or consumption values" (Tapachai and Waryszak, 2000); "Totality of impressions, beliefs, ideas, expectations, and feelings accumulated towards a place over time by an individual or group of people"

(Kim and Richardson, 2003). "An interactive system of thoughts, opinions, feelings, visualisations, and intentions toward a destination" (Tasci and Gartner, 2007).

3.5.2 Destination Image dimensions

Although the construct has been studied extensively since the early 1970s (Stepchenkova and Mills, 2010), there is still a lack of empirical validation of the relationship between the dimensions of destination image. In the conceptual article entitled Image Formation Process, published in the Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing (1994), Gartner proposes the theory that three components – cognitive, affective and conative – make up a hierarchical causal model.

In accordance with Gartner´s model (1993), the literature points to the existence of three main dimensions of destination image – cognitive, affective and conative (Dann, 1996; Pike and Ryan, 2004; Konecnik and Gartner, 2007; Tasci and Gartner, 2007; Stepchenkova and Mills, 2010; Qu, Kim and Im, 2011; Agapito, Oom do Valle and Da Costa Mendes, 2013; Zhang, et al., 2014; Kim and Chen, 2015). This model is in line with Boulding's research (1956) which states that an image comprises what one knows and thinks about an object (cognitive), how one feels about it (affective) and how one acts using this information (conative). Bridging the concept of image with holiday destinations, the cognitive (intellectual/perceptual) component relates to the individual's beliefs and knowledge about the attributes of the destination, while the affective component refers to the evaluation stage, concerning the feelings that the individual associates with the place of visit (Baloglu and Brinberg, 1997; Baloglu and McCleary, 1999; Beerli and Martin, 2004; San Martín and Del Bosque, 2008; Sahin and Baloglu, 2011; Papadimitriou, Apostolopoulou and Kaplanidou, 2013; Papadimitriou, Kaplanidou and Apostolopoulou, 2015). Finally, the conative component comprises action, i.e., the individual's actual conduct or intention to revisit and recommend the destination to others (Bigne, Sanchez and Sanchez, 2001; Pike and Ryan, 2004; Konecnik and Gartner, 2007; Agapito, Oom do Valle and Da Costa Mendes, 2013; Choi and Cai, 2015), or even to spread positive word of mouth (Baker and Crompton, 2000) — that is, besides recommendation, if individuals have the intention to say positive things about the destination. In this context, researchers have related this component to loyalty (Oppermann, 2000; Del Bosque and San Martin, 2008; Chi and Qu, 2008; Coban, 2012;

Zhang, et al., 2014; Ramseook-Munhurrun, Seebaluck and Naidoo, 2015). Furthermore, the three dimensions contribute to the formation of a global image that is considered to be greater than the sum of its parts, and that is used by the consumer to simplify the task of decision-making (Beerli and Martin, 2004; Agapito, Oom do Valle and Da Costa Mendes, 2013). Nevertheless, the dimensions of destination image can be study separately in order to understand the complexity of the whole (Lee and Xie, 2011).

Both affective and cognition are mental responses to environmental stimuli, which form a dynamic and interactive system (Tasci and Gartner, 2007). Following on from Gartner's theoretical model, Baloglu and McCleary (1999) provide a review of the research and empirical evidence which shows that the cognitive and affective elements are interrelated, and that affect is largely dependent on cognition. Other studies support these findings (Stern and Krakover, 1993; Beerli and Martin, 2004; Li, et al., 2010). Therefore, the literature shows that the evaluative component of the destination image (affective dimension) arises from its attributes (cognitive dimension).

Furthermore, researchers recognise that there is an association between destination image and the way in which travellers act towards a destination on the basis of cognition and affect (Bigne, Sanchez and Sanchez, 2001; Konecnik and Gartner, 2007; Stepchenkova and Mills, 2010; Veasna, Wu and Huang, 2013). Nevertheless, although several authors claim that the affective component should be separated from the perceptual component in order to better understand how people assess environments and places (Baloglu and Brinberg, 1997; Cai, Feng and Breiter, 2004; Li, et al., 2010), there is a lack of empirical evidence that supports the influence of both the cognitive image and the affective image on the conative image.

Considering the theoretical model proposed by Gartner (1993), the literature review indicates that the cognitive component has a higher effect on the conative image, via the affective component, since there is a hierarchical causal relationship between the three image components (Tasci and Gartner, 2007). Indeed, Russell and Snodgrass (1987) argue that behaviour may be influenced by the affective quality of an environment, rather than directly by its objective properties, a theory which is supported by Cai, Feng and Breiter, (2004) and Li et al. (2010). Furthermore, some research has shown that emotions might be better predictors of behaviour than the perceptual dimension (Yu and Dean,

2001). Nevertheless, there is still a need for empirical evidence on the hierarchical relationship between the three dimensions of destination image.

3.5.3 Destination Image attributes

According to Echtner and Ritchie (1991), destination image attributes are scenery or natural attractions, costs or price levels, climate, tourist sites or activities, nightlife and entertainment, sports facilities or activities, national parks or wilderness activities, local infrastructure, transportation, architecture or buildings, historic sites, museums, beaches, shopping facilities, accommodation facilities, cities fairs, exhibits, festivals, facilities for information and tours, crowdedness ,cleanliness, personal safety, economic development or affluence, accessibility, degree of urbanisation, extent of commercialisation, political stability, hospitality or friendliness or receptiveness, different customs or culture, different cuisine or food and drink, restful or relaxing, atmosphere, opportunity for adventure, opportunity to increase knowledge, family or adult oriented, quality of service and fame or reputation. Sönmez and Sriakaya (2002) used these attributes to measure destination image: architectural styles, local festivals, archeological treasures, natural scenic beauty, cities, museums and art galleries, adventure, weather, cultural heritage, plenty of places to get away from crowds, local people are friendly, good-quality restaurants, hotels are easy to find , restful and relaxing place to visit, food, lifestyles and customs, standard of living, dress, road conditions, cleanliness and hygiene, safe and security, culture, shopping facilities, nature preserves and wilderness areas, tourist information, tour availability, skiing opportunity, national parks, price and good value for money.

Chi and Qu (2008) also classified attributes into nine aspects: 1- travel environment safe and secure environment, clean and tidy environment, friendly and helpful local people, tranquil and restful atmosphere and pleasant weather); 2- natural attractions (scenic mountain and valleys, scenery and natural attractions, gardens and springs, scenic drive, parks, lakes, rivers, wildlife, caves and underground formations); 3- entertainment and events (shows or exhibitions, cultural events and festivals, quality, fun ,western music, nightlife and entertainment); 4- historic attractions (history and heritage and Vintage buildings); 5- infrastructure (restaurants, cuisine, shop facilities and accommodations); 6- accessibility (traffic flow and parking information, parking facilities ,access to the area

and affordable trolley system); 7- relaxation (spa, soothing the mind and refreshing the body, spiritual rejuvenation); 8- outdoor activities (boating, fishing, hiking, picnicking, camping and hunting, outdoor recreation and golfing); 9- price and value (food, accommodation, attractions and activities and good bargain shopping).

Following an extensive review of the existing literature, Beerli and Martin (2004) classified all attributes influencing image assessments into nine dimensions: natural resources; natural environment; tourist infrastructure; general infrastructure; culture, history, and art; social environment; atmosphere of the place; leisure and recreations; political and economic factors (see Table 3.3).

Table 3.3: Dimensions and attributes of destination image

Natural Resources	Tourist Infrastructure
Weather - Temperature - Rainfall - Humidity - Hours of sunshine Beaches - Quality of seawater - Sandy/rocky beaches - Length of beaches - Overcrowding of beaches wealth of countryside - Protected natural reserves - Lakes, mountains, deserts, etc. - Variety and uniqueness of flora and fauna	Accommodation - Number of beds - Categories - Quality Restaurants - Number of seats - Categories - Quality - Bars, discos and clubs Hotels and self-catering Ease of access Excursions at destination Tourist centers Network of tourist information
Natural Environment	General Infrastructure
Beauty of the scenery Attractiveness Cleanliness Overcrowding Air and noise pollution Traffic congestion	Development and quality of roads Airports and ports Private and public transport facilities Development of health services Development of telecommunications Development of commercial infrastructure Extent of building development
Culture, History, and Art	Social Environment
Festival, concerts, etc. Handicraft Gastronomy Folklore Religion Museums, historical buildings, monuments Customs and ways of life	Quality of life Underprivileged and poverty Language barriers Hospitality and friendliness of the local Residents
Leisure and recreations	Political and economic factors

	Political stability
Adventure activities	Terrorist threats / Safety
Golf	Crime rate
Fishing	Economic development
Hunting	Prices
Trekking	**Atmosphere**
Theme parks	Luxurious / Fashionable
Zoos	Good reputation
Casinos	Family-oriented
Nightlife	Exotic
Shopping	Relaxing
	Fun, enjoyable
	Pleasant

Source: Beerli, A. & Martin, J.D. 2004, "Factors influencing destination image", *Annals of Tourism Research,* vol. 31, no. 3, pp. 659

3.5.4 Formation of a tourist destination image

As the result of a perceptual and cognitive process, the destination image is formed from several sources of information (social medias, media, reference groups, group membership, etc.). Thus, any person can build an image of any destination (in their mind) without ever having been there. In other words, the image of the destination will be based on historical, political, economic and social information which, in turn, will shape the image that the person already held (Echtner and Richie, 1991). The value system of each individual will eventually influence the image that they develop of a tourist destination, by acting as a selective attention filter (Moutinho, 1987). Also the country of origin of the person influences the image that they build of tourist destinations (Bonn, Joseph and Dai, 2005). Lubbe (1998) proposes a framework that explains the construction of the primary image of a tourist destination, identified in Figure 3.3.

Figure 3.3: Destination primary image construction
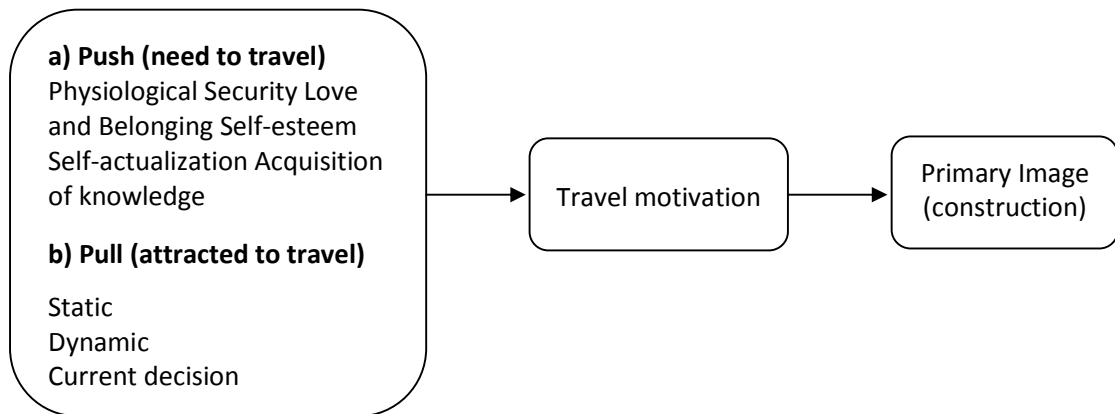
Source: Adapted from Lubbe, B. 1998, "Primary image as a dimension of destination image: an empirical assessment", *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing,* vol. 7, no. 4, pp. 21-43.

Baloglu and McCleary (1999) propose a PATH model to explain the process of forming the image of a tourist destination (Figure 2.4). Sources of information, age and level of education influence cognitive and perceptual assessment. More specifically, the study carried out by Tasci and Gartner (2007) demonstrates that age and a previous visit to destination are very important for the destination image created in the minds of tourists. Meanwhile, level of education and (socio-psychological) motivation to travel influence affective assessment - feelings and emotions (Jang, et al. 2009; Li and Cai, 2012). Indeed, both perceptual-cognitive and affective assessments configure the overall image that people develop about a tourist destination. In this context, Govers, Go and Kumar (2007) state that the tourist's personality becomes an important factor when choosing the kind of destination to visit (beach, mountain, etc.) and that personality traits influence the differentiation between destinations. Demographic variables also strongly influence the image tourists have of tourist destinations (Hyun and O'Keefe, 2012). Beerli and Martín (2004) reported that motivation, socio-demographic variables and experience are important factors for forming the image of a tourist destination.

More recently, other authors suggest that psychological factors such as a tourist's motivations and cultural values strongly influence the construction of the image of a tourist destination even before it is visited (Madhavan and Rastogi, 2013). With reference to the components of the image of a tourist destination, one theoretical orientation states that the cognitive component precedes the emotional component in the overall image

structure (San Martín and Del Bosque, 2008; Yuksel, Yuksel and Bilim, 2010). Meanwhile for the general image of a destination, some authors suggest that these two (cognitive and affective) components determine whether that general image will be a positive or negative assessment of the destination (Lin, et al., 2007; Li, et al., 2014).

Figure 3.4: PATH model of the determinants of the destination image
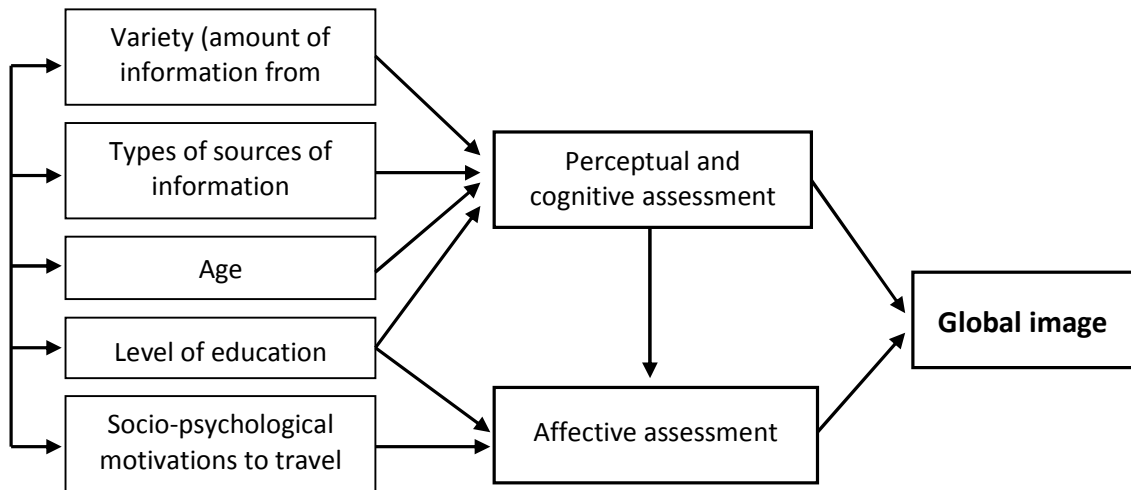
Source: Baloglu, S. & McCleary, K.W., 1999, "A model of destination image formation", *Annals of Tourism Research,* vol. 26, no. 4, p. 868.

3.5.5 Factors Influencing Destination Image

Each person's image of a particular place is unique, comprising their own memories, associations and imaginations of a particular place (Jenkins and McArthur, 1996, p. 11). Image is the most important concept for interpreting the choices made by tourists. But they warn that it is difficult for tourists to gain a clear image of a destination without having visited before (Govers and Go, 2003). In this context where the tourist has no experience in locum, there are three factors that affect their image of a tourist destination: tourism motivations, demographic variables and information about the destination (Beerli and Martin, 2004). For this last factor - information about the destination - sources of information are magazines, celebrities (opinion leaders), television and the internet, which will ultimately influence the image that potential tourists will have of a tourist destination (McCartney, Butler and Bebbett, 2008; Jeong, et al., 2012; Hsu and Song, 2013; Tessitore, Pandelaere and Van Kerckhove, 2014; Yvette Reisinger, 2015). In information technology, Govers and Go (2005) report that social networks on the Internet

can play an important role as a source of inside information for potential tourists, whether through images, interaction and multimedia on the Web, making it possible to configure a stronger and lighter image of a destination (Govers and Go, 2003).

Gunn (1972, cited in Fakeye and Crompton, 1991) identified two (2) levels for the image of a tourist destination, based on the type of information transmitted to the tourist:

- Organic image: all of the information transmitted unintentionally by representatives of tourism destinations. Such information may be transmitted either via television, radio, books on geography or history, newspapers, magazines, or by people living at a tourist destination.

- Induced image: the image formed by the promotions and communications of the tourism organisations involved in a region.

It is naturally true, in this context, that both reference or membership groups and opinion leaders can have a powerful influence on the perception tourists have of a particular destination.

Baloglu and McCleary (1999) identified two key forces which influence image formation: stimulus factors and personal factors.

Stimulus factors

Information sources are the main stimulus factors that have an effect on the forming of cognitive perceptions and evaluations. Um and Crompton (1990) believed that individuals form perceptual/cognitive evaluation of destination attributes after being exposed to various information sources, including symbolic stimuli (promotional efforts through media), social stimuli (Word-of-mouth and recommendations), and information acquired from previous visitation. Various authors (Molina, Gomez and Martin-Consuegra, 2010; Jeong, et al., 2012; Llodrà-Riera, et al., 2015) have also established that information sources are one of the determinants of tourists' destination choice behavior.

Gartner (1993, cited in Beerli and Martin, 2004) classified the different information sources (which he termed 'image forming agents') on a continuum: (a) overt induced information – conventional advertising in the mass media; (b) covert induced information - using celebrities in the promotion activities; (c) autonomous information, including mass-media broadcasting news, documentaries, films, television programs, etc.; (d)

organic information – word-of-mouth recommendations from friends and relatives; and (e) a visit to the destination, the end point of the continuum of the image forming process. The primary image is formed through personal experience or by actually visiting the destination. Some authors (Gibson, Qi and Zhang, 2008; Yilmaz, et al., 2009; Gomez, Garcia and Molina, 2013; Aliman, et al., 2014) suggested that the destination image formed by an actual visit tends to be more realistic and complex, and it is different from the one formed through secondary sources of information. The image formed by organic, induced, and autonomous sources of information is called secondary image.

Personal Factors

An individual's personal characteristics, or internal factors, also affect the formation of an image (San Martín and Del Bosque, 2008). Personal factors include the demographic characteristics (gender, age, level of education, place of residence, etc.) as well as the psychological characteristics (motivations, values, personality, etc.).

It is widely agreed that motivation influences the image forming and destination choice process because it is the impelling and compelling force behind all actions (Baloglu and McCleary, 1999; Lee, 2009; Li, et al., 2010; Kim and Chen, 2015). Motivation is "social-psychological forces that predispose an individual to opt for and participate in a tourist activity" (Baloglu and McCleary, 1999, p.875). Some authors (Dann, 1996; Baloglu and Brinberg, 1997; San Martín and Del Bosque, 2008) suggested that motivation is related to the affective component of image. Since the affective dimension influences the overall image, motivation may in turn directly or indirectly influence the overall image.

Most image formation and destination selection models (Um and Crompton, 1990; Beerli and Martin, 2004) show that personal characteristics influence the cognitive perceptions of destinations. A number of empirical studies (Baloglu and Brinberg, 1997; Baloglu and McCleary, 1999; Meng and Uysal, 2008; Prayag and Hosany, 2014) have been conducted to explore the relationship between the perceived image and demographic characteristics such as gender, age, education, occupation, income, marital status, and country of origin. Such studies have revealed mixed results: some studies found differences in the perceived image depending on all demographic variables; while others found such differences only in the cases of age and education.

Figure 3.5: Factors influencing the formation of the image of tourism destinations
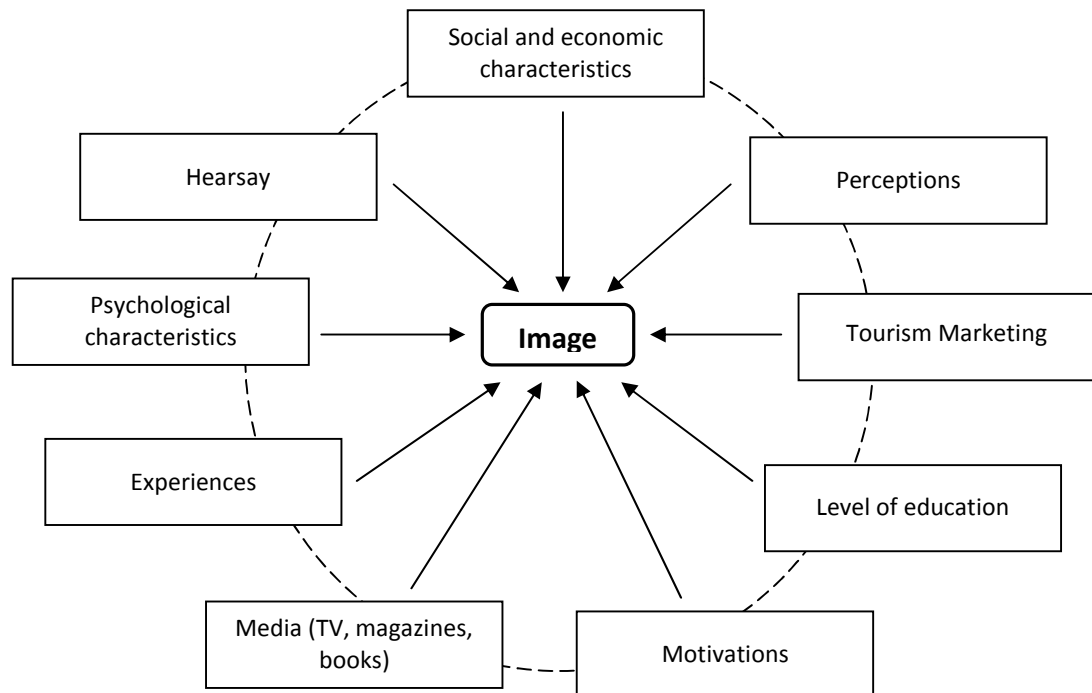
Source: Adapted from Stabler, M. J., 1988, "The image of destination regions: theoretical and empirical aspects", *Marketing in the tourism industry*, pp. 133-161.

3.5.6 Development of the image of a tourist destination

Tocquer and Zins (2004, cited in Lopes, 2011) studied the perceptual influences on tourists with regard to a particular destination, and proposed the grouping of images into four (4) stages of development:

- Vague and unrealistic image; stems from advertising, education and word of mouth dissemination. It is formed before the tourist travels. In this sense, people see a travel vacation as something healthy.

- Distortion of the image. At this stage, the person decides to go on vacation, choosing the time spent on vacation, destination and type of tourism product. It is during this period that the image of vacation is changed, clarified and expanded. The image developed becomes clearer once the vacation plan has been finalised.

- Improved image. At this third stage, we have the vacation experience itself. When there is direct experience of the tourism product, the image is improved by canceling out incorrect or distorted elements and strengthening elements that prove to be correct.

- Resulting image. This fourth stage refers to the recent memory of the vacation experience and can lead to nostalgia, regret or fantasy. Thereafter, a set of new images will be triggered that will affect future decisions about that same tourism product.

Other authors proposed an interpretation of the image before visiting the tourist destination and with the image being built after the visit. Thus, Phelps (1986) defines the primary image as the image built after the visit to the destination and the secondary image is seen as the image built before the visit to the destination.

Mansfeld (1992) later distinguished two types of images in the secondary image: the organic image (informal image) that derives from non-commercial information (independent of destination management) and the induced image (formal image) with respect to information conveyed by the commercial organisation responsible for the destination (figure 3.6).

Figure 3.6: Image types according to type of knowledge
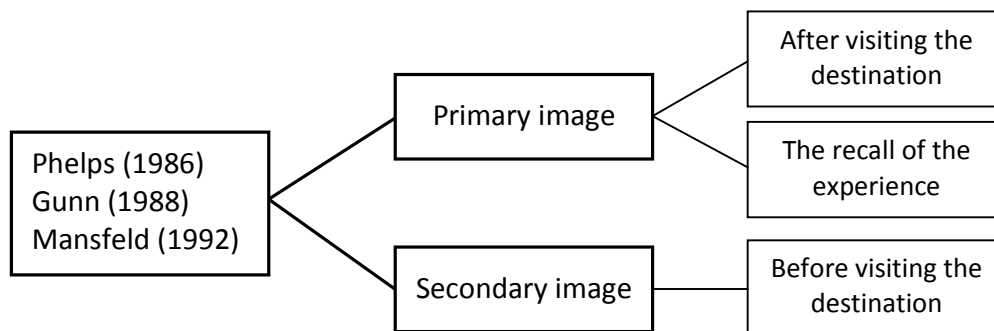
Source: Adapted from Phelps (1986) and Mansfeld (1992)

Figure 3.7: Types of secondary image
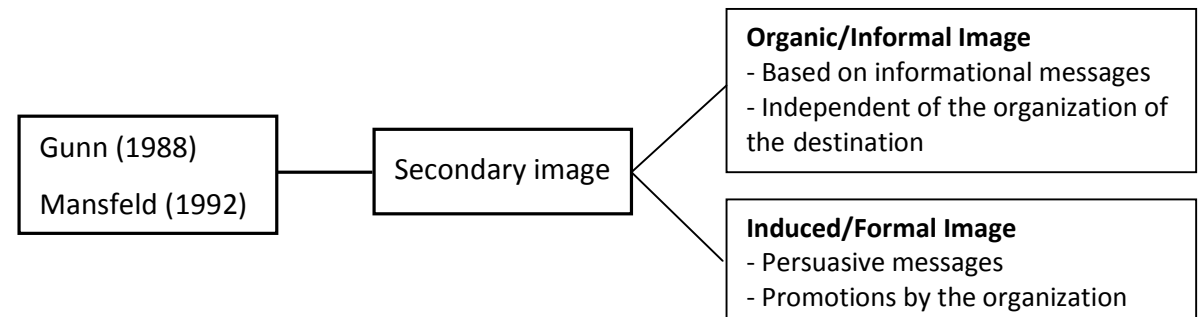
Source: Adapted from Mansfeld (1992)

Based on this typology, Fakeye, and Crompton (1991) developed a path model that illustrates the route taken by tourists in search of information. Thus, these authors explain that a potential tourist has a secondary organic image of a set of destinations (share of mind). Then, based on their motivations and perceptions, they will actively seek information. However, the fact that potential tourists have a strong or a weak organic image and/or direct or indirect experience with the tourist destination will influence the amount of information sought and efforts made in this search process. The different alternatives found will be assessed on the basis of the initial organic image, personal experiences and the induced formal image (sent by the organisation responsible for the destination). Then the destination visited will develop the primary image that, in turn, will influence the future search process. The same authors also suggest that for a more advantageous promotion of a destination, informational messages should be used in the organic phase of the image, while persuasive messages would be appropriate for the induced phase of the image. During the primary image stage, the authors claim that messages that remind tourists of previous experiences are more beneficial.

3.5.7 Measurement and operationalisation of destination image

The proposed definition of destination image suggests that a complete operationalisation involves measuring both attributes and holistic impressions. Each of these components should be measured in terms of functional and psychological characteristics. Furthermore, in the process of measuring destination image, consideration should be given not only to obtaining information on traits common to all destinations but also to capturing those unique features or auras which distinguish a particular destination. This section examines the methodologies used by tourism researchers to date in destination image measurement. However, before focusing on the destination studies, it is useful to briefly review the techniques commonly used in more general image measurement research.

3.5.7.1 General techniques for measuring image

A review of the techniques used in the past for research on product image measurement revealed two basic approaches; structured and unstructured. In a structured methodology, various common image attributes are specified and incorporated into a standardised instrument, usually a set of semantic differential or Likert type scales. A product (or

products) is rated by the respondent on each of the attributes included in the measure and an 'image profile' is derived from these ratings (Ferber, 1974).

Because structured methodologies use standardised scales, they are easy to administer, simple to code and the results can be analysed using sophisticated statistical techniques (Marks, 1976; cited in Echtner and Ritchie, 1991). Structured methodologies also facilitate the comparison of several products across each of the attributes included as scale items. Structured methodologies are attributes-focused. In other words, they force the respondent to think about product image in terms of the attributes specified by the scales. Although holistic impressions may be referenced by the respondent when completing the scale items, there is no direct opportunity to describe these holistic impressions. Furthermore, scale items are not designed to measure the unique characteristics of the product. Rather, they force the respondent to rate the product on more general, common traits. The completeness of structured methodologies can be highly variable depending upon the procedures used to elicit the attributes of image included in the scales (McDougall and Fry, 1974). Where the attribute components are likely to be numerous and diverse, as it is the case for destination image, it may be necessary to conduct extensive research to ensure that all have been uncovered (Hooley, Shipley and Krieger, 1988). In particular, according to the image conceptualisation proposed in the previous section, the most complete measurements would have to address both the functional and psychological characteristics of product attributes.

Unstructured methodologies are the alternate form of measurement used in product image research. Unstructured methodologies use free form descriptions to measure image (Boivin, 1986; cited in Echtner and Ritchie, 1991). Using this approach, the attributes of image are not specified at the onset of the research. Rather, the respondent is allowed to more freely describe his/her impressions of a product. Data is gathered from a sample of respondents through such methods as focus groups or open-ended survey questions. Content analysis and various sorting and categorisation techniques are then used to determine the image dimensions. In this manner, unstructured methodologies are more conducive to measuring the holistic components of product image and also to capturing unique features and auras. However, the level of detail provided by unstructured methodologies is highly variable as it depends upon the verbal and/or writing skills of the individuals used in the study, their willingness to provide multiple responses and their

knowledge base of the product (McDougall and Fry, 1974). Furthermore, because of the qualitative nature of the data, statistical analyses of the results are limited. In particular, comparative analyses across several products are not facilitated by unstructured methodologies.

3.5.7.2 Measurement techniques used by tourism researchers

The measurement of destination image has been widely discussed in the last three decades. Due to the complicity and diverse nature of the tourism product, it seems necessary to develop more specific and more complex conceptual frameworks and methodologies for increased reliability and validity to measure the destination image (Echtner and Ritchie, 2003). Researchers in the tourism field face difficulties in the selection of appropriate methods and techniques to measure tourists' perceptions and attitudes toward destinations, especially for developing and promoting destinations (Yankholmes and Akyeampong, 2010).

Most destination image studies have used structured measurement techniques. However, a few researchers have used unstructured or open-ended surveys. Most of the studies adopting a structured measurement technique have employed the semantic differential and/or the Likert scale technique to measure cognitive and affective components of destination image. Unstructured techniques on the contrary aimed to examine the complex structure of image. Echtner and Ritchie (1993) suggested that a combination of both structured and unstructured methodologies should be employed to capture the complex assessment of destination image. Echtner and Ritchie (1991) determined three major dimensions along which image should be measured:

- A dimension that differentiates the functional characteristics (specific benefits provided) and the psychological characteristics (the more abstract feeling experienced) of a destination.

- A dimension that distinguishes between the specific attributes of destination versus the measurement of a more holistic impression of the destination.

- A dimension that makes difference between the measurement of aspects that are common to virtually (see Figure 3.8).

Figure 3.8: Dimensions of image measurement
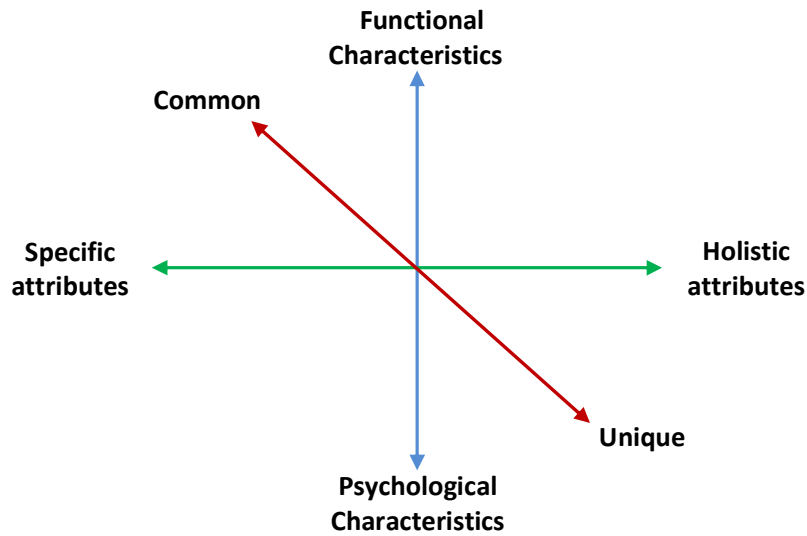
Source: Echtner, C.M. and Ritchie, J.B., 1991, "The meaning and measurement of destination image", *Journal of tourism studies,* vol. 2, no. 2, p. 6.}

The methodologies that have been used in the major destination image studies conducted to date are summarised in Table 3.4.

Table 3.4: Methodologies used by destination image researchers

Reference	Type of Methodology	Technique for the Generation of Attributes
Hunt, D. (1975)	Structured: - 20 Attributes - 7 and 5 point Sem. Diff. Scale	- Tourism experts - Researcher's judgement
Crompton, J. (1977)	Structured: - 18 Attributes - 7 point Sem. Diff. Scale	- General reading material/brochures - Consumer interviews (N=36)
Goodrich, J. (1977)	Structured - 10 Attributes - 7 point Likert Scale	- Tourism experts - Travel brochures
Crompton, J. (1979)	Structured - 30 Attributes - 7 point Sem. Diff. Scale	- General reading material/brochures - Consumer interviews (N=36)
Pearce, P. (1982)	Structured - 13 Attributes - 6 point Likert Scale	- Modified Kelly Repertory Grid technique (N=10)
Haahti and Yavas (1983)	Structured - 10 Attributes	- Literature review - Focus group of travel agents
Crompton and Duray (1985)	Structured - 28 Attributes - 5 point Sem. Diff. Scale	- General reading material/brochures - Consumer interviews (N=100)

Kale and Weir (1986)	Structured - 26 Attributes - 7 point Likert Scale	- Not discussed
Phelps, A. (1986)	Structured - 32 Attributes - Check list of attributes	- Researchers' judgement
Richardson and Crompton (1988)	Structured - 10 Attributes - 4 point Comparative Scale	- Used attributes from Tourism Canada Vacation Patterns Survey
Gartner, W. (1989)	Structured - 15 Attributes - 5 point Likert Scale	- Not Discussed
Reilly, M. (1990)	unstructured - open-ended questions	- Not Applicable

Source: Litterature review 2016

As the second column of Table 3.4 indicates, destination image researchers have a strong preference for structured methodologies. In fact, almost all have used either semantic differential or Likert-type scales in the measurement of destination image. Therefore, because of the nature of structured methodologies, the majority of destination image measurement studies have focused on the common, attribute-based component of destination image and have not addressed the more holistic and unique components. Even in terms of measuring the attribute component of destination image, previous studies exhibit some shortcomings. As mentioned previously, unless considerable effort is expended in the initial design stages, attribute lists may be incomplete by failing to incorporate all of the relevant functional and psychological characteristics of the destination image. Ideally, to combat this problem, fairly extensive research should be conducted in the primary stage of scale construction. For example, qualitative research in the form of focus groups is very useful to uncover a more complete list of attributes that are relevant and salient to consumers (Hooley, Shipley and Krieger, 1988). However, as the third column of Table 2.4 indicates, only a few of the researchers to date (Crompton, 1977; Pearce, 1982; Baloglu and McCleary, 1999; Tasci, Gartner and Cavusgil, 2007) have used consumers (and even then only to a limited extent) to identify and generate the lists of destination image attributes. The remaining researchers have relied on secondary sources of information (literature reviews, brochures) and the opinions of "experts" (travel agents, others in the tourism industry). While it is recognised that qualitative research with consumers is expensive and time consuming, it is difficult to design a valid

and complete set of destination image attributes without such input. To illustrate this point, Table 2.5 presents a summary of the attributes of destination image used to date in the studies employing structured methodologies.

Table 3.5: Measurement of destination image attributes used by researchers

Functional	Attribute	Number of studies measuring the attribute
	Scenery/natural attraction	13
	Costs/price levels	9
	Climate	8
	Tourist sites/ activities	8
	Nightlife and entertainment	8
	Sport facilities/ activities	8
	National park/ wildness activities	7
	Local infrastructure/ transportation	7
	Architecture buildings	7
	Historic sites/ museums	6
	Beaches	6
	Shopping facilities	5
	Accommodation facilities	5
	Cities	4
	Fairs, exhibits, festivals	2
	Facilities for information and tours	1
	Crowdedness	4
	Cleanliness	4
	Personal Safety	4
	Economic development affluence	3
	Accessibility	2
	Degree of urbanisation	1
	Extent of commercialisation	1
	Political stability	1
	Hospitality/ friendliness/ receptiveness	11
	Different customs/ culture	7
	Different cuisine food and drink	7
	Restful / relaxing	5
	Atmosphere/ familiar versus exotic	4
	Opportunity for Adventure	3
	Opportunity to increase a knowledge	2
	Family or adult oriented	1
	Quality of service	1
	Fame/ reputation	1
Psychological		**166**

Source: Echtner, C.M. and Ritchie, J.B., 1991, "The meaning and measurement of destination image", *Journal of tourism studies,* vol. 2, no. 2, p. 10.

This list was derived by grouping the attributes used by the various researchers into categories. For example, are included under the attribute of scenery, Calantone et al.'s attribute of "beautiful scenery", Crompton's attribute of "physical geography", Kale and Weir's attribute of "scenic beauty", etc. The master list of attributes has also been arranged within the functional/psychological continuum. Certain items (such as costs/price levels) are quite functional, others are distinctly psychological (for example friendliness), while some could be argued to lie near the middle of the continuum (cleanliness).

Very few researchers have succeeded in incorporating the majority of these attributes into a measurement instrument. Furthermore, the emphasis in existing research has obviously been on the more functional attributes of destination image. The only psychological attribute measured by the majority of researchers is "friendliness". While previous research has almost exclusively focused on the use of structured methodology, there has been a notable exception. Reilly (1990) used open-ended questions to allow respondents to describe, in their own words, images of the state of Montana. By combining the most common descriptions, a mental picture / stereotypical holistic impression of Montana State was drawn. Included in that image were scenic beauty, openness, mountains, cold weather and big, blue sky. While some of these attributes, such as scenery and weather could have been rated using a set of scales, such a standardised format would have eliminated some of the unique imagery (blue sky, openness) produced by the open-ended questions.

3.6 Service quality and customer satisfaction

Quality of service and customer satisfaction are critical factors for the success of any business (Steven, Dong and Dresner, 2012; Bansal and Taylor, 2015). As Armstrong et al (2014) point out, companies exist because they have a customer to serve. The key to achieve sustainable advantage lies in delivering high quality service that results in satisfied customers (Jahanshani, et al., 2014). Tourist satisfaction results in increased numbers of satisfied tourists revisiting and recommending more destinations, which in turn promotes the sustainable development of tourism particularly in the areas of management and marketing (Hui, Wan and Ho, 2007). Further, satisfaction is affected by

service quality (Shing, Koh and Nathan, 2012; Damiannah, et al., 2014; Chan, Hsu and Baum, 2015).

One of the biggest contemporary challenges of management in service industries is providing and maintaining customer satisfaction. Service quality and customer satisfaction have increasingly been identified as key factors in the battle for competitive differentiation and customer retention. Additionally, increased competition between leisure service businesses has force managers to place greater importance on understanding and satisfying their customers' requirements. Like other service industries, hospitality research is focusing on the relationship between customer satisfaction, and repeated sales. Customer satisfaction is one of the most important sources of competitive advantage and its accurate measurement is essential for the positioning or repositioning the service mix to meet customers' needs. According to Spreng and Mackoy (1996), there is no clear definition of satisfaction, although most definitions would involve "an evaluative, affective or emotional response". There are a number of approaches to define what customer satisfaction is. Hill and Alexander (2006) describe it as the customer's evaluation of product or service in terms of whether that product or service has met their needs and expectations. Considering the travel industry, where the product offering addresses hedonistic (leisure) needs, satisfaction is defined by Oliver and Burke (1999) "as pleasurable fulfillment". Therefore, the overall experience of the tourist is evaluated based on fulfillment of his/her needs, wants, desires and hopes. Consequently, "satisfaction is the tourist's sense that consumption provides outcomes against a standard of pleasure versus displeasure" (Kobylanski, 2012).

The discrepancy between perceived service quality and satisfaction is important because managers need to know whether their objective is to provide the maximum level of perceived service quality or to have satisfied customers. The standard of comparison in forming satisfaction is predictive expectations, or what the consumer believes will happen. Perceived service quality is the result of a comparison of performance and what the consumer feels a firm should provide (Shonk, 2006). One of the widespread determinants of overall customer satisfaction is perceived quality (Qin and Prybutok, 2008). In contrast to this idea to equate the two constructs, the idea that perceived service quality and customer satisfaction are distinctive constructs has later achieved some degree of consensus among researchers. According to this view, perceived service quality is

evaluated by the actual performance of the service in terms of particular service attributes in the specific context, whereas customer satisfaction is assessed by the customers' overall experience of the service. Customer satisfaction thus depends on a variety of factors, including perceived service quality, customers' mood, emotions, social interactions, and other experience-specific subjective factors.

Satisfying consumers in tourism is important for three main reasons (Horner and Swarbrooke, 2012). First it leads to positive word-of-mouth recommendation of the product to friends and relatives, which in turn brings in new customers. Second creating repeat customer by satisfying them with their first use of the product brings a steady source of income with no need for extra marketing expenditure. Third dealing with complaints is expensive, time consuming and bad for the organisation's reputation. Furthermore, it can bring direct costs through compensation payments. In tourism industry, quality of consistent delivery and visitor services according to expected standards is become one of the major challenges for the destination management will be facing in the following years as it is a crucial condition for destinations'' success in the competitive and emerging tourism industry. On other hand, service quality has become a great predictor to outcomes, such as customer satisfaction (Atilgan, Akinci and Aksoy, 2003). In destination marketing, tourist satisfaction is considered to be very important, as it is very influential in the choice of destinations, the consumption of products and services, and the tourists' decision to return (Kozak and Rimmington, 2000). Bowen and Clarke (2002) indicated that measurement between service qualities with tourist satisfactions allows destination management to fully understand how to provide the best possible service quality to satisfied tourists.

As indicated before, service quality and customer satisfaction are different concepts, although they are closely related. According to some authors, satisfaction represents an antecedent of service quality (Carman, 1990; Bolton and Drew, 1991). In this sense, satisfactory experience may affect customer attitude and the assessment of perceived service quality. Thus, satisfaction with a specific transaction may result with positive global assessment of service quality. Other authors conflict the previous approach and claim that service quality is antecedent of customer satisfaction (Spreng and Mackoy, 1996; Sureshchandar, Rajendran and Anantharaman, 2002; Qin and Prybutok, 2008). This group of authors suggests that service quality is a cognitive evaluation, which may lead to

satisfaction. Hence, customer satisfaction is the result of service quality. The current study adopted the latest point of view in which service quality as a process will cause customer satisfaction as an output. A second debate within the literature relates to the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction. Satisfied customers tend to be loyal to the company and more likely to return (Al–Refaie, Ko and Li, 2012). In the tourism and recreation field, distinctions have been made between quality of opportunity or performance, and satisfaction or/and quality of experience. Crompton and Love (1995) in their discussion of the quality and satisfaction constructs in the context of tourism. Quality of performance, which may also be termed quality of opportunity, refers to the attributes of a service which are primarily controlled by a supplier. It is the output of a tourism provider. Evaluations of the quality of performance are based on tourists perceptions of the performance of the provider. In contrast, satisfaction refers to an emotional state of mind after exposure to the opportunity. It recognises that satisfaction may be influenced by the social-psychological state a tourist brings to a site (mood, disposition, needs) and by extraneous events (for example climate, social group interactions) that are beyond the provider's control, as well as by the program or site attributes that suppliers can control. Thus, performance quality is conceptualised as a measure of a provider's output, whereas level of satisfaction is concerned with measuring a tourist's outcome. All else equal, higher quality performance in facility provision, programming, and service are likely to result in a higher level of visitor satisfaction. However, extraneous variables associated with factors outside the control of the provider make it likely that there will be a less than perfect correlation between the two measures.

Tian-Cole and Crompton (2003) believe there is agreement that service quality and tourist satisfaction are unique and different constructs. They strengthen their position by arguing that service quality contributes to overall satisfaction. It can therefore, be viewed as one of the factors that determine tourist satisfaction. Other factors are the experience, desired outcomes, perceptions, needs and desires. With the argument given above, it is clear that there is a need to clarify the relationship between service quality and tourist satisfaction in terms of differences and similarities in order to evaluate variables that contribute to tourist satisfaction. Tian-Cole and Crompton (2003) state that "service quality relates to quality of opportunities or performance of management, while satisfaction relates to the psychological outcome resulting from the experience, which is out of direct control of

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management". To sum up, the relationship between quality and satisfaction is complex. Danaher and Mattsson (1994) have described it as Siamese twins. Although there still remain a lot of unresolved questions, it can be concluded that service quality and customer satisfaction can be perceived as separate concepts that have causal ordering. Several studies have investigated the relationship between service quality and customer behavior patterns (Olorunniwo, Hsu and Udo, 2006; González, Comesaña and Brea, 2007; Chi and Qu, 2008; Ryu, Lee and Gon Kim, 2012; Amin, et al., 2013). According to these findings, customer satisfaction increases customer loyalty, influences repurchase intentions and leads to positive word-of-mouth.

Since customer satisfaction has been considered to be based on the customer's experience on a particular service encounter, it is in line with the fact that service quality is a determinant of customer satisfaction, because service quality comes from outcome of the services from service providers in organisations. Another author stated in his theory that "definitions of consumer satisfaction relate to a specific transaction (the difference between predicted service and perceived service) in contrast with 'attitudes', which are more enduring and less situational-oriented" (Lewis, 1993, p. 4-12). This is in line with the idea of Zeithaml et al (2006). Regarding the relationship between customer satisfaction and service quality, (Kassim and Asiah Abdullah, 2010) first suggested that service quality would be antecedent to customer satisfaction regardless of whether these constructs were cumulative or transaction-specific. Some researchers have found empirical supports for the view of the point mentioned above (Ryu, Lee and Gon Kim 2012; Amin, et al, 2013; Jahanshani, et al., 2014); where customer satisfaction came as a result of service quality. In relating customer satisfaction and service quality, researchers have been more precise about the meaning and measurements of satisfaction and service quality. Satisfaction and service quality have certain things in common, but satisfaction generally is a broader concept, whereas service quality focuses specifically on dimensions of service. Although it is stated that other factors such as price and product quality can affect customer satisfaction, perceived service quality is a component of customer satisfaction (Zeithaml, et al., 2006, p. 106-107). This theory complies with the idea of Jahanshani, et al. (2014) and has been confirmed by the definition of customer satisfaction presented by other researchers.

Figure 3.9: Customer perceptions of quality and customer satisfaction
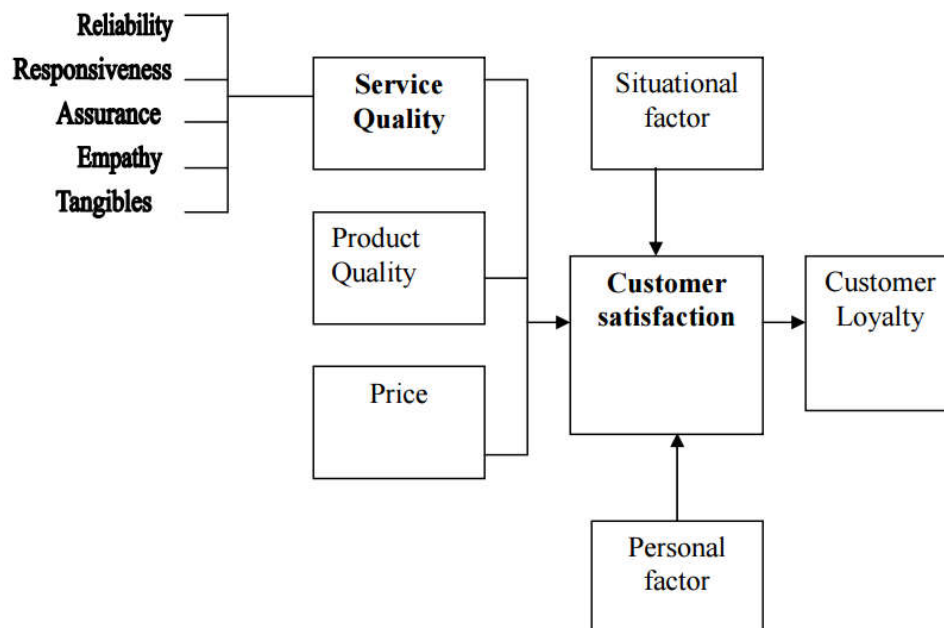
Source : Wilson et al., 2008, p. 79.

Figure 2.9 above shows the relationship between customer satisfaction and service quality. The author presented a situation that service quality is a focused evaluation that reflects the customer's perception of reliability, assurance, responsiveness, empathy and tangibility while satisfaction is more inclusive and it is influenced by perceptions of service quality, product quality and price, also situational factors and personal factors. (Wilson, 2008, p.78) It has been proven from past researches on service quality and customer satisfaction that Customer satisfaction and service quality are related from their definitions to their relationships with other aspects in business. Some authors have agreed to the fact that service quality determines customer satisfaction. Parasuraman et al. (1985) in their study, proposed that when perceived service quality is high, then it will lead to increase in customer satisfaction. Some other authors did comprehend with the idea brought up by Parasuraman (1994) and they acknowledged that customer satisfaction is based upon the level of service quality that is provided by the service providers.

Looking into (figure 2.9), relating it to these authors' views, it is evident that customer satisfaction definition involves predicted and perceived service; since service quality acted as one of the factors that influence satisfaction. More evidence of this relationship has been proven by past researches. As a result of the definition of customer satisfaction

presented by Sivadas and Baker-Prewitt (2000) used a national random telephone survey of 542 shoppers to examine the relationship between service quality, customer satisfaction, and store loyalty within the retail department store context. One of the results was that service quality influences relative attitude and satisfaction with department stores. They found out that there is a relationship between customer satisfaction and service quality. In line with the findings of Sivadas and Baker-Prewitt (2000), Su et al., (2002, p.372) in their study of customer satisfaction and service quality, found out that; these two variables are related, confirming the definitions of both variables which have always been linked. They also dictated that service quality is more abstract because it may be affected by perceptions of value or by the experiences of others that may not be so good, than customer satisfaction which reflects the customer's feelings about many encounters and experiences with service firm (Su, et al., 2002, p.372).

In addition to what some researchers have found out from customer satisfaction and service quality, Wang and Hing-Po (2002) went into details to bring in customer value in the study of the relationship between customer satisfaction and service quality. Their study used SERVQUAL model in measuring service quality in China's mobile phone market, but with modification on the basis of focus group discussions and expert opinions to reflect the specific industry attributes and the special culture of China. Emphasis was then paid to the study of the dynamic relationships among service quality, customer value, customer satisfaction and their influences on future behaviours after the key drivers of customer value and customer satisfaction were identified. All of them were based on the development of structural equation models by using PLS-GRAPH Package (Wang and Hing-Po, 2002, p.50-60). Their research blended the study of customer satisfaction and service quality with customer value which added more weight to the linkage between customer satisfaction and service quality because value is what customers look in an offer.

Kuo (2003) conducted a research on service quality of virtual community websites with the purpose of constructing an instrument to evaluate service quality of virtual community websites and to have a further discussion of the relationship between service quality dimensions and overall service quality, customer satisfaction and loyalty. The researcher used Factor analysis, t-test, and Pearson correlation analysis to analyse the data collected from college students of three major universities in Taiwan. One of the results was that

"on-line quality and information safety is positively related to the overall service quality, customer satisfaction, and loyalty, but the service quality level of this dimension was the poorest" (Kuo, 2003, pp. 461-473). In contrast to the above studies; Bennett and Barkensjo (2005) studied relationship quality, relationship marketing, and client perceptions of the levels of service quality of charitable organisations. Questions were asked to 100 people on their perceptions of service quality of the organisations that had given them assistance, their satisfaction with a charity service etc. they constructed a model and estimated using the method of partial least square. Also, perceived service quality was measured via adaptations of the SERVQUAL instrument but without any assessments of the respondents' prior expectations concerning the services they would receive from an organisation. In their results, relationship marketing was found to represent an effective weapon for improving both relationship quality and beneficiaries' satisfaction with service provision. They stated that "relationship quality and actual service quality induced beneficiaries to want to recommend a charity to other people and to engage in positive word-of-mouth" (Bennett and Barkensjo, 2005, p.101). Meaning the beneficiaries who stood as customers were satisfied since recommendation is signal of satisfaction; confirming the idea that service quality is related to customer satisfaction. They were not directly conducting a research on the relationship between customer satisfaction and service quality, but because when talking about client perceptions, one must think of their satisfaction, and when talking about service quality there is a link between these two, as has been proven by many researchers (Kuo, 2003, pp.461-473; Gera, 2011, pp.2-20). This means it could be useful to test these three variables (Customer satisfaction, service quality and Service quality dimensions). The study of Bennett and Barkensjo (2005) stated that "the hypothesis elements of SERVQUAL model (Tangible, assurance etc.) were scientifically associated with the service quality construct" (Bennett and Barkensjo, 2005, p.101).

In support of the use of SERVQUAL in the relationship between customer satisfaction and service quality, Ahmed et al. (2010) conducted a mediation of customer satisfaction relationship between service quality and repurchase intentions for the telecom sector among university students, with SERVQUAL model's 5 dimensions (tangibles, responsiveness, empathy, assurance and reliability) by Parasuraman et al. (1985). to measure service quality. To crown the fact that customer satisfaction and service quality

are important variables in business research on customers, Gera (2011) investigated the link between service quality, value, satisfaction and behavioral intentions in a public sector bank in India and one of their results states that "Service quality was found to significantly impact on customer satisfaction and value perceptions" (Gera, 2011, pp.2-20). Jamal and Anatassiadou (2007) confirmed that service quality is positively related to bank's customer satisfaction in Greece. Another study was conducted by Hossain and Leo (2008), they revealed that service quality is a strong antecedent and significantly related to customer satisfaction in banking industry in Qatar. Similarly, Chen and Lee (2008) attested that service quality has a positive influence with customer satisfaction in non vessel owners and shippers in Taiwan. Akbar and Parvez (2009) revealed that service quality has strong influence and significantly and positively related to customer satisfaction in private telecommunication company operating in Bangladesh. Munusamy et al. (2010) found that four elements of service quality, including assurance, tangibles, empathy and responsiveness have positive relationship with customer satisfaction, while one element „reliability" has negative relationship with customer satisfaction in banking industry in Malaysia.

A study conducted by Jay and Hsin (2007), which aimed to understand the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction in various hotels in Murtinos. The study found that the image of the hotel affected by the existence of service and customer satisfaction that support for the favourite image created by the hotel through the improvement of service quality and customer satisfaction. Osman and Sentosa (2013) studied the impact of service quality on customer satisfaction in Malaysian rural tourism; they found that service quality has significant impact and positive relationship with customer satisfaction. In the Jordanian tourism industry, Abu Ali and Howaidee (2012) conducted a study to investigate the causal relationships among the components of tourism product and overall tourist satisfaction in Jerash, Jordan. The study supported that destination facilities and accessibility and attraction directly influenced tourist satisfaction, it was also confirmed that there is a significant impact of the service quality on tourist satisfaction Jerash as one of the major tourism destinations in Jordan. While Abu Alroub et al. (2012) investigated the impact of service quality on customer satisfaction in the tourist restaurants in Amman, Jordan. Their study clarified that there is a significant relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction in tourist

restaurants. Mukhles Al-Ababneh (2013) proposed a model showing the impact of Service Quality on Tourist Satisfaction.

Figure 3.10: Service quality and its impact on tourist satisfaction
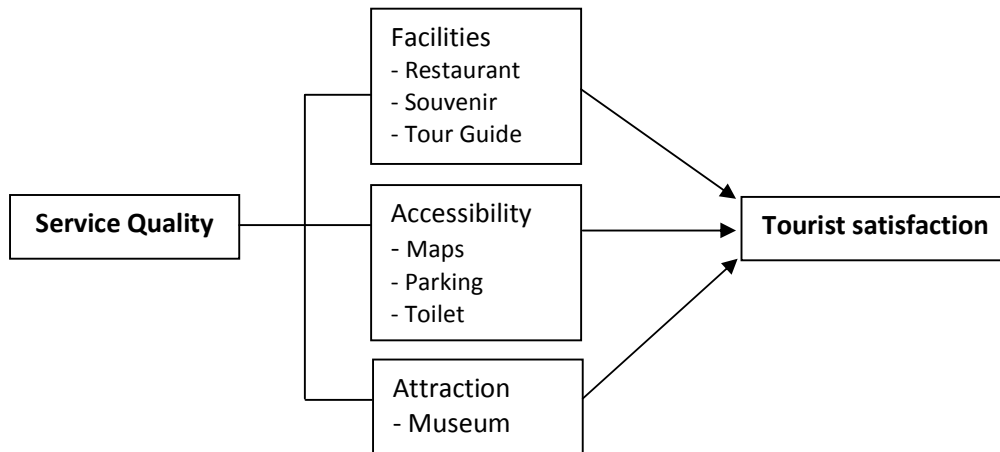
Source: M. Al-Ababneh, 2013. *Service Quality and its Impact on Tourist Satisfaction.* Interdisciplinary Journal of Contemporary Research in Business.

I. U. Canny (2012) designed a model linking service quality, tourist satisfaction and future behavioural intentions.

Figure 3.11: Relationship between service quality, tourist satisfaction and future behavioural intentions
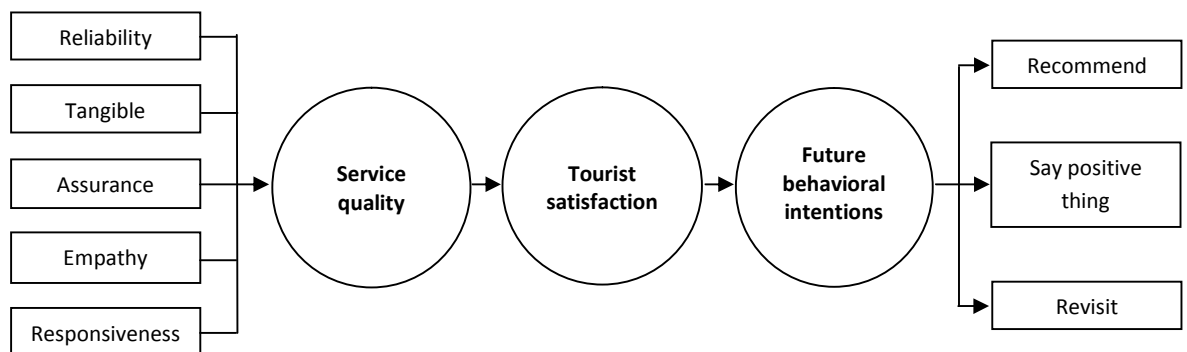
Source: I. U. Canny, 2012. *Service Quality, Tourist Satisfaction and Future Behavioral Intentions on Culture Heritage Tourism: An Empirical Study of Domestic Local Tourist at Borobudur Temple.* Swiss German University, Tangerang.

3.7 Destination Image and Customer Satisfaction

Destination image is an essential factor to encourage tourists towards any destination. If any destination management can create positive images of the destination, the number of tourists will increase. A strong destination image gives a competitive advantage.

According to A. Khan, A. Haque and M Rahman (2013), destination image has a positive influence on tourist satisfaction. If tourists perceive positive image for any destination in their mind, then they will be satisfied easily. A better destination image provides mental satisfaction of a given destination. Mohamed et al. (2015) conducted a research In Malaysia and found that destination image is one of the important antecedents for tourist satisfaction. During the 2002 world cup football, Lee et al. (2003) led a research on destination image of Korea. Based on the study, they concluded that destination image was one of the essential antecedents of tourist satisfaction on Korean tourist destination.

The main success of any destination depends upon the five pillars of the level of satisfaction of tourists. Chi and Qu (2008) confirmed that there are many factors that lead to tourist satisfaction but tourist destination image is a significant factor. Without building a positive destination image in tourist mind, it is difficult to make a tourist satisfied.

There is a close relation between tourist motivation and satisfaction. Beerli and Martín (2004) mentioned that motivation is the need that drives an individual to act in a certain way to achieve the desired satisfaction. According to Yoon and Uysal (2005), tourist satisfaction works as a mediator between travel motivation and destination loyalty. In the context of Islamic tourism, it is observed that thousands of Muslim tourists visit Islamic tourist destination in Malaysia. Based on that it can assume if tourists have religious motivation to visit Islamic tourist destination, then there is a chance to be satisfied.

Figure 3.12: Model of tourist satisfaction
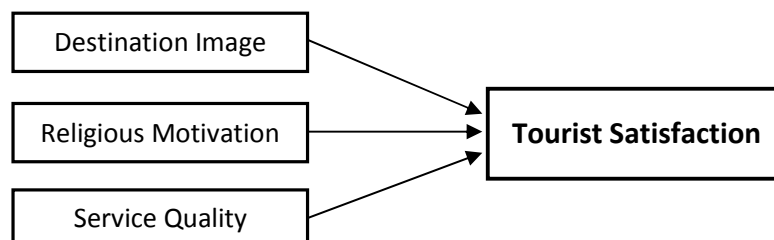
Source: A. Khan, A. Haque and M Rahman. 2013. *What makes tourists satisfied? An empirical study on Malaysian islamic tourist destination*. IDOSI Publications. Faisalabad.

Ryan and Gu (2008) emphasise that the image itself is the beginning point of tourist's expectation, which is eventually a determinant of tourist behaviors. In addition, the authors explained that destination image exerts two important roles for both suppliers and tourists. The first role involves informing the supply systems of what to promote, how to promote, who to promote to and, for the actual product that is purchased, how to design that product. The second role involves informing the tourist as to what to purchase, to what extent that purchase is consistent with needs and self-image, and how to behave and consume.

In the tourism literature, it is widely acknowledged that overall image of a destination is influenced by cognitive and affective evaluations (Mackay and Fesenmaier, 2000; Uysal et al., 2000; Baloglu and Mangaloglu, 2001; Hosany, et al., 2007). Cognitive evaluation refers to beliefs and knowledge about an object whereas affective evaluation refers to feelings about the object (Walmsley and Jenkins, 1993; Baloglu and Brinberg, 1997). Unfortunately, the majority of image studies treated destination image as a cognitive evaluation. Only few studies employed both cognitive and affective components in understanding the overall image of a destination (Baloglu and McCleary, 1999; Mackay and Fesenmaier, 2000; Uysal, et al., 2000; Hosany, et al., 2007). It is important to consider both cognitive and affective components of destination image to build a comprehensive destination branding model; acclaiming Gartner's (1993) image formation process as the most comprehensive model toward a destination branding.

In terms of destination branding, Cai (2002) claims that attitudes may be one type of brand association for building destination image. However, there is still conceptual confusion between attitudes and destination image (Sussman and Ünel, 1999). Destination image is also viewed as an attitudinal construct consisted of cognitive and affective evaluations (Baloglu and McCleary, 1999). For their conceptual closeness, this study takes the side of Baloglu and McCleary's standpoint. Although it is argued that cognitive and affective image components are hierarchically correlated to form a destination image (Woodside and Lysonski, 1989; Gartner, 1993; Cai, 2002), it is still possible that each cognitive and affective brand image component would have unique contributions to the overall image formation. That is, each association would have a different level of impact on the overall image formation because brand associations are not considered equally weighted in terms of performance to consumers (Keller, 2008,

p.59). The separate treatment of cognitive and affective components is necessary to examine their unique effects on consumers' attitude structure and future behaviors (Russel, 1980; Russel and Pratt, 1980; Russel, Ward, and Pratt, 1981; Russel and Snodgrass, 1987; Baloglu and Brinberg, 1997).

Figure 3.13: Model of destination branding

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┌──────────────────┐                          ┌──────────────────┐
│ Cognitive image  │ ─────┐            ┌─────▶ │   Intention to   │
└──────────────────┘      │            │       │      revisit     │
┌──────────────────┐   ┌──────────────────┐    └──────────────────┘
│   Unique image   │ ──▶│  Overall image   │    ┌──────────────────┐
└──────────────────┘   └──────────────────┘──┐ │   Intention to   │
┌──────────────────┐      │            └─────▶ │    recommend     │
│  Affective image │ ─────┘                    └──────────────────┘
└──────────────────┘
```
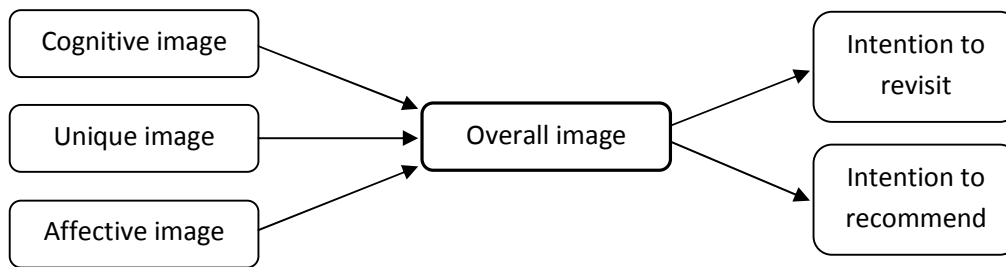
Source: H. Qu et al. 2011. *Tourism Management*. Elsevier Ltd, Beijing.

Empirical studies carried out in New Mexico and Thailand indicated that destination image positively affects future behavior of tourists (Court and Lupton, 1997; Rittichainuwat, Qu and Brown, 2001). For example, destination images significantly affect the satisfaction and future behavior of tourists staying at coastal resorts in Spain (Bigne, et al., 2001), scenic ´ coastal areas in Taiwan (Lin, et al., 2003) and in Eureka Springs in the United States (Chi and Qu, 2008). Chen and Tsai (2007) ascertained that destination image directly affects the quality of the trip, and indirectly affects perceived value, satisfaction and future behavioral intentions of tourists visiting coastal destinations. The tourism literature, therefore, indicates that destination image is the antecedent of satisfaction and future behavior. However, the relationships among destination image, satisfaction and future behavior of wetland tourists have not been examined. The theory of planned behavior is frequently used to study tourist attitudes. This theory has been used to examine various human behaviors to predict leisure choice (Ajzen and Driver, 1992), hunting intention (Rossi and Armstrong, 1999; Hrubes et al., 2001), choice of travel destination (Bamberg, Ajzen and Schmidt, 2003; Lam and Hsu, 2006), and behavior of wine tourists (Sparks, 2007). Some studies have used this behavioral theory to argue that tourist attitude significantly affects behavioral intention (Ajzen and Driver, 1992; Rossi and Armstrong, 1999; Hrubes; et al., 2001; Bamberg; et al., 2003). On the other hand, some researchers have found no significant relationship between attitude and

behavior intention (Lam and Hsu, 2006; Sparks, 2007). In addition, researchers using satisfaction as a mediating variable to modify the theory of the planned behavior have found that attitude significantly and directly affects satisfaction. Attitude also significantly and indirectly affects behavioral intention in behavioral model of tourism in isolated inland areas, river tracing tours, and national forest recreation areas (Yu and Lee, 2001; Lee, 2006, 2007).

These studies describe the causal relationships among tourist attitude, satisfaction and behavioral intention for natured-based tourists. In contrast, a structural model linking tourist attitude, satisfaction and future behavior for tourists in wetlands tourism has not been discussed. Tourist satisfaction is significantly affected by motivation, as shown in empirical studies of tourism in various contexts: sightseeing tourism in Washington State (Ross and IsoAhola, 1991), climbing trips on Ayers Rock (Fielding, Pearce and Hughes, 1992), visits to international cultural festivals (Lee and Wicks, 2004) and visits to farm resorts (Lin, 2005). However, in a study of tourism in Northern Cyprus, Yoon and Uysal (2005) reported that the push motivation did not significantly influences satisfaction, while the pull motivation directly and negatively affected satisfaction and indirectly and negatively affected destination loyalty. No empirical studies have examined the causal relationships between tourist motivation and satisfaction for wetlands tourism, and thus reexamining whether the above causal relationships exist in the behavioral model applied to wetlands tourism is interesting. Developed a model on relationships among destination image, attitude, motivation, satisfaction and future behavior.

Figure 3.14: Model on relationships among destination image, attitude, motivation, satisfaction and future behavior
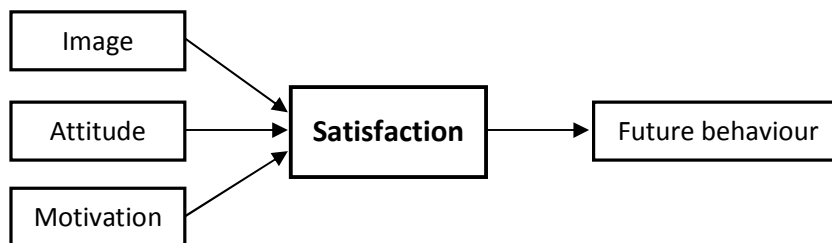
Source: T. H. Lee. 2009. *A Structural Model to Examine How Destination Image, Attitude, and Motivation Affect the Future Behavior of Tourists*. Routledge, London.

3.8 Service Quality and Destination Image

The Jones and Haven-Tang's model (2005) considers a destination as a hierarchy of entities (destination, tourism businesses including SMEs and employees) integrated together with public-sector interventions, which play a key role as a supporter for the destination strategic development. These integrated elements do not result merely in building a coherent destination image in the tourists' minds, but support destination managers to implement a good destination management plan (see Figure 2.15).

Figure 3.15: Jones and Haven-Tang's model
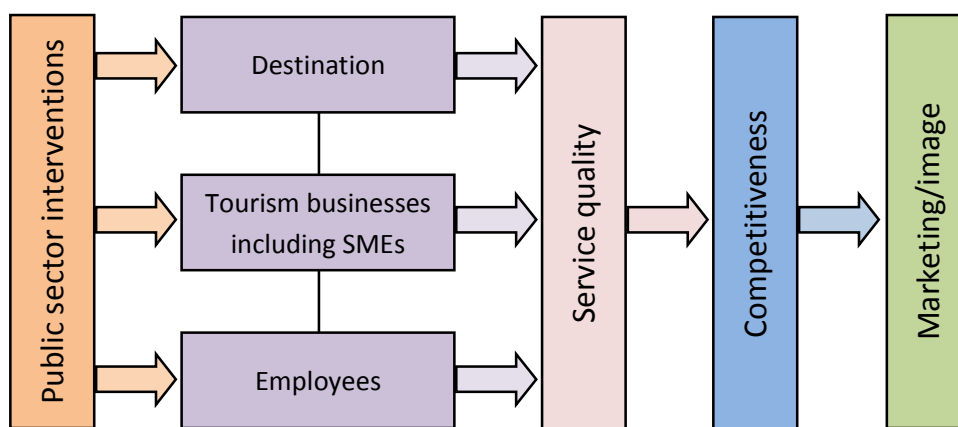
Source: Jones and Haven-Tang (2005, p.3)

3.9 Summary of Knowledge Gaps

The review of literature reveals a number of gaps as shown in Table 2.6. While literature points at emphasis of the disconfirmation paradigm, this study adopted a perception paradigm. Although several dimensions of service quality have been pointed out in literature, this study sought to examine their significance in explaining changes in customer satisfaction in the tourism industry. The limited effort to link service quality and destination image to customer satisfaction led this study to hypothesise that service quality and image were antecedents to customer satisfaction.

Table 3.6: Summary of knowledge gaps

Researcher (s)	Focus	Findings	Knowledge Gaps	Addressing Knowledge Gaps in Current Study
Sultan and Wong (2010)	Effectiveness, capability, efficiency, competencies, assurance, unusual situation management, and syllabus.	Performance based measure to service quality preferred over E-P approach. Seven factors influence service quality.	Need to undertake a comparative study in # Did not examine the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction.	This study confirmed that performance based service quality model works as opposed to the cumbersome disconfirmation approach. The study tested the relationship between service quality, image and customer satisfaction.
Alves and Raposo (2010)	Image, tourist expectation, technical quality perceived, functional quality perceived, perceived value and tourist satisfaction.	The model shows that image is the construct that most influences tourist satisfaction. The influence of image is also relevant on tourist loyalty.	Relationship between image and service quality not established.	The study determined the relationship between service quality, image and customer satisfaction.
Smith et al. (2007)	Reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles.	Application of SERVQUAL in the public sector can produce different results from that of private sector. Reliability is an important service quality dimension.	Only used factor analysis and failed to test the strength of relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction.	This was a comparative study of public sector and private sector using ANOVA. The study tested relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction.
Kang and James (2004)	Reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles, image and customer satisfaction.	Service quality consists of three dimensions, technical, functional and image, and that image functions as a filter in service quality	The location of service quality as moderating the relationship between image and customer satisfaction is questionable Convenience sampling	Image was studied as mediating the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction This study used stratified sampling which is probability based to facilitate generalisation.

		perception.	limits generalisation.	
Kelsey and Bond (2001)	Customers positive experience, commitment of staff, availability of staff, recommendation of alternative processes and sources of information by staff, approachability of management and assistance provided by the centre staff and customer satisfaction.	The study revealed seven determinants of customer satisfaction, seven determinants of customer dissatisfaction and five determinants of perceived effectiveness of the service provider.	Used convenience sampling procedure which was non probability based, hence possibility of non-representative sample. The determinants of customer satisfaction are service quality dimensions though not mentioned in the study.	Study used stratified random sampling to increase representativeness and enhance the generalisation of findings.
Cronin and Taylor (1992)	Reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles and customer satisfaction.	Service quality should be measured as an attitude (perception). Originated SERVPERF and exemplified it over SERVQUAL.	Need to identify more service quality constructs than the five. Need to test applicability of SERVPERF in the tourism industry.	Study determined the adequacy of additional dimensions; tested the admissibility of perception battery in the tourism industry in Cameroon.
Carman (1990)	Reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles.	Five generic dimensions of service quality exist. Wordings of items should be customised for each service.	Need for research to test how generic service quality dimensions are in the tourism industry. Is it necessary to administer the expectation battery?	Tested how generic the proposed service quality dimensions are in Cameroon. Wordings of items in instrument were customised
Parasuraman, Berry, and Zeithaml (1988)	Reliability, assurance, tangibles, empathy, and responsiveness	Reduction of service quality determinants to 5. The SERVQUAL instrument was originated and it was suggested it applies in	Stability of the five service quality dimensions not established. Applicability of SERVQUAL across all service sector worth testing.	Unidimentionality test was used to examine the stability of constructs in Cameroon tourism industry. Study tested the admissibility of performance battery.

		all service sectors.		
Parasuraman, Berry, and Zeithaml (1985)	Reliability, responsiveness, competence, access, courtesy, communication, credibility, security, understanding and tangibles.	Ten service quality (service quality) determinants were revealed. Customer expectation of service quality were different from managers expectation.	Use of exploratory research design whose findings are tentative Used qualitative approach, which is followed by qualitative analysis.	A conclusive research design was used to generate findings that are input into decision making. Quantitative analysis was applied.

Source: Literature Review, 201

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

The methodology adopted in this study provided a design that empirically addresses the identified research problem and recaps how the study results can be replicated, generalised and employed in prediction for effective decision making. This chapter describes the population sampling procedure, the instrumentation and data collection approach used. Our methodology allowed the description of the influence of service quality and destination image on customer satisfaction among international tourists in Cameroon.

Crotty (1998) suggests that there are four different aspects that any research needs to consider. These are epistemology, theoretical perspective, methodology and methods (see figure 3.1). In the following sections, these four aspects are discussed in the context of this study.

Figure 4.1: Research approach diagram
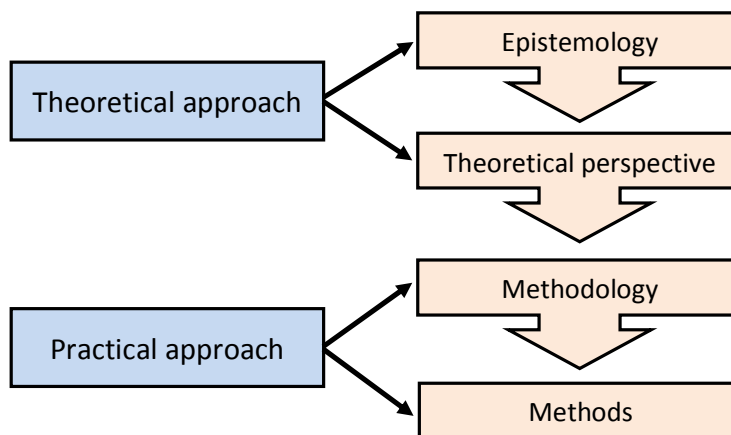
Source: Crotty (1998)

Crotty's classification is relevant to this study because it initially approaches research from a wider perspective, before narrowing down the process through a logical sequencing of events. Therefore, this section discusses the research epistemology approach, the theoretical perspective, the methodology to be used, and the methods of data collection and analysis.

Crotty (1998) asks four questions, which are the basic elements of any research process and which the researcher should take into consideration when he or she begins a project.

- What theoretical approach lies behind the methodology in question?
- What epistemology informs this theoretical perspective?
- What methods do we propose to use?
- What methodology governs our choice and use of methods?

4.2 Theoretical approach

Creswell (2003) conceptualised a model which considers three questions related to the research design as shown in figure 3.2.

- The knowledge claims made by the researcher (including the theoretical perspective);
- The strategies of inquiry that will inform the procedures;
- The methods of data collection and analysis.

Creswell (2003) also added that the knowledge claims as well as the strategies and the methods used, all contribute to the research approach, which can be considered as qualitative, quantitative or a combination of both.

Figure 4.2: Knowledge claims and strategies of inquiry
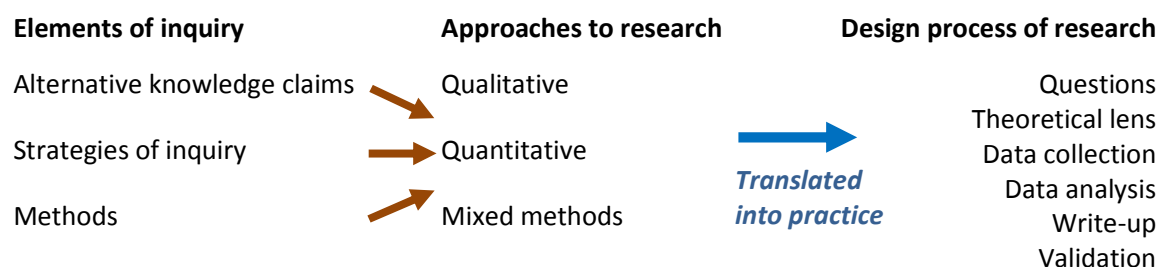
Source: Creswell (2003, p. 5)

4.2.1 Research epistemology

Epistemology is a research philosophy concerned with the theory of knowledge in terms of its methods, validity and gaining understanding of social reality (Grix, 2002). DeRose (2005) asserts that epistemology is the theory of knowledge and added that is the branch

of philosophy that deals with questions concerning the nature, scope and source of knowledge.

However, the term epistemology was defined in the dictionary of philosophy, created by Dagobert Runes in 1942, as a branch of philosophy that investigates the origin, structure, methods and validity of knowledge. The term epistemology itself appears to have been used for the first time by the Scottish philosopher James Frederick Ferrier, Institute of Metaphysics (1854), who distinguished between two branches of philosophy, namely epistemology and ontology (**Dagobert, 1942**).

The term epistemology is based on the Greek word "episteme" which means knowledge or science and "logos" which means reason (Grix, 2002). According to Plato, knowledge is the true belief that has been "given an account of", meaning explained or defined in some way (Dagobert, 1942). Crotty (1998) simplifies this when he defines epistemology as the way of understanding how we know what we know. Tribe (1997, p. 639) claims that *Epistemology's essential concern is the analysis of the validity of a claim to know something*.

According to Crotty (1998), epistemology has three categories: objectivism, constructionism and subjectivism (see figure 3.4).

Figure 4.3: Epistemology categories
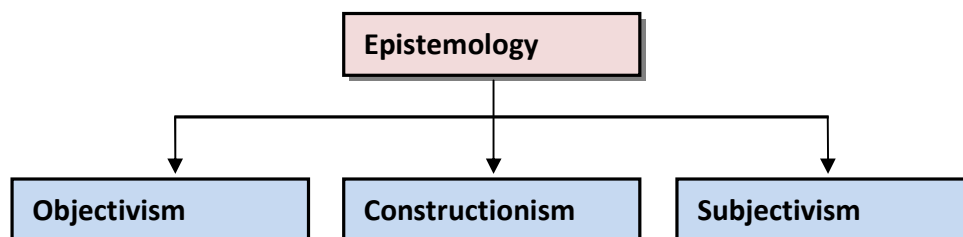
Source: Crotty (1998, p.5)

The term objectivism was developed by the Russian writer Ayn Rand in 1962, in her introduction to objectivist epistemology, and was one of her significant contribution to the field (Ayn Rand Institute, 2008). According to Crotty (1998), objectivists believe that meaningful reality exists as a part from the operation of any consciousness. However, he argues that subjectivists claim that meaning of reality cannot be explored by human beings.

Concerning constructionism, he states that (1998, p.42) *constructionism is the view that all knowledge, and therefore all meaningful reality as such, is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context.*

In this regard, the researcher will build his knowledge according to other human being relationship. Therefore, the truth will come from others sayings. Findings and results of this study will be based on the Cameroon's tourism stakeholder's opinions. Thus, it must be grounded in real participation within the observed phenomenon. Whilst this study's research aim is to establish the nature of the relationship between service quality, destination image and customer satisfaction amongst international tourists in Cameroon; thus the research epistemology is constructivist rather than objectivist or subjectivist.

4.2.2 Theoretical perspective

Crotty (1998) explains that the theoretical perspective describes the philosophical approach to information gained from the methodology. This creates a context for the process and provides grounding for its logic and criteria. In others words, it is the way of looking at the world and making sense of it.

According to Tithen and Robson (2007, p.121) phenomenology is the study of lived, human phenomena within the everyday social contexts in which the phenomena occurs from the perspective of those who experience them. Phenomena comprise anything that human beings live / experience. Tesch (1994, cited in Gray, 2004, p.21) states that phenomenological research is a descriptive and interpretive approach, and focuses on culture and the human experience of the life-world. Gray (2004) added that phenomenological research emphasises the use of the inductive approach and produces large amounts of data that describe people's experiences and perspectives in natural settings. Neuman (2000) believes that interpretive research is concerned with the study of a particular phenomenon in its natural setting and seeks to interpret the phenomenon through the meaning of people amongst themselves. Phenomenology is one of the interpretivism categories (Crotty, 1998), and is used for semi-structured methods of data collection (Gray, 2004).

In order to gather sufficient answers to the research questions and achieve the research objectives, the interpretive and phenomenological approaches are chosen as they seem to be the most appropriate theoretical perspective from which to analyse the Cameroon's tourism industry. In addition, perspectives of potential UK tourists and Cameroon's tourism stakeholders are shaped by their life experiences, knowledge, social relationships and the socio-cultural environment. This research is based on an analysis of these experiences, behaviours and attitudes towards tourism development.

4.2.3 Research type

For Gill and Johnson (2002), there are different research types which can be classified according to:

- The process of the research or the way of collecting and analysing the data (qualitative or quantitative research).

- The logic of the research or whether the research is moving from general to specific or vice versa (deductive or inductive research).

- The purpose of the research or the reason beyond conducting the study (exploratory, descriptive, analytical or predictive research).

- The outcome of the research or whether the research is attempting to solve a particular problem or make a general contribution to the knowledge (applied or theoretical).

A research approach is a broad process under which the researcher is able to conduct the study and produce results. The common research types are qualitative and quantitative. This classification defines how data are processed and analysed in the research approach.

4.2.3.1 Qualitative and quantitative research

Creswell (2003) argues that there are three research types: qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods. A qualitative research can be defined as an investigative process of understanding a particular issue or problem which comes in many forms, such as building complex, holistic pictures formed with words, reporting detailed views of informants, and importantly conducting these in a natural setting. He continues saying

that in quantitative study, the phenomena or the problem is investigated through understanding the factors or variables influencing the outcome. A mixed method uses a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods.

For Creswell (2003), qualitative researchers focus primarily on the research process, rather than the outcomes. They are more interested in the meaning of how people make sense of their lives and experiences. Denzin and Lincoln (2005, p.10) stress on the difficulty to define clearly a qualitative research. They state that the word qualitative implies an emphasis of the qualities of entities and on processes and meanings that are not experimentally examined or measured (if measured at all) in terms of quantity, amount, intensity or frequency. For Mack et al. (2005, p.vi) *the great contributions of qualitative research are the culturally specific and contextually rich data it produces*.

Silverman (2001) makes a difference between qualitative and quantitative data; saying that qualitative data is soft, flexible, subjective, political, used in case studies, speculative and grounded theory. In contrast, quantitative data is hard, fixed, objective, value-free, used in surveys, hypothesis testing and abstract. Veal (2006) says that quantitative research involves statistical analysis, which relies on numerical evidence to draw conclusions or to test hypotheses, whilst qualitative research is generally not concerned with numbers, but with gathering data from a small number of people. Corbetta (2003) asserts that quantitative research makes ample use of mathematical and statistical tools, together with a whole array of tables, graphs, statistical tests, etc; as well as the full set of technological equipment (computers, software, data banks, etc.). For qualitative analysis, no statistical or mathematical tests are needed, and if any is undertaken they are limited to the organisation of empirical material.

According to Veal (2006), the decision to adopt qualitative or quantitative approach depends on what the researcher is trying to find out. Strauss and Corbin (1998) believe there are numbers of reasons for conducting qualitative research; the main ones being the preferences and background of the researcher, and the nature of the research. Qualitative research still gains rich and valuable information if the samples are not biased. It also gives an opportunity to explore new ideas that relate to the research questions of the "how" and "why", which cannot be obtained by a quantitative approach. However, for Creswell (2003) there are three factors that influence the choice of a

particular research approach: the research problem, the personal experience of the researcher and the audience(s).

In this study, the research questions and objectives thus dictate a mixed method to be adopted in order to explore the following:

- the service quality dimensions that influence international tourists' satisfaction in Cameroon. Since there is very little literature on this matter, we needed to collect those elements directly from tourists' sayings. Also, knowing that people's needs, wants and preferences can change over the time, by using qualitative approach new attributes could emerge;

- the difference in service quality perception amongst international tourists; which could not be captured by a quantitative approach, as the researcher had little prior knowledge of tourists' different behaviours;

- the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction, service quality and destination image, destination image and customer satisfaction; and the extent to which destination image mediates the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction. Statistical tests are needed to establish the nature and the significance of those relationships.

Moreover, tourism is still a minor industry in Cameroon and faces many challenges. Thus, with open-ended questions and in-depth discussion, tourism authorities and entrepreneurs will have the opportunity to raise these challenges, its causes and potential solutions. Also, tourists' experiences and narratives are important elements that will help supporting the study's findings. A quantitative approach does not provide space for stories and lived experience.

The advantage of a mixed methods approach is that it balances efficient data collection and analysis with data that provides context. The quantitative data quickly and efficiently captures potentially large amounts of data from large groups of stakeholders. The qualitative data provides the contextual information and facilitates understanding and interpretation of the quantitative data.

These reasons were enough to drive and encourage us to choose mixed method approach as we expected to gather meaningful information and run tests.

4.2.3.2 Inductive and deductive research

This school looks at research approach from a different angle; they divide research types into two categories: Inductive and deductive (Gill and Johnson, 2002; Veal, 2006; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2007), as illustrated in figures 3.5 and 3.6. The inductive researcher starts at point A (observation / description), then proceeds to point B (analysis) and arrives at point C (explanation and hypotheses or production of a theory). Gill and Johnson (2002, p.40) state that *a conceptual and theoretical structure is developed prior to empirical research; theory is the outcome of induction*.

Figure 4.4: Inductive research process
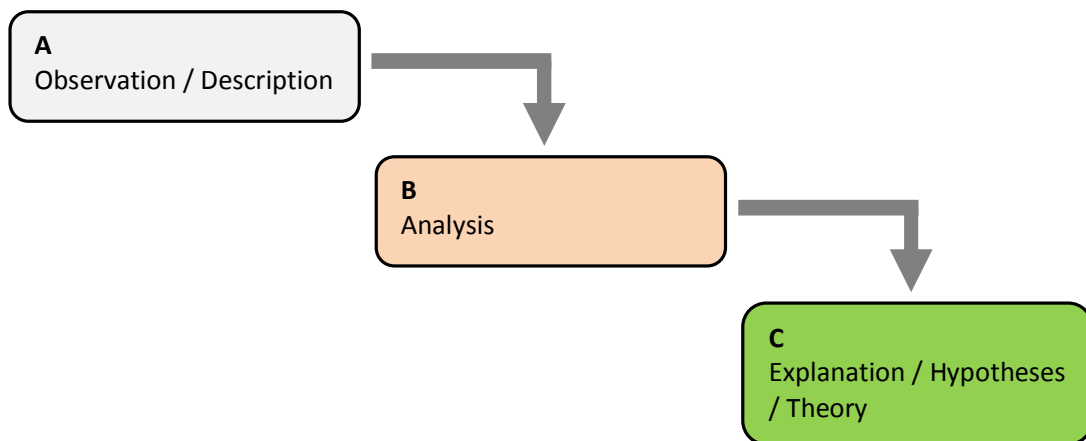
Source: William et al. (1982, cited in Veal, 2006, p.21)

The deductive approach is the reverse of the inductive one. It begins at point C with a theory or hypothesis; proceeds to point A, gathering data to test hypotheses; and then moves to point B, analysis to test hypothesis against the data. Gill and Johnson (2002, p.34) point that deductive research methods entail the development of a conceptual and theoretical structure prior to its testing through empirical observation.

Figure 4.5: Deductive research process
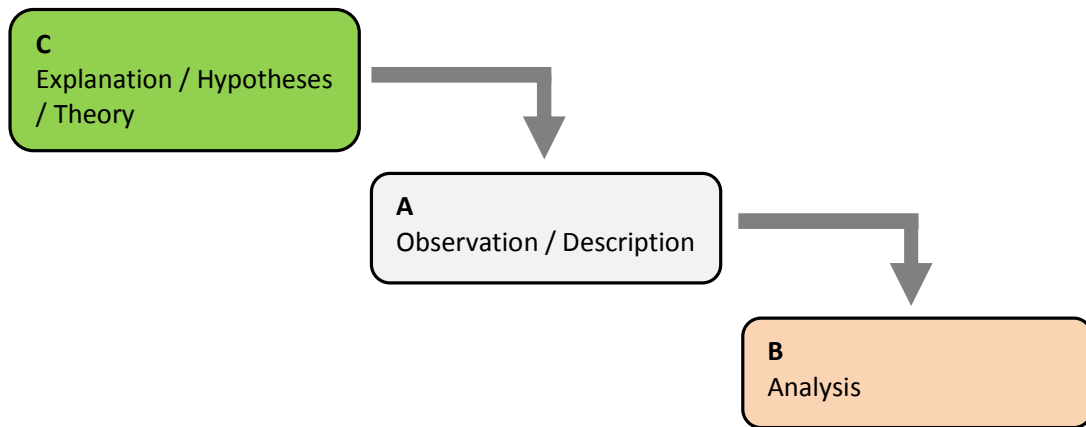
Source: William et al. (1982, cited in Veal, 2006, p.21)

According to the above classification, this study took a deductive research perspective; starting at point C with hypotheses, before proceeding to point B for the data collection, and then moving to point C for the analysis of the data gathered. There, an explanation of the phenomena will be delivered with efficient recommendations.

4.2.3.3 Exploratory, explanatory and descriptive research

The research type choice here depends on the nature of the research itself and the research approaches. In terms of research purposes, it can be classified into several general categories of research: exploratory, descriptive and explanatory (Robson, 1993); exploratory, descriptive or casual (Kumar, 1999); descriptive, explanatory and evaluative (Veal, 2006); exploratory, descriptive, explanatory and evaluative (Schutt, 2006).

According to Saunders et al. (2007), an exploratory study seeks to find out what is happening and assess the phenomenon in a new light. In this case, the researcher is unsure of the precise nature of the problem. The explanatory study, on the other hand, attempts to identify the relationship between variables. He indicates that there are three main methods of carrying out exploratory research:

- A review of the literature;
- Interviewing experts in the subject;
- Conducting focus group interviews.

Hedrick et al. (1993, cited in Gray, 2004, p.32) argue that the purpose of a descriptive study is to provide a picture of a phenomenon as it naturally occurs.

This study aimed at exploring the nature of the relationship between service quality, destination image and customer satisfaction amongst international tourists in Cameroon. It also intends to determine the challenges of Cameroon's tourism industry in terms of service quality. According to the research purpose classification, this study is obviously exploratory.

The above section has reviewed the theoretical approach and justification as illustrated in figure 4.6. The following section discusses the practical approach, which includes research methodology and methods. A case study is used as a research methodology and a wide range of data collection methods are employed to explore the influence of service quality and destination image on international tourists satisfaction. This picture is captured through a combination of appropriate methods; documents analysis, focus group interviews, semi-structured interviews, questionnaire survey and participant observation.

Figure 4.6: Theoretical approach
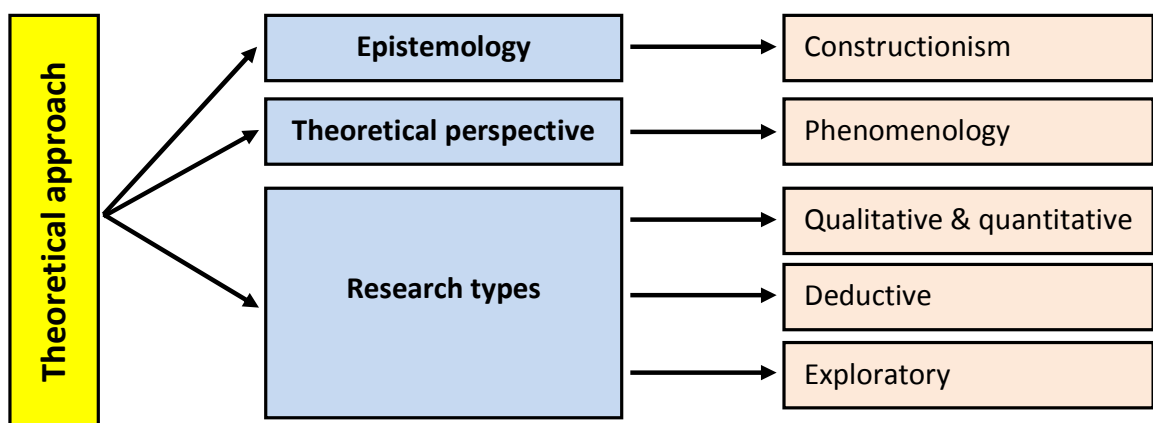
Source: The researcher, October 2013.

4.3 Practical approach

It is all about research methodology and methods.

4.3.1 Research methodology

Crotty (1998) defines research methodology as a strategy, plan, process and design linking the theoretical approach and the chosen research methods. In this context Saunders et al. (2007) state that there are a number of research strategies that can be employed for the research approach: experiment, survey, case study, action research, grounded theory, ethnography and archival research. They add that no research strategy is inherently inferior or superior to any other. The appropriate approach enables the researcher to answer the research questions and meet the research objectives. This study adopted the survey method.

A quick review of the literature will reveal many different definitions of what constitutes a survey. Some handbooks on survey methodology immediately describe the major components of surveys and of survey error instead of giving a definition (e.g. Groves, 1989; Fowler, Gallagher, Stringfellow, Zalavsky Thompson and Cleary, 2002), others provide definitions, ranging from concise definitions (e.g. Groves, et al, 2004; Czaja and Blair, 2005;) to elaborate descriptions of criteria (Biemer and Lyberg, 2003). What have these definitions in common? The survey research methods section of the American Statistical Association provides on its website an introduction (Scheuren, 2004) that explains survey methodology for survey users, covering the major steps in the survey process and explaining the methodological issues. According to Scheuren (2004) the word survey is used most often to describe a method of gathering information from a sample of individuals. Besides sample and gathering information, other recurring terms in definitions and descriptions are systematic or organised and quantitative. So, a survey can be seen as a research strategy in which quantitative information is systematically collected from a relatively large sample taken from a population.

De Leeuw, J. Hox and D. Dillman (2008, p.1) argued that "The idea of conducting a survey is deceptively simple. It involves identifying a specific group or category of people and collecting information from some of them in order to gain insight into what the entire group does or thinks; however, undertaking a survey inevitably raises

questions that may be difficult to answer. How many people need to be surveyed in order to be able to describe fairly accurately the entire group? How should the people be selected? What questions should be asked and how should they be posed to respondents? In addition, what data collection methods should one consider using, and are some of those methods of collecting data better than others? And, once one has collected the information, how should it be analysed and reported? Deciding to do a survey means committing oneself to work through a myriad of issues each of which is critical to the ultimate success of the survey".

Organisations and individuals often decide that a survey will help to solve some important problem because it seems so easy to prepare a form with some questions and send it out. But without careful attention to sampling, measurement, and overall survey design, the effort is likely to be a flop. Such flops are too common for comfort, and the responsible survey researcher must take the time to design surveys properly and to convince sponsoring organisations that this time is worth the effort (Turner and Martin, 1984, p.68). For a survey to succeed, it must minimise the risk of two types of error: poor measurement of cases that are surveyed (errors of observation) and omission of cases that should be surveyed (errors of non-observation) (Groves, 1989).

Potential problems that can lead to errors of observation stem from the way questions are written, the characteristics of the respondents who answer the questions, the way questions are presented in questionnaires, and techniques the interviewers use to ask the questions.

There are three sources of errors of non-observation: 1- Coverage of the population can be inadequate due to a poor sampling frame. 2- The process of random sampling can result in sampling error differences between the characteristics of the sample members and the population that arise due to chance. 3- Non-response can distort the sample when individuals refuse to respond or cannot be contacted. Non-response to specific questions can distort the generalisability of the responses to those questions.

4.3.2 Research methods

Crotty (1998, p.3) defines research methods as "the techniques and methods used together to analyse data related to some research questions or hypotheses". Research

methods are thus certain activities and procedures used when considering gathering and analysing the required data for the research. Jankowicz (2000) believes that research method can be defined as the systematic and orderly approach taken towards the collection and analysis of raw data so that usable information can be obtained from that data. A research method is about how the researcher conducts the study and obtains the required data and analyse them.

4.3.2.1 Data collection methods

According to Veal (1997) there are two types of data, primary data and secondary data. Primary data is new data collected specifically for the research study, and may be collected by a range of methods. Secondary data is data which already exists and was collected for another purpose. This data can be used as part of the current research as a second source of data.

The following Table compares the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and constraints of primary and secondary data.

Table 4.1: Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and constraints of primary and secondary data

	Collecting primary data	Using secondary data
Strengths	- you can control timing of data collection and the location of data to be obtained - you can use indicators not routinely collected in other surveys - you have information on programme participation status, so you can distinguish participants from non participants	- less expensive than primary data collection - no need to set up data collection system - in many cases, quality of national surveys is high - national surveys may also provide information at sub national levels
Weaknesses	- primary data collection is very expensive - much time is required for data collection, analysis and reporting	- cannot control the timeliness of data collection and availability of datasets - cannot regulate level of disaggregation of data, therefore coverage of project areas cannot be guaranteed - existing indicators may not be specific enough for impact assessment of the programme - might be difficult to identify programme participants
Opportunities	- strengthens the capacity of staff	- can add key indicators on food security to

	in carrying out primary data collection	national surveys such as Household Budget Surveys (HBS), census, Nutrition or Agricultural surveys - possibility of using small area statistics to disaggregate national surveys to lower levels than the survey foresaw (combined with recent census data)
Constraints	- may need to set up a new system from scratch to collect data - need capacity to design and pre-test questionnaires, train enumerators, supervise data collection, perform analysis and interpret data - need to obtain a valid and recent sampling frame for sample selection	- lack of control over data collection leads to non specific impact assessment of programs (e.g. timing of existing surveys may not coincide with baseline or end of program) - may require statistical expertise to manipulate data and carry out analyses

Source: FAO, 2011. *Assessing impact of development programmes on food Security quantitative methods: secondary data.*

Creswell (2003, p.187) lists qualitative data collection methods and provides a brief description of these methods as shown in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Qualitative data collection types, options and advantages

Data collection types	Options within types	Advantages of the type
Documents	- Public documents such as minutes of meetings and newspapers. - Private documents such as journals, diaries and letters. - E-mail discussion.	- Enables a researcher to obtain the language and words of participants. - Can be accessed at a time convenient to the researcher - It is an unobtrusive source of information. - Represents data that are thoughtful, in which participants have given attention to compiling. - As written evidence, it saves the researcher the time and expenses of transcribing.
Audiovisual	- Photographs - Videotapes - Art objects - Computer software - Films	- May be an unobtrusive method of collecting data. - Provides an opportunity for participants to directly share their "reality". - Creative in that it captures attention visually.
Interviews	- Face-to-face: one on one, in-person interview. - Telephone: researcher	- Useful when participants cannot be observed directly. - Participants can provide historical

	interviews by phone. - Group: researcher interviews participants in a group.	information - Allows researcher "control" over the line of questioning.
Observation	- Complete participant: researcher conceals role. - Observer as participant: role of researcher is known. - Participant as observer: observation role secondary to participant role. - Complete observer: researcher observes without participating	- Researcher has first-hand experience with participants. - Researcher can record information as it is revealed. - Unusual aspects can be noticed during observation. - Useful in exploring topics that may be uncomfortable for participants to discuss.

Source: Creswell (2003, p186 - 187). Note: Creswell (2003) included some materials from Merriam (1998), Bogdan and Biklen (1992), and Creswell (2002).

Triangulation is the technique of using a number of data collection methods to ensure the researcher addresses the phenomena from different angles in order to gain rich information. In order to gather enough relevant data and information for this study, we have used five different data collection methods: document analysis, focus group interviews, semi-structured interviews, participant observation and questionnaire survey. The purpose of combining all these available methods was also to increase the reliability and validity of the study's outcomes.

4.3.2.1.1 Document analysis

Burke and Larry (2005) divide documents into two types:

- Personal documents, including written or recorded things for private purpose.

- Official documents, including written or recorded things for public or private organisations.

By "things", they are referring to newspapers, magazines, annual reports, books and dairies. Yin (2003, p.81) asserts that "the most important use of documents is to corroborate evidence from other sources". A wide range of documents has been analysed for this study including books, journals, newspapers and reports.

4.3.2.1.2 Focus group interviews

According to Wholey et al. (2004), focus group methods are an important, sometimes essential tool used in marketing strategy. Focus groups interviews are qualitative

research methods and are employed to extract the range of perceptions, feelings, thoughts and alternative viewpoints that people might have about certain issues. Mack et al. (2005, p.51) state that "focus groups are a qualitative data collection method effective in helping researchers to learn the social norms of a community or subgroup, as well as the range of perspectives that exit within that community or subgroup".

Bouma and Ling (2006) emphasise that focus groups gather together the strengths of in-depth interviewing and observation in a group context. Focus group sessions are usually audio-recorded and sometimes videotaped. The researcher (the moderator) guides the discussion by asking participants open-ended questions, which require an in-depth response rather than short answers such as "yes" or "no" (Mack et al.,2005).

According to Vaughn et al. (1996 cited in Puchta and Potter, 2004, p.6) a focus group usually contains the following two core elements:

- A trained moderator who sets the stage with prepared questions or an interview guide;

- The goal of eliciting participants' feelings, attitudes and perceptions about a selected topic.

Dawson (2002, p.29) defines a focus group as *a* "number of people who are asked to come together in a group to discuss a certain issue". According to Calder (1977, 1994 cited in Puchtaand Potter, 2004) there are three approaches to focus groups: the exploratory, the clinical and the phenomenological approach. The phenomenological approach is described as the most relevant and commonly used in marketing research. Effective phenomenological approach allows the researcher to share the experience of consumers. Focus group interviews enable the researcher to explore the nature and effects of ongoing social discourse in ways which are not available through conducting individual interviews or observation (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005).

For Corlien, Indra and Ann (2003) there are always differences within the members of a focus group; for instance in educational level, political tendency, income status, gender, culture or ethnic group. These differences directly affect their perceptions about the topic or the problem. However, focus groups are useful for exploring ideas and obtaining in-depth information about how people think about an issue. Burke and Larry

(2005) point out that focus group sessions generally last between one and three hours and are recorded using audio and/or videotapes.

In the context of this study, three focus groups were conducted in November and December 2013. All three group discussions were led by the researcher, acting as the moderator/facilitator. Our main responsibilities were to introduce the topic, ask questions and control the conversation. In addition, we were always making sure that every participant contributes and no one dominates.

The first session (Saturday 23rd November 2013) was a pilot study group. It aimed at testing the relevance of our set of questions, to make sure they help bring out factual Cameroon destination image attributes and tourism service quality components. It was also the occasion to improve our moderator skills in terms of asking question accurately, motivating participants to contribute, moderating, time keeping, etc. We gathered 7 Europeans friends/colleagues (3 French, 2 British, 1 Italian and 1 Spanish) in our flat at Tulse hill. They were invited to participate 4 weeks ahead. We actually contacted 12, but only 7 turned up. 2 of them had already visited Cameroon, the other 5 not. We welcomed the group, introduced the purpose and context of the focus group, explained what a focus group is and how it will flow, and made participants presentations. The session was due to last 1 hour, but it actually took 1 hour and 27 minutes. The whole discussion was audio recorded via our smartphone. That pilot focus group helped the researcher redesign his questions set (delete irrelevant questions and add new ones, reorder them), learn how to better manage interventions to keep them short and precise without frustrating anyone, discover how important it was to provide them with few snacks and soft drinks to keep them motivated.

The second focus group was held on Saturday 6th December 2013 at the Brixton Library. This session's participants profile was: American or European aged 20 and more, who has never visited Cameroon. The purpose was to determine the perceived Cameroon destination image attributes and service quality dimensions; what factors could deter / motivate people to visit Cameroon. The researcher invited 20 people – who were friends' relatives – 12 confirmed their attendance, and just 9 turned up. There were 2 French, 2 British, 2 Italians, 1 American, 1 German and 1 Spanish. We welcomed the

group, presented the purpose and context of our meeting, explained what a focus group is and how it will go, and let each participant introduce himself briefly. The session lasted 1h09min, slightly more than expected. The whole discussion was audio recorded with 3 smartphones, dispatched in the meeting room in order to capture every participant's voice accurately. This focus group session brought out some new perceived Cameroon destination image attributes and service quality dimensions, and factors that could daunt / induce potential tourists to visit Cameroon. Extracting the perceived image and service quality was not an easy mission, since the quality of the data and approaches to elicit rich and well-discussed information were to be considered.

The Brixton library also hosted the third group discussion – on Saturday 13th December 2013. The participants profile for that session was: American or European aged 20 and more, who has already visited Cameroon. We aimed at establishing actual Cameroon destination image attributes and service quality dimensions; what factors really put off / motivate people to visit Cameroon. We invited 15 people – they were recommended to us by some travel agents in London – 11 confirmed their attendance, and just 7 turned up. We had 3 British, 2 French, 1 Dutch and 1 Spanish. We welcomed the group, introduced the aim and context of our session. We explained what a focus group is all about and how it will be conducted. Each partaker presented himself in a few words. The session ran for 1h03min, almost as expected. The whole debates were audio recorded with 3 smartphones, dispatched in the meeting room in order to capture every participant's sayings accurately. That workshop helped us determine some specific actual Cameroon destination image and service quality dimensions, and factors that really influence people's decision to visit Cameroon or not.

When closing each focus group, we thanked all participants, gave them an opportunity and avenue for further input, restated how the data will be used, and let them know when the larger process will be completed. All audio files were transferred into the researcher's computer and tablet right at the end of each session, and then carefully stored on Google Drive.

4.3.2.1.3 Semi-structured interviews

In social sciences research there are many types of interviews, but the most common interviews are: structured, unstructured and semi-structured (Dawson, 2002; Miller and Brewer, 2003; Saunders et al., 2007). According to Finn, Elliott-White and Walton (2000) these three different types of interviews can be used to gather primary data in the tourism and leisure industry, and the type chosen will depend on the research aims. In a structured interview, a standard interview schedule is designed and questions predetermined ready for answering in a face-to-face interview. This type is more convenient for survey-style interviews and produces quantitative data. However, a semi-structured interview has specified and predetermined questions, but will allow the researcher to delve further by facilitating discussion. This allows the investigation to provide more clarification, and the data generated will be rich and qualitative. Finally, in an unstructured interview, no questions are predetermined. This is sometimes called an exploratory interview and is usually associated with ethnographic research.

As the research endeavours gaining rich and in depth information, semi-structured interviews were employed as a meaningful data collection technique beside focus group interviews. They also helped us close questions on the questionnaire administrated later on to international tourists in Cameroon.

We conducted semi-structured interviews in 2 periods:

    1- Travel agents in London (13 – 22 January 2014).

We interviewed 3 travel agents' managers. The first 2 (Euro Africa Travel – 13 January 2014 and Africa Travel – 16 January 2014) do not sell Cameroon destination. These interviews helped us better figure out Cameroon destination deficiencies in terms of brand image marketing and service quality.

The 3rd one (Real Holidays – 22 January 2014) offers Cameroon packages. That meeting gave us further insights about factors that motivate people to visit/revisit and recommend Cameroon destination.

    2- Tourism stakeholders and international tourists in Cameroon (31 March – 10 April 2014).

We flew from London to Yaoundé on the 26th of March 2014 and started interviews on the 31st of March. We had booked appointments with interviewees months before. We

conducted a total of 39 semi-structured interviews. Details are presented in the following Table.

Table 4.3: Semi-structured interviews conducted in Yaoundé

Cameroon tourism authorities (Ministry of Tourism)	2
Hotel managers (Djeuga, Merina and Somatel)	3
Restaurant managers (Aux fines épices, L'Africain and Le Bunker)	3
Tourist site managers (Yaoundé Zoo and Eto Kos complex)	2
Travel agency's managers (ITA and Sofitoul)	2
International tourists	27
	39

Source: The researcher, April 2014.

Interviews with tourism authorities and managers were done in their office. We met tourists at their hotel. Those sessions helped ascertain Cameroon destination attributes and actual service quality dimensions, and then close questions on the questionnaire. The survey instrument was therefore ready for the quantitative part of our data collection.

According to Bouma and Ling (2006) interviews can be recorded and descriptions created that allow the researcher to review the interview context many times. Silverman (2001) suggests that the advantages of tape recording are that tapes are a public record and can be replayed, and transcripts improved. They also preserve the sequence of the dialogue. Keeping the source of data is a crucial function for two reasons: first, the source of data is tangible evidence of the research findings and results; second, it can be reviewed as many times as needed for the researcher to comprehend the whole text which is translated and transcribed later.

During the different interviews, we were encouraging each participant to talk, moving him on through the questions, getting him to stop and think, and keeping him on the subject. Each session lasted approximately 30 min. Tourism stakeholders in Cameroon did not agree for their sayings to be audio recorded. So, only interviews with travel agents in London and International tourists in Yaoundé were audio recorded. All audio files were transferred into the researcher's computer and tablet right at the end of each meeting, and then carefully stored on Google Drive.

4.3.2.1.4 Questionnaire survey

Our survey was conducted in 3 phases: 14 April – 28 June 2014 (165 questionnaires), 28 February – 11 April 2015 (108 questionnaires) and 02 March – 10 May 2016 (139 questionnaires)

After having completed the questionnaire design, based on focus groups and semi-structured interviews findings, we started the survey phase on Tuesday the 14th of April 2014 with a team of 2 trained investigators. From 14 April to 28 June 2014 we self-administrated 162 questionnaires in 6 Cameroon Regions (Adamawa, Centre, Littoral, North, South, and West). We could not cover one of the most important Cameroon touristic Regions – the Far-North – due to the intensive fights ragging there between the Cameroonian army and the terrorist group Boko Haram.

Despite serious security concerns vis-a-vis the North Region expressed by tourism authorities we met in Ngaoundéré, we decided to get there to assess the situation our self and collect more precious data. We went there alone, leaving our 2 teammates continue the survey in Ngaoundéré and surroundings. We arrived in Garoua (North) on Friday 06 June 2014 and took a room at Hôtel du plateau. We administrated some questionnaires that same evening to a small group of French tourists we met at our hotel. On Saturday 07 June 2014 morning, when touring the city on motorbike, we stopped at the Bénoué Bridge to snap the memorial plaque. Right after our second camera shot, 2 soldiers jumped out of a bush nearby and arrested us. We got escorted few minutes later to the Regional intelligence headquarter by 5 heavily armed military. It is during our interview with intelligence officer that we understood why we got apprehended: We were suspected to be linked to the terrorist group Boko Haram, since it was alleged that they had threatened few days before to blow out that bridge, in order to cut off the Northern part of Cameroon from the rest of the country. We should acknowledge that before that incident we were not fully aware how strategic the Bénoué Bridge is for the connection between the Northern and the Southern parts of Cameroon.

Following the audition by the intelligence officer, we were interrogated by the deputy head of North Cameroon intelligence services. After having fully checked our details, he retained our ID documents and recommended us to stay at his disposal in Garoua till Monday 09 June 2014 for further investigation. He issued a note allowing us to move

around freely within the Region while waiting for his feedback. On Sunday 08 June 2014 we continued our data collection in Garoua neighboring cities (Pitoa and Lagdo). We went back to the intelligence services office on Monday 09 June 2014 as requested by the deputy head and everything was sorted out. We got back all our ID documents and were left free to go.

Picture 4.1: The researcher during his audition with the intelligence officer
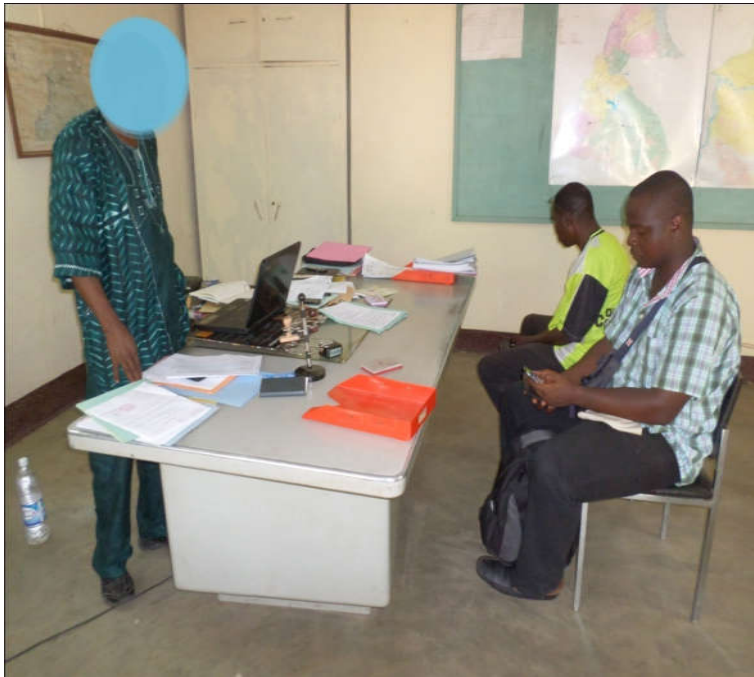
Source: The researcher, June 2014.

Before leaving Garoua that same day to Ngaoundéré, we had a 40 minute interview with the Regional Delegate of Tourism in the North about the impact of recent terrorist attacks on the local tourism industry. We rejoined our 3 teammates in Ngaoundéré on Monday evening and we took a train for Yaoundé on Tuesday 10 June 2014 morning. We concluded that first step of our survey on Saturday 28 June 2014 with a total of 165 self-administrated questionnaires. We flew back to London on Monday 30th June 2014. After having sorted that first set of data, we went back to Cameroon on the 23rd of February 2015. We resumed on Friday 28th February and focused this time on 2 of the most touristic Regions: South and West. 108 questionnaires were administrated.

We were back to Cameroon the year after; on the 18th of February to complete our survey (02 March – 10 May 2016: 139 questionnaires). We concluded our quantitative data collection process with a total of 412 questionnaires.

4.3.2.1.5 Observation

According to Bouma and Ling (2006) observation is a qualitative data collection method that requires disciplined planning and alertness. Observation can be carried out in two forms; participant and non-participant observation. Proctor (2000, p.206) argues that observation involves the personal or mechanical monitoring of selected activities. It records actions as they occur and thus there is no lack of accuracy caused by a respondent's faulty recollection of its past actions or inadequate estimation of future ones.

Jones and Somekh (2007) point out that participant observation achieves unique insights in behaviour and activities of observed subjects because the observer participates in group activities. Moreover, the researcher observes participants in natural and/or structured environments; observation methods provide the researcher with a degree of realism (Burke and Larry, 2005). For Ely (1991 cited in Jones and Somekh, 2007) when they use the observation method, researchers are involved in the first phase of looking at the field before seeking out how to analyse the gathered data by establishing the essential meaning of the raw data.

During that 25-week survey period in Cameroon (14 April – 28 June 2014, 27 February – 11 April 2015 and 02 March – 10 May 2016), we travelled around the country, accompanied by 2 investigators; covering 6 of the 10 Regions of Cameroon. We used public transport, ate in classy and street restaurants, slept in hotels and motels. We also traveled with groups of tourists in order to make use of their free time on the road to administrate our questionnaires. During the time we spent with them, we did not only focus on our questionnaire; we also had informal discussions about their customer experience (some of them were recorded with their permission), and we participated in some of their activities (visit of touristic sites, recreational activities).

Our participant observation helped spotting some important issues that have not been identified by other data collection methods (documents, interviews and questionnaire

survey). One of the main concerns we noted is the significant difference in service quality delivered in urban or rural cities. We decided to investigate it deeply.

Some elements of the data collected by observation are used in our research in the storytelling approach.

Picture 4.2: The researcher at a street restaurant in Mbalmayo

Source: The researcher, June 2014.

4.3.2.2 Population sampling

Sampling means considering a part of a whole population. According to Dereshiwsky (1998) there are three reasons why researchers use samples: time; cost; convenience/accessibility. Finn et al. (2000) claims that researchers have to answer two questions in any sample survey: How should the sample be obtained and how large should the sample be? They suggest that there are basically two types of sampling: probability sampling, where each element in the population has an equal chance of being selected in the sample; and non-probability sampling, where not all elements have an equal chance of being selected. In this context Burns (2000, p.83) argues that "we cannot make any valid generalisation about the population from which the sample was drawn unless the sample is representative"

Burke and Larry (2005) believe that the main objective of sampling is to produce a representative sample which has similar characteristics as the population as a whole. Sampling is the scientific approach of getting data from part of the whole population; the selected samples must be representative in order to allow the researcher to generalise the research findings and results.

4.3.2.2.1 Target Population

We focused on Americans and Europeans and not Asians or other African nationals because the westerners currently represent the largest portion of Cameroon international tourists and are the one spending the most.

4.3.2.2.2 Sample Size

Confidence interval approach was used to determine the sample size (Burns and Bush, 1995). The formula for obtaining 95% accuracy at the 95% confidence level is: $\mathbf{n} = \frac{z^2(pq)}{e^2} = \frac{1.96^2(0.5*0.5)}{0.05^2} = \mathbf{385}$ Where:

n = sample size

z = standard error associated with chosen level of confidence (95%)

p = estimated variability in the population 50%*

q = (1 − p)

e = acceptable error + 5% (desired accuracy 95%)

Note: *The amount of variability in the population is estimated to be 50%, which is widely used in social research (e.g. National opinion polls in the USA). From a practical standpoint, most researchers will choose the 50% level of p because it results in the most conservative sample size (Burns and Bush, 1995).

Applying this formula, the sample size was set at 385 at 95% confidence level with 95% desired accuracy. On site surveys generally obtain a relatively higher response rate than online surveys. However, since the tourists are usually there for a limited period of time and to enjoy themselves, not "waste" their precious time participating in surveys, we expected a response rate of 30%. Assuming a response rate of 30% and an unusable rate of 10%, more than 1,925 (385/0.2) people were approached to participate in our survey.

Incentives such as free tourist guide leaflets were offered to increase the response rate. We also managed to interview them during their time off: In the evening at their hotel, at restaurants while they were waiting to be served or in the bus when they were commuting from a city/tourist site to another one.

4.3.2.2.3 Sampling approach

There are a number of sample techniques that can be used to collect data (see Figure 3.10).

Figure 4.7: The common sampling techniques and types
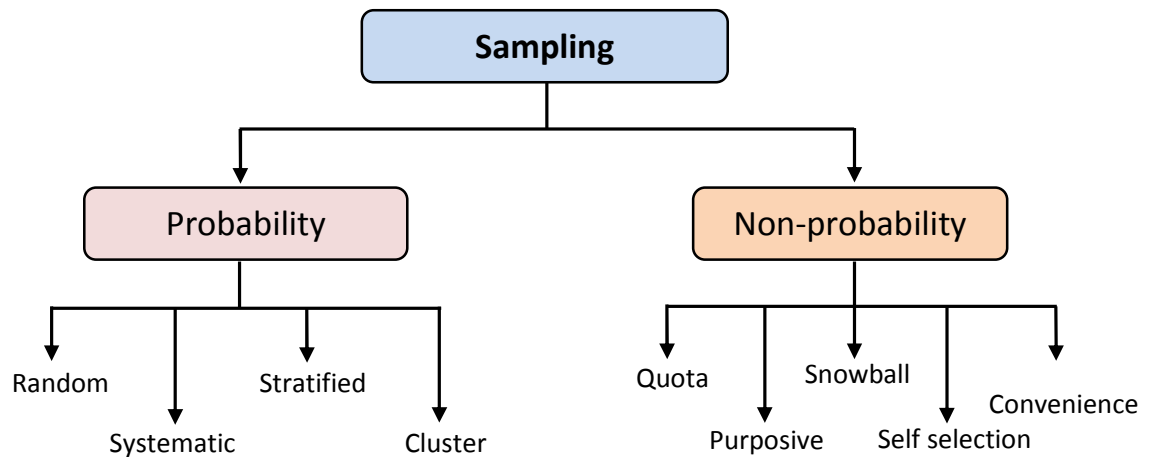
Source: Saunders et al. (2007, p.207)

Given the large number of our target population and the size of our area of study (Cameroon), we opted for the two stage cluster sampling method. We firstly divided the population in 8 groups by cities (8 of the most touristic cities of Cameroon). Secondly, we randomly selected in each city (cluster) international tourists to be approached for our questionnaire survey.

Figure 4.8: Two stage cluster sampling
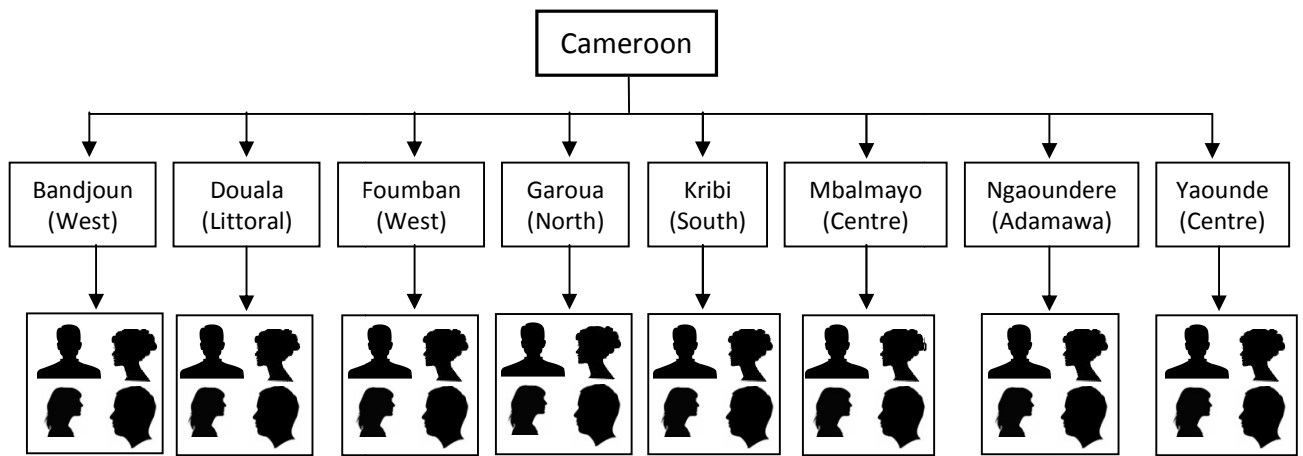
Source: The researcher, 2015

We could not travel all over Cameroon to cover all the touristic cities of the country in 16 weeks. This method helped us save time and minimise survey costs.

4.3.2.3 Data analysis

In recent years, more social and health sciences researchers have been using mixed-methods designs for their studies. The rationale for mixing both kinds of data within one study is grounded in the fact that neither quantitative nor qualitative methods are sufficient, by themselves, to capture the trends and details of a situation. When used in combination, quantitative and qualitative methods complement each other and allow for a more robust analysis, taking advantage of the strengths of each one of them (Green, Caracelli and Graham, 1989; Miles and Huberman, 1994; Green and Caracelli, 1997; Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998).

There are about forty mixed-methods research designs reported in the literature (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003). Creswell et al. (2003) identified the six most often used designs, which include three concurrent and three sequential designs. One of those is the mixed-methods sequential explanatory design (MMSED).

4.3.2.3.1 Mixed-methods sequential explanatory design

The MMSED is highly popular among researchers and implies collecting and analysing first quantitative and then qualitative data in two consecutive phases within one study.

Its characteristics are well described in the literature (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998; Creswell, 2003, 2005; Creswell, et al., 2003), and the design has found application in both social and behavioral sciences research (Kinnick and Kempner, 1988; Ceci, 1991; Klassen and Burnaby, 1993; Janz, et al., 1996).

Researchers who choose to conduct a mixed-methods sequential explanatory study have to consider certain methodological issues. Such issues include the priority or weight given to the quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis in the study, the sequence of the data collection and analysis, and the stage/stages in the research process at which the quantitative and qualitative phases are connected and the results are integrated (Morgan, 1998; Creswell, et al. 2003).

In the case of this study, the researcher started with the qualitative approach. We conducted 3 focus groups and 3 semi-structured interviews in London - UK, plus 39 semi-structured interviews in Yaoundé – Cameroon. The exploitation of their outcomes helped fully inform the design of the questionnaire used later on to survey international tourists in Cameroon (397 questionnaires administrated).

4.3.2.3.2 Software for data analysis

The number and types of statistical software packages that are available continue to grow each year. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was chosen to analyse because of its popularity within both academic and business circles, making it the most widely used package of its type. SPSS is also a versatile package that allows many different types of analyses, data transformations, and forms of output - in short, it more than adequately served our purposes. SPSS data were also exported to Microsoft Excel in order to easily generate meaningful graphs and charts.

No software was used to analyse qualitative data derived from our focus group and semi-structured interviews. All the necessary information and quotes were extracted manually after the transcription of audio recordings.

4.3.2.3.3 Statistical tests

Four statistical tests were performed to analyse the data:

1- Descriptive statistical analysis: It helped describe the basic features of the data in this study. It provided simple summaries about the sample and the measures.

2- Factor analysis: It was used to reduce the bulky number of variables into fewer numbers of factors. We extracted maximum common variance from all variables and put them into a common score.

3- One way ANOVA test: Our study area was divided into two groups, urban and rural cities. This test examined the existence of significant differences in service quality dimensions between urban and rural tourists.

4- Regression analysis: It is a set of statistical processes for estimating the relationships among variables. It helps understand how the typical value of the dependent variable changes when any one of the independent variables is varied, while the other independent variables are held fixed. We used Regression analysis to test the research hypotheses, determine the existence of a significant relationship between the variables under study and to establish the predictive power of service quality on customer satisfaction.

4.4 Ethical considerations

Research ethics are concerned with the appropriateness of the researcher's behavior and attitudes in relation to the rights of the target audience or interviewees who become the subject of the research work (Saunders et al., 2007). Blaxter et al. (2006) claim that in social sciences research responsibility and ethical issues should be the top priorities. They also assert that ethical issues arise essentially in the first stages of the research design which must employ appropriate approach for data collection. Therefore, there are several aspects to be considered in this study such as informed consent, potential harm and risk, honesty and trust, privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity.

4.4.1 Informed consent

The informed consent is concerned with the level of awareness for participants in what the researcher is doing, and what the purpose of the study is. Hence, we first introduced ourself and our project to all participants in the focus group and semi-structured

interviews. Our 2 survey team mates did the same while administrating questionnaires in Cameroon. Official letters from TSD University were also presented, allowing the researcher to conduct the field work. These procedures ensured all partakers are aware and informed about the study. We encouraged them to feel more relaxed in order to contribute efficiently. Furthermore, the possibility to withdraw from the study at any time was given to all participants.

4.4.2 Harm and risk

There are a number of types of harm that participants can be subjected to. These include:

- **Psychological distress and discomfort**

Research studies can put participants in situations that may make them feel uncomfortable in order to learn about their reaction to a situation. The result can be psychological harm that can manifest itself through worry (warranted or unwarranted), feeling upset or depressed, embarrassed, shameful or guilty, and/or result in the loss of self-confidence. When collecting information from participants about upsetting and/or disturbing events, there is a potential for the researcher to upset or disturb his participants. Asking information about painful experiences could upset the participant and may bring other psychological issues to the surface. The potential for harm can increase depending on how long and often the participant is involved in the study and the capacity of the individual to handle upsetting situations. For a normal, healthy adult, temporarily being in a situation that is frightening or upsetting may not cause any lasting harm, particularly if the participant is adequately debriefed and able to process the meaning of the activity. However, if a person does not have the mental and/or emotional capacity to process a stressful situation, participation in the study may be beyond what the individual can handle.

To minimise the risk, the researcher only dealt with people over 18 years old. We developed an appropriate consent process which involved not only informing the participant at the beginning of the study but continuing to monitor their progress; allowing room for withdrawal at any point, and an informative debriefing period after the interview.

- **Physical harm**

This risk tends to be less frequent with a social and behavioral science studies. Our research itself did not present any physical harm risk to the participants. But since our survey was conducted in a particular context where Cameroon was experiencing the occurrence of the first terrorist attacks from Boko Haram in the Northern part, we avoided interviewing tourists in risky areas (markets, open tourist sites, etc.). All questionnaires were administrated in hotels and restaurants in the North of Cameroon.

- **Legal Harm**

Unlike doctors and lawyers, researchers cannot protect their participants' confidences in a court of law. Information collected about any individual during a study could be subpoenaed.

The researcher did not intend to collect information that could be a legal risk to participants, but there may be a possibility that it could be divulged. Therefore, in order to protect them, we instructed during the consent process all the participants not to share risky information with us, and then reminded them every time the subject came up. We also made sure we stop the recording when necessary and erase unwanted elements.

- **Social Harm**

When studying an individual, it is important to consider their social situation and how they function in it. Depending on the subject of the research and how well known it is in the community, even associating with the researcher could have risks for the participant. It can be the case for studies related to terrorism.

The current research being positively oriented - developing the Cameroon tourism industry – there was no serious threat for the participants. However, in order to reduce risks to the minimum; we preserved all participants privacy and confidentiality by avoiding collecting their names and function.

- **Economic Harm**

Economic risks can manifest in terms of costs participants would have to bear in order to participate in the study such as travel, child care, food, etc; or time the interview will last, particularly if it is time that they would spend away from their employment.

We offered £5 travel expenses reimbursement and refreshments to each focus group participant in London. To avoid costs for participants in Cameroon, we interviewed

them at their workplace during their break (Managers) and at their hotel, in between their leisure activities or in buses (tourists).

4.4.3 Honesty and trust

The issues of honesty and trust are focused on the relationship between the researcher and the target audience. Keats (2000) suggests that the researcher should have a good relationship with the interviewees and avoid talking to the participants imprecisely or have a study title that does not reflect the research contents and inquiries. Keats (2000, p.32) added that "Apart from the ethical issues involved, deliberately giving misleading information can also have disastrous effects upon the respondent-interviewer relationship when respondents later begin to realise that they have been misled".

In order to overcome that issue, we provided participants with sufficient information about our self and the study at the beginning of each focus group or interview. Questionnaires had an introductory head. Additionally, the researcher foremost interest was to contribute to Cameroon's tourism industry development; there was therefore no reason to mislead participants.

4.4.4 Deception

Deception refers to the process of obtaining information through trickery or fraudulent means (Punch, 1994 cited in Denzin and Lincoin, 1994, p.20). Since this research aimed at providing an academic framework and make practical recommendations to boost Cameroon's tourism performance, most of participants were happy to freely express their feelings. Thus, there was no reason for the researcher to use any sort of trick to obtain information.

4.5 Validity and reliability

Validity is the extent to which a scale or set of measures accurately represents the concept of interest. Reliability is an assessment of the degree of consistency between multiple measurements of a variable (Hair et al., 1998).

4.5.1 Validity

Validity of a measure can be inferred through two validity checks - content validity and construct validity.

Content validity is the extent to which a measurement reflects the specific intended domain of content. The key to content validity lies in the procedures that are used to develop the instrument (Churchill, 2000). For this study, a combination of the in-depth review of literature, focus group sessions and interviews was conducted to ensure the inclusion of an adequate and representative set of items that tap the concepts "Service quality", "destination image" and "customer satisfaction". Then 2 tourism management experts examined the generated list of service quality dimensions and destination image attributes to ensure that they adequately covered the most important aspects of the constructs. The survey instrument was submitted to the researcher's academic supervisors for their comments and inputs.

Construct validity, an overarching term now seen by most to encompass all forms of validity, refers to the extent to which a measure adequately assesses the theoretical concept it purports to assess (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994). Construct validation is a complex and on-going endeavor. Theory, research design and analysis have direct bearing on the validation process. No simple metric can be used to quantify the extent to which a measure can be described as construct valid. Researchers typically establish construct validity by correlating a measure of a construct with a number of other measures that should, theoretically, be associated with it (convergent validity) or vary independently of it (discriminant validity). For example, multi-trait multi-method (MTMM) matrix proposed by Campbell and Fiske (1959) assesses convergent and discriminant validity of measures.

The scale used in this study was adapted from established existing measures that have been applied and validated in numerous tourism studies. In addition, the validity of the measurement scale was also assessed via the confirmatory factor analysis. The convergent validity of the scale was measured by tests of composite reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE). High CR and AVE values indicate high convergent reliability of the measurement.

4.5.2 Reliability

Reliability is an assessment of the degree of consistency between multiple measurements of a variable (Hair et al., 1998).

Reliability is a necessary, though not sufficient condition for validity. However, since reliability is more easily determined than validity, there has been a greater emphasis on it historically for inferring the quality of measures (Pedhazur and Schmelkin, 1991). For this study, a pilot test was conducted to check the internal consistency of the questionnaire items. The pilot sample size was determined using the confidence interval approach: a sample with 80% accuracy at the 95% confidence level is calculated as

$$n = \frac{1.96^2(0.5\_0.5)}{0.2^2} = 25$$

We approached, with the first draft of the survey instrument, 50 randomly selected visitors who stayed in Yaoundé hotels and motels. A reliability analysis using Cronbach's alpha was performed to test the internal consistency of the three measurements: service quality (20 items), destination image (9 items) and customer satisfaction (8 items). An alpha of 0.7 or above is considered acceptable as a good indication of reliability (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994).

A total of 27 tourists completed our questionnaire. The results of the reliability analysis showed that the scales were internally reliable: $\alpha = 0.925$ for service quality, $\alpha = 0.963$ for destination image, and $\alpha = 0.807$ for customer satisfaction. The alpha values well exceeded the minimum standard (0.70) suggested by Nunnally and Bernstein (1994). Based on the results of the pilot test and feedback from Cameroon tourism stakeholders, the final version of the survey instrument was developed (Appendix 4).

In order to increase furthermore the study reliably and validity a triangulation approach was used. We employed five research methods (document analysis, focus group interviews, semi-structured interviews, participant observation and questionnaire survey), and gather data from various information sources (tourism companies managers, Cameroon government officials and international tourists). In addition, samples were selected from diverse locations across Cameroon.

Figure 4.9 summarises the practical approach justification. It shows that a case study was applied as research methodology and five research methods employed to gather the

required data. It also presents the sampling techniques and data analysis used in this research.

Figure 4.9: Research practical approach
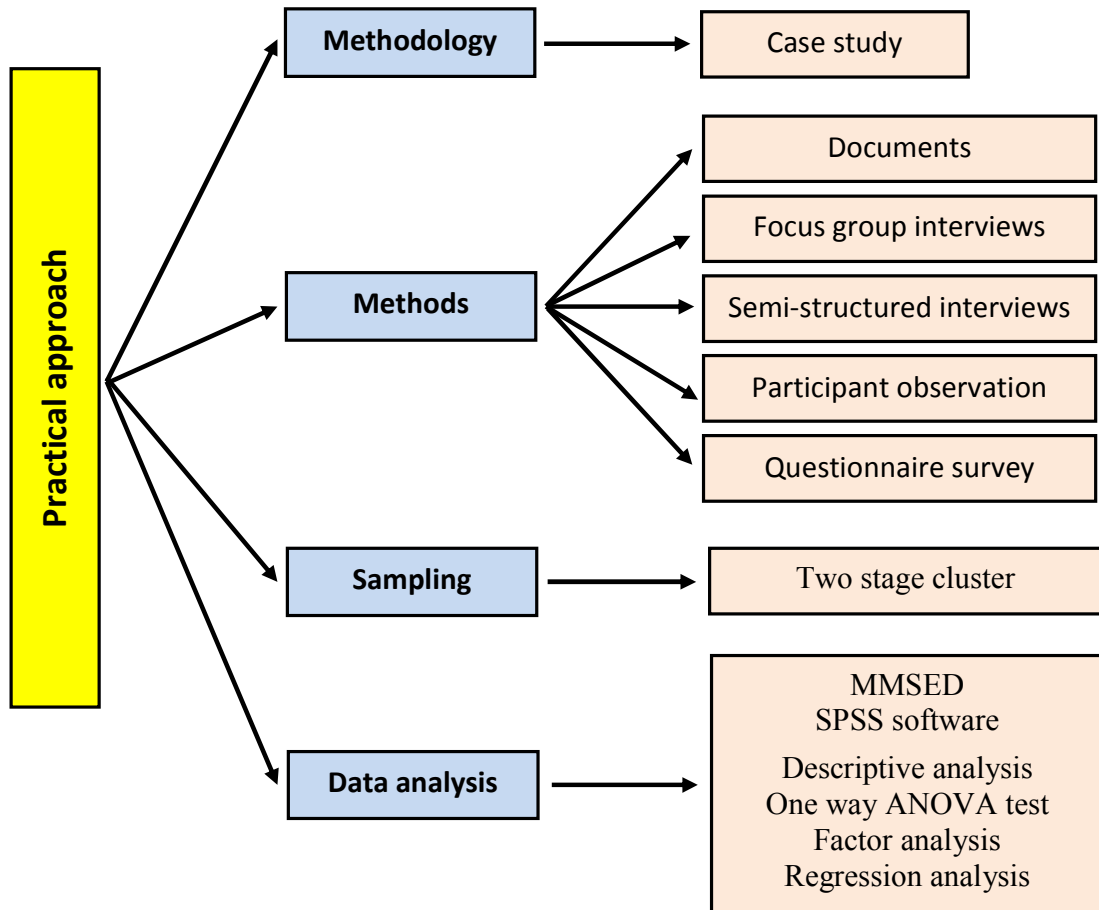
Source: The researcher, August 2014

4.6 Conceptual Framework

The study adopted the conceptual framework in Figure 4.10. The independent variables and the mediating variable were precursors to the dependent variable. The conceptual schema identified service quality as the independent variable and destination image as the mediating variable, while customer satisfaction was the dependent variable.

Instead of examining only one direct causal relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction, the proposed meditational model hypothesised that the

independent variable (service quality) influenced the mediating variable (destination image) which in turn influenced the dependent variable (customer satisfaction). A mediating variable is one that links an independent variable and a dependent variable. It was further proposed that the mediating variable had a strong influencing effect on the relationship between the independent and the dependent variables.

Destination image is the net result of the combined experiences, impressions, beliefs, feelings and knowledge that people have about the country. These subtle elements send strong signals towards improving the destination image and consequently influence tourists' satisfaction. Tourist satisfaction is achieved when service quality meets their needs, makes them display willingness to come back and recommend the destination to others.

Initially, the study proposed four dimensions of service quality; human elements, non-human elements, service blueprint and core service. Human element was a construct coined to recapitulate the aspects of service delivery strongly driven by the activities of the boundary spanners during the service encounter and included reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy. Non-human elements referred to the physical evidence in service environment. Service blueprint defined the procedures, systems and technology that would make a service a seamless one. The core service was encapsulated as the "content" of a service and it portrayed the "what" of a service.

Figure 4.10: Conceptual framework

Mediating variable

Independent variable

Dependent variable

Destination Image

☐ Posts and comments on social platforms about Cameroon
☐ Perception of the country by prospects
☐ Country's communication campaigns
☐ Media reports on Cameroon

Service Quality Dimensions

Human Elements
☐ Responsiveness
☐ Reliability
☐ Assurance
☐ Empathy

Non-human Elements
☐ Modern facilities
☐ Scenery beauty
☐ Employees appearance
☐ Personal safety

Service Blue Print
☐ Visa process
☐ Information at the embassy
☐ Payment process
☐ Reception at the Cameroon airport
☐ Transportation means

Core Service
☐ Service in restaurants & hotels
☐ Reception and information on touristic sites
☐ Beauty of cultural events

Customer Satisfaction

☐ Smooth visa process
☐ Positive experience at the Cameroon airport
☐ Overall satisfaction with the service quality in hotels / restaurants / tourist sites
☐ Willingness to come back to the country
☐ Willingness to recommend the country to friends / acquaintances

H6 H8 H1 H2 H3 H4 H5 H7 H8

Source: Adapted from Owino, E. O., 2013. *The influence of service quality and corporate image on customer satisfaction among university students in Kenya*. Nairobi: University of Nairobi, p.30.

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4.7 Hypotheses

The following hypotheses are developed from the research objectives, the literature review and the conceptual framework:

H_1: There is a significant relationship between human elements and customer satisfaction.

H_2: There is a significant relationship between non-human elements and customer satisfaction.

H_3: There is a significant relationship between service blueprint and customer satisfaction.

H_4: There is a significant relationship between core service and customer satisfaction.

H_5: There is a significant relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction.

H_6: There is a significant relationship between service quality and destination image.

H_7: There is a significant relationship between destination image and customer satisfaction.

H_8: There is a significant mediating effect of destination image on the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction.

H_9: The service quality perception in rural Regions is significantly different from that in urban Regions.

4.8 Summary

This chapter has demonstrated the research epistemology, the theoretical perspective, the methodology and methods. The research question and objectives influenced the researcher to adopt both qualitative and quantitative approaches, in order to gain rich information about the phenomenon and investigate certain issues in detail. This study applied a systematic approach from the first stage of research design until the data was collected and analysed.

With the intention of obtaining high validity and reliability, data were gathered by employing multiple methods, including document analysis, focus group interviews, semi structured interviews, participant observation and questionnaire survey. The survey instrument was scientifically designed based on the contributions from Londoners who have already visited Cameroon and others who have not yet, tourism

experts in London; tourism companies' managers, government officials and international tourists in Cameroon. Moreover, survey samples were circumspectly selected from different locations across the country.

CHAPTER FIVE: DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents an analysis of the data collected and the study findings. Data analysis was undertaken in three steps; data preparation, data analysis and reporting as recommended by Owino (2013). After field work, data were prepared by checking the questionnaires, editing, coding, transcribing and cleaning data. Data were analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The transcribed data were subjected to data cleaning using descriptive statistics as evidenced in Appendix 10. No outliers and errors were apparent from data, and the data set was considered clean for analysis.

The study undertook four statistical tests: descriptive statistical analysis, factor analysis, one way ANOVA test and regression analysis. Descriptive statistics were used to describe the study variables particularly the sample profile. Factor analysis was run to decompose the large number of variables into a set of core underlying factors. The ANOVA test was used to examine the existence of significant differences in service quality dimensions between urban and rural tourists. Regression analysis helped test the research hypotheses, determine the existence of a significant relationship between the variables under study and ascertain the predictive power of service quality on customer satisfaction.

5.2 Response Rate

Since we chose to self-administrate all our questionnaires, we did not have to deal with non-returned ones. Following the data editing process, 397 questionnaires out of 412 were found usable. The final sample size adopted in this study was therefore 397 respondents.

5.3 Internal Consistency of Study Variables

The study sought to establish the internal consistency of the key variables in the study. This was achieved by subjecting the seven key variables to a reliability test as shown in Table 5.1 A scale test of the seven variables yielded an overall Cronbach alpha coefficient = 0.937 which was considered very reliable in providing consistent results overtime. George and Mallery (2003) posited the following rule: α greater

than 0.9 as excellent, α greater than 0.8 as good, α greater than 0.7 as acceptable, α greater than 0.6 as questionable, α greater than 0.5 as poor, and α less than 0.5 as unacceptable. The closer Cronbach's alpha coefficient is to 1.0, the greater is the internal consistency of the items in the scale.

The inter-item correlation matrix in Table 5.1 shows no negative value, implying all the items are measuring the same underlying characteristics. The presence of negative variables would have indicated that in the process of questionnaire design, some of the questions were reversed, but were not correctly scored in the transcription stage (George and Mallery, 2003).

Table 5.1: Inter-Item Correlation Matrix

Variable	Human elements	Non-human elements	Service blue print	Core service	Service quality	Destination image	Customer satisfaction
Human elements	1.000						
Non-human elements	.769	1.000					
Service blue print	.634	.651	1.000				
Core service	.742	.683	.679	1.000			
Service quality	.927	.903	.749	.834	1.000		
Destination image	.662	.683	.657	.621	.753	1.000	
Customer satisfaction	.704	.639	.642	.668	.746	.709	1.000

Source: Primary Data, 2016.

Table 5.2 shows what the Cronbach's alpha value would be if a particular item was deleted from the scale. It shows that the removal of any item would result in alpha value greater than 0.9, but the removal of the service quality item would reduce the Cronbach's alpha to its lowest (α = 0.907). Given that Cronbach's Alpha if item deleted for all the seven items was greater than 0.7. None of the items was deleted from analysis and the seven items in the study were inferred to have excellent internal consistency and could therefore be successfully replicated using a similar methodology.

Table 5.2: Item-Total statistics

Variable	Scale Mean if item deleted	Scale Variance if item deleted	Corrected item-total correlation	Squared multiple correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if item deleted
Human elements	21.3564	19.837	.839	.938	.928
Non-human elements	21.4873	18.207	.821	.967	.938
Service blue print	21.1984	18.198	.723	.817	.936
Core service	21.2993	18.671	.799	.769	.932
Service quality	21.4937	19.032	.972	.987	.907
Destination image	21.5002	18.927	.798	.639	.922
Customer satisfaction	21.3994	19.021	.782	.628	.939

Source: Primary Data, 2016.

The study sought a sample set whose results could represent the parameters of the population, leading to generalization of findings. For this reason, we adopted the use of parametric statistics in undertaking four statistical tests including descriptive statistics, factor analysis, ANOVA and linear regression analysis. The use of these four requires a normally distributed data set (Osborne, 2010).

The use of parametric statistics requires that the sample data should be normally distributed, have homogeneity of variance and be continuous. Two methods of testing for normality proposed by Park (2008) were adopted: graphical methods and numerical methods. Graphical methods were preferred because they visualize the distributions of random variables and are easy to interpret. From Appendix 7 it was deduced that the data was normally distributed. The two key constructs in our work, service quality and destination image, were subjected to a normality test using histogram distribution and quantile-quantile (Q-Q) plots. Appendix 8 shows no major violation of normality test using Q-Q plots was reported.

The graphical analysis was supplemented by numerical analysis of normality using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. Numerical methods provide objective ways of examining normality. The results of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov D test in Appendix 9 meant the data set was normally distributed, consistent with the interpretation of Field (2009). Because the test did not reject normality, the study proceeded to adopt parametric procedures that assume normality.

5.4 Demographic Profile of international tourists

The demographic profile of the respondents in Table 5.3 shows a majority of the respondents were in rural Regions (59.95 percent) with the urban Regions representing 40.05 percent of the sample. This means international tourists main interests when visiting Cameroon are in rural areas.

It was observed that amongst the respondents, 54.41 percent were males and 45.59 percent were females; indicating that men are more willing to travel to Cameroon than women. Having adopted the performance only paradigm (Cronin and Taylor, 1992), a measure of service quality based on performance only, it was necessary to get respondents who had repeatedly been exposed to the service performance and who had over their visits formed a composite service quality perception of the service provider.

The top 3 visitors are French (27.46%), Germans (18.14%) and British (14.36%). This could be explained by the fact that Cameroon has been colonised by those 3 countries. They are still tight relations between those people. Italy and Spain have been hosting a very great Cameroonian community since 90s; Italians and Spanish are therefore interested in discovering that special African country. Americans and Canadians are there mostly for business purposes. Amongst other nationality there are Belgians, Russians, Norwegians, etc.

Visitors mostly come from France (24.43%), the United Kingdom (18.89%) and Germany (16.12%). There are many French, Italians and Spanish visitors living in the UK. That's the reason why there are more tourists coming from the UK than there are British visitors.

Top visitors are aged]45-55] (24.69%), 55+ (23.93%) and]35-45] (19.14%). They are predominantly entrepreneurs (24.18%), retirees (21.41%) and business managers (18.14%). They stay 5 to 10 days (40.81%: entrepreneurs and business managers), 10 to 15 days (27.46%: entrepreneurs, retirees, civil servants and tourists), less than 5 days (17.13%: entrepreneurs and business managers), 15 to 20 days (9.32%: retirees, tourists, medical doctors and NGO workers). Those who spend more than 20 days in Cameroon are mainly retirees. They are the ones who have got time to travel and spend good time as they want.

Most international visitors come to Cameroon for pure tourism purpose (51.89%). 18.39% are there for business reasons; they are the ones spending less than 5 days.

There are also tourists who come to visit family (17.38%). We are talking about Cameroonian-born Europeans and Europeans who have married Cameroonians. There are few who come to seek traditional african medical treatments (7.81%). Others are there for seminars and conferences (4.53%), namely medical doctors and entrepreneurs.

Most tourists travel with friends (34.51%: pensioners, civil servants and tourists), alone (23.17%: entrepreneurs and NGO workers) or with their partner (21.66%: retirees, business managers and civil servants). Some are accompanied by colleagues (12.34%: entrepreneurs and business managers) and few by their children (7.05%: retired people and civil servants) or parents (1.26%: tourists). They only come in by air via the Douala airport (51.89%) and the Yaoundé Nsimalen Airport (48.11%). They make their entry point choice based on the location of the attractions / African clinic they will visit or their business interest / conference site, where their family live. Those who are catered by travel agencies do not mind; it's all up to the agent. It is therefore not about conveniences available or the service quality delivered at Douala or Nsimalen.

Table 5.3: Demographic profile of the respondents

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Cities		
Ngaoundere (Adamawa)	40	10.08%
Garoua (North)	27	6.80%
Bandjoun (West)	78	19.65%
Foumban (West)	93	23.43%
Mbalmayo (Centre)	24	6.05%
Yaounde (Centre)	41	10.33%
Douala (Littoral)	21	5.29%
Kribi (South)	73	18.39%
Regions categories		
Rural (Adamawa, North, West)	238	59.95%
Urban (Centre, Littoral, South)	159	40.05%
Gender		
Male	216	54.41%
Female	181	45.59%
Nationality		
French	109	27.46%
German	72	18.14%
British	57	14.36%
Italian	52	13.10%
Spanish	46	11.59%

American	34	8.56%
Canadian	6	1.51%
Others	21	5.29%
Country of residence		
France	97	24.43%
United Kingdom	75	18.89%
Germany	64	16.12%
Italy	46	11.59%
USA	41	10.33%
Spain	29	7.30%
Belgium	16	4.03%
Canada	6	1.51%
Others	23	5.79%
Age		0.00%
]45-55]	98	24.69%
55+	95	23.93%
]35-45]	76	19.14%
]25-35]	67	16.88%
[18-25]	52	13.10%
Missing values	9	2.27%
Profession		
Entrepreneur	96	24.18%
Retired	85	21.41%
Business manager	72	18.14%
Civil servant	46	11.59%
Tourist	39	9.82%
Medical doctor	17	4.28%
NGO worker	14	3.53%
Others	28	7.05%
Length of stay (in days)		
]5-10]	162	40.81%
]10-15]	109	27.46%
Less than 5	68	17.13%
]15-20]	37	9.32%
More than 20	21	5.29%
Purpose of stay		
Tourism	206	51.89%
Business	73	18.39%
Family visit	69	17.38%
Healthcare	31	7.81%
Seminar/Congress	18	4.53%
Sports competition	0	0.00%
Accompanied by		
Friends	137	34.51%
Alone	92	23.17%
Partner	86	21.66%

Colleagues	49	12.34%
Children	28	7.05%
Parents	5	1.26%
Entry point to Cameroon		
Douala airport	206	51.89%
Ydé Nsimalen	191	48.11%
Sample size	397	100.00%

Source: Primary Data, 2016.

The study sought to establish an understanding of the existence of a significant relationship between demographic data and the dependent variable (customer satisfaction). To achieve this, three statistical tests were performed: correlation analysis, cross tabulation and Chi-Square test for independence. The correlation results are presented in Table 5.4. Pearson correlation coefficient (r) determine the level of significance of the bivariate relationships (demography and customer satisfaction). Cooper and Schindler (2003) posit that when the correlation coefficient (r) = ±1.00, there is a perfect positive or negative correlation. When r = 0.01 it shows a very weak relationship and r = 0.9 indicates a very strong correlation between the variables. When r = 0 it means there is no relationship between the variables.

A correlation is considered significant when the probability value is equal to or below 0.05 (p-value less than or equal to 0.05). Olamide, Uwalomwa and Ranti (2015) interpreted r = 0.4 as a weak positive relationship. Table 5.4 displays several significant relationships between the demographic variables and customer satisfaction.

At the 0.01 level in a 2-tailed test, customer satisfaction has a significant positive relationship with:

- Region category (p = 0.003, r = 0.051)
- Nationality (p = 0.017, r = 0.092)
- Country of residence (p = 0.029, r = 0.055)
- Age (p = 0.014, r = 0.196)
- Gender (p = 0.008, r = 0.283)
- Profession (p = 0.102, r = 0.128)
- Length of stay (p = 0.012, r = 0.041)
- Purpose of stay (p = 0.002, r = 0.073)
- The company (p = 0.066, r = 0.089)

- Entry point (p = 0.001, r = 0.301)

The relationship is also significantly positive between:

- The region category and responders age (p = 0.004 , r = 0.613), profession (p = 0.018, r = 0.094), length of stay (p = 0.209, r = 0.308), purpose of stay (p = 0.013, r = 0.701)

In fact, older visitors tend to prefer rural regions. Most entrepreneurs and business managers stay in urban areas, while retirees and NGO workers go to rural ones. Tourist visiting rural regions tend to stay longer than those in urban cities. Those who are there for pure touristic or healthcare reasons predominantly visit rural sites, while business and congress people stay in urban regions

- Tourists age and the length of stay (p = 0.052, r = 0.513), the stay purpose (p = 0.004, r = 0.321)

Young tourists spend fewer days in Cameroon than elders. In the meantime aged visitors are more interested in tourism activities and African medical services, while others are principally there for business and seminar opportunities

- Visitors gender and the length of stay (p = 0.106, r = 0.008), the stay purpose (p = 0.159, r = 0.047)

Women stay longer in Cameroon than men and are mostly there for family visit and healthcare, as well as tourism. In the other hand, there are more men involved in business and seminar activities

- Profession and the length of stay (p = 0.217, r = 0.259), the stay purpose (p = 0.281, r = 0.061)

Entrepreneurs generally spend less than 10 days in the country and are there for business deals. Pensioners, civil servants, tourists and NGO workers are mostly the ones stay 10+ days.

Table 5.4: Correlation of demographic profile and customer satisfaction

Variable	Pearson Statistics	Region category	Nationality	Country of residence	Age	Gender	Profession	Length of stay	Purpose of stay	Accompanied by	Entry point	Customer satisfaction
Region category	Pearson correlation	1										
	Significance (2-tailed)											
	Sample size	397										
Nationality	Pearson correlation	0.701	1									
	Significance (2-tailed)	0.019										
	Sample size	397	397									
Country of residence	Pearson correlation	0.118	0.049	1								
	Significance (2-tailed)	0	0.039									
	Sample size	397	397	397								
Age	Pearson correlation	0.613	0.207	0.062	1							
	Significance (2-tailed)	0.004	0.11	0.001								
	Sample size	388	388	388	388							
Gender	Pearson correlation	0.004	0.019	0.026	0.011	1						
	Significance (2-tailed)	0.012	0	0.013	0.34							
	Sample size	397	397	397	397	397						
Profession	Pearson correlation	0.094	0.431	0.27	0.601	0.319	1					
	Significance (2-tailed)	0.018	0.077	0.03	0.019	0.025						
	Sample size	397	397	397	397	397	397					
Length of stay	Pearson correlation	0.308	0.059	0.004	0.513	0.008	0.259	1				
	Significance (2-tailed)	0.209	0.002	0	0.052	0.106	0.217					
	Sample size	397	397	397	397	397	397	397				
Purpose of	Pearson correlation	0.701	0.013	0.027	0.321	0.047	0.061	0.033	1			

stay	Significance (2-tailed)	0.013	0.206	0	0.004	0.159	0.281	0				
	Sample size	397	397	397	397	397	397	397	397			
Accompanied by	Pearson correlation	0.019	0.044	0.029	0.149	0.081	0.023	0.039	0.009	1		
	Significance (2-tailed)	0	0.02	0.041	0.077	0.023	0.008	0.03	0.031			
	Sample size	397	397	397	397	397	397	397	397	397		
Entry point	Pearson correlation	0.392	0.019	0.114	0.002	0.017	0.006	0.441	0.081	0.073	1	
	Significance (2-tailed)	0.028	0.036	0	0.192	0.006	0.304	0.019	0.296	0.013		
	Sample size	397	397	397	397	397	397	397	397	397	397	397
Customer satisfaction	Pearson correlation	0.051	0.092	0.055	0.196	0.283	0.128	0.041	0.073	0.089	0.301	1
	Significance (2-tailed)	0.003	0.017	0.029	0.014	0.008	0.102	0.012	0.002	0.066	0.001	
	Sample size	397	397	397	397	397	397	397	397	397	397	397

Source: Primary Data, 2016.

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In order to examine the strength of associations between the bivariate categorical variables, cross tabulation and a Chi-Square test for independence were performed. Table 5.5 shows a Chi-Square value = 48.029, p = 0.017. The p value is lower than 0.05 and hence there is a statistically significant association between Region categories and customer satisfaction. This means it is possible that tourists in urban and rural areas experience different levels of satisfaction.

Table 5.5: Chi-Square tests between Region category and customer satisfaction

	Value	Degrees of freedom	Asymptotic significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	48.029	16	0.017
Likelihood ratio	51.931	16	0.009
Linear-by-linear association	36.942	1	0.003
Sample size	397		

Source: Primary Data, 2016.

The nature of the association between tourists nationality and customer satisfaction was inspected further using Chi-square test resulting in a Pearson Chi-Square value = 65.908, p-value = 0, as shown in Table 5.6. P-value being lower than 0.05, nationality and customer satisfaction are significantly associated. Satisfaction level could therefore differ from visitors based on their nationality.

Table 5.6: Chi-Square Tests between nationality and customer satisfaction

	Value	Degrees of freedom	Asymptotic significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	65.908	21	0.000
Likelihood ratio	47.193	21	0.002
Linear-by-linear association	46.729	1	0.016
Sample size	397		

Source: Primary Data, 2016.

Table 5.7 shows a Pearson Chi-Square value = 33.918, p-value = 0.004; meaning that country of residence and customer satisfaction are significantly associated. Level of satisfaction could therefore be influenced by the environment in which visitors come from.

Table 5.7: Chi-Square tests between country of residence and customer satisfaction

	Value	Degrees of freedom	Asymptotic significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	33.918	18	0.004
Likelihood ratio	41.743	18	0.017
Linear-by-linear association	17.272	1	0.006
Sample size	397		

Source: Primary Data, 2016.

Testing customer satisfaction against age, we get a Pearson Chi-Square value = 46.829, p-value = 0.089. P-value being greater than 0.05, the test shows there is no statistical association between those two variables. Visitors' age does not affect their level of satisfaction.

Table 5.8: Chi-Square tests between age and customer satisfaction

	Value	Degrees of freedom	Asymptotic significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	46.829	24	0.089
Likelihood ratio	50.531	24	0.053
Linear-by-linear association	10.016	1	0.014
Sample size	388		

Source: Primary Data, 2016.

Table 5.9 displays a Chi-Square value = 63.107, p = 0.011. With p-value < 0.05, there is evidence that gender and customer satisfaction are significantly associated. Tourists may then experience different levels of satisfaction towards the same service, being male or female.

Table 5.9: Chi-Square tests between gender and customer satisfaction

	Value	Degrees of freedom	Asymptotic significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	63.107	19	0.011
Likelihood ratio	48.922	19	0.004
Linear-by-linear association	23.703	1	0.027
Sample size	397		

Source: Primary Data, 2016.

Performing Chi-Square tests on profession and customer satisfaction variables give a Chi-Square value = 51.092, p = 0.029; meaning visitors could have various satisfaction levels based on their occupation.

Table 5.10: Chi-Square tests between profession and customer satisfaction

	Value	Degrees of freedom	Asymptotic significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	51.092	27	0.029
Likelihood ratio	50.438	27	0.013
Linear-by-linear association	17.601	1	0.005
Sample size	397		

Source: Primary Data, 2016.

Table 5.11 showing a Chi-Square value = 36.019, p = 0.009, the association between tourists stay period and customer satisfaction. The number of days spent in Cameroon may therefore affect visitors' level of satisfaction.

Table 5.11: Chi-Square tests between length of stay and customer satisfaction

	Value	Degrees of freedom	Asymptotic significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	36.019	18	0.009
Likelihood ratio	41.281	18	0.021
Linear-by-linear association	10.003	1	0.018
Sample size	397		

Source: Primary Data, 2016.

Testing customer satisfaction against the purpose of stay, we get a Pearson Chi-Square value = 39.002, p-value = 0.061. With a P-value greater than 0.05, we can conclude that there is no statistical association between those two variables. Visitors' purpose of stay has no effect on their level of satisfaction.

Table 5.12: Chi-Square tests between purpose of stay and customer satisfaction

	Value	Degrees of freedom	Asymptotic significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	39.002	12	0.061
Likelihood ratio	27.916	12	0.037
Linear-by-linear association	17.281	1	0.006
Sample size	397		

Source: Primary Data, 2016.

Table 5.13 shows a Pearson Chi-Square value = 31.903, p-value = 0.058; meaning that tourist's mate and customer satisfaction are not significantly associated. Visitor's satisfaction cannot be influenced by the person he is travelling with.

Table 5.13: Chi-Square tests between tourist's mate and customer satisfaction

	Value	Degrees of freedom	Asymptotic significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	31.903	23	0.058
Likelihood ratio	28.719	23	0.019
Linear-by-linear association	11.038	1	0.012
Sample size	397		

Source: Primary Data, 2016.

Performing Chi-Square tests on entry point and customer satisfaction variables reveals a Chi-Square value = 60.103, p = 0.013; meaning visitors could experience different levels of satisfaction should they come in through Yaoundé Nsimalen airport or Douala airport.

Table 5.14: Chi-Square tests between entry point and customer satisfaction

	Value	Degrees of freedom	Asymptotic significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	60.103	36	0.013
Likelihood ratio	41.915	36	0.009
Linear-by-linear association	10.297	1	0.038
Sample size	397		

Source: Primary Data, 2016.

Results of a cross tabulation between nationality and Region category are presented in Table 5.15. While most tourists prefer rural areas, Americans (76.47%) and British (61.4%) principally stay in urban cities.

Table 5.15: Cross Tabulation of nationality and Region category

		Nationality								Total
		French	German	British	Italian	Spanish	American	Canadian	Others	
Region category	Rural	78	49	22	37	27	8	4	13	238
	Urban	31	23	35	15	19	26	2	8	159
Total		109	72	57	52	46	34	6	21	397

Source: Primary Data, 2016.

Crossing profession and Region category variables reveals that entrepreneurs (71.87%) are the tourists who predominantly stay in urban cities; followed by business managers (52.78%). All others prefer rural areas, with the top players being retirees (91.76%), NGO workers (78.57%) and civil servant (73.91%).

Table 5.16: Cross Tabulation of profession and Region category

		Profession								Total
		Entrepreneur	Retired	Business manager	Civil servant	Tourist	Medical doctor	NGO worker	Others	
Region category	Rural	27	78	34	34	23	10	11	21	238
	Urban	69	7	38	12	16	7	3	7	159
Total		96	85	72	46	39	17	14	28	397

Source: Primary Data, 2016.

5.5 Factors Influencing tourist Satisfaction in Cameroon

The study employed factor analysis, a multivariate technique used to reduce a large number of variables or objects to a set of core underlying factors. The 48 items in the instrument were decomposed into a few factors with related factor scores that explained the variations in the observed variables. Factor analysis was used to determine the number of dimensions required to represent service quality. The EFA method helped determine service quality dimensions in Cameroon tourism industry. The EFA was undertaken in five key steps; preliminary analysis, assessment of suitability of data for factor analysis (pre-test), factor extraction, factor rotation and factor interpretation. Preliminary EFA led to the generation of the following statistical outputs: descriptive statistics, correlation matrix, communalities, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlets Test of sphericity, total variance explained, scree plot and component matrix.

The descriptive statistics in Appendix 14 The mean column firstly shows that, "Cameroonians are welcoming" has the highest mean = 4.79, followed by "You feel safe in urban places" with a mean = 4.47, "Hotel staff are diligent" with a mean = 4.41, "Running water and electricity are always available" with a mean = 4.29, "Hotel rooms are comfy" with a mean = 4.12 and "Dishes are delicious" with a mean = 4.08. From the descriptive statistics these are the variables with the greatest influence on service quality perception of tourists because they have the highest mean scores.

Secondly, concerning destination image, "A relative recommended you Cameroon destination" has the top mean = 4.91, then "Media reports on Cameroon are generally positive" with a mean = 4.87, "You opted for Cameroon because it is a safe destination" with a mean = 4.59 and "You chose Cameroon for its amazing

cultural diversity" with a mean = 4.39. These are therefore the variables that impact the most on the image tourists have of Cameroon.

A correlation matrix was used to examine correlation coefficients between a single variable and every other variable in the data set. Since one of the goals of factor analysis is to obtain factors that explain these correlations, the variables must be related to each other for the factor model to be appropriate. The Pearson correlation showed p-values ≥ 0.000 but less than 0.05 and r values greater than 0.2 but less than 0.9. Wiedermann and Hagmann (2015) recommend r value greater than or equal to 0.3 but less than 0.9. This means the data set did not have singularity problem and therefore no variable was eliminated from analysis.

Communalities associated with the combined Region data set are displayed in Appendix 16 and shows that the least communality value is 0.299, associated with the variable "Police officers are ready to help" and the variable with the highest communality is "Cameroonians are welcoming" (0.588). This indicated that the variables fitted well with each other.

The data were initially subjected to two pre-test requirements of factor analysis, KMO measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's test of Sphericity. The KMO test statistics of 0.943 was established as shown in Appendix 19. Kaiser (1974) recommends accepting KMO values greater than 0.5 as acceptable. But Hutcheson and Sofroniou (1999) as referenced in Field (2009) posit that KMO values between 0.5 and 0.7 are mediocre, values between 0.7 and 0.8 are good, scores between 0.8 and 0.9 are great and values above 0.9 are superb, hence the value 0.943 was adequate in this study. Bartlett's test was used to test the strength of the relationship among variables. The study tested the null hypothesis that the variables were uncorrelated using the Bartlett's test of Sphericity. The p-value = 0.000 was significant and less than the threshold of 0.05 and therefore the null hypothesis was rejected meaning the variables in the population correlation matrix were correlated.

The initial solution was determined using Principal Component Analysis (PCA) method. This was a two stage method comprising an unrotated solution and a rotated solution. The PCA was preferred because it allowed for the reduction of the data set to a more manageable size while retaining as much of the original information. The unrotated solution in Table 5.17 shows a total of 37 components out of which 8

components explained 70.134 percent of the variations leaving 29.866 percent of the variations to be explained by the other 29 components.

Using Kaiser's criterion, the study sought variables with eigenvalues greater than or equal to 1. The first eight components had eigenvalues greater than or equal to 1 and accounted for 70.134 percent of the variations, with component 1 accounting for 17.211 percent of the variations, component 2 explained 13.192 percent of the variations and component 3, 8.002 percent of the variations. Therefore based on the total variance explained analysis, a maximum of 8 components could be extracted from the combined data set.

Table 5.17: Total Variance Explained by the combined data

Component	Initial eigenvalues			Extraction sums of squared loadings		
	Total	Percent of variance	Cumulative percent	Total	Percent of variance	Cumulative percent
1	17.211	24.825	24.825	17.211	24.825	24.825
2	13.192	15.029	39.854	13.192	15.029	39.854
3	8.002	10.995	50.849	8.002	10.995	50.849
4	5.118	6.392	57.241	5.118	6.392	57.241
5	2.319	3.645	60.886	2.319	3.645	60.886
6	2.105	3.229	64.115	2.105	3.229	64.115
7	2.092	3.017	67.132	2.092	3.017	67.132
8	1.934	3.002	70.134	1.934	3.002	70.134
9	0.416	0.924	71.058			
35	0.195	0.281	99.602			
36	0.179	0.216	99.818			
37	0.103	0.182	100.000			

Extraction method: Principal Component Analysis

Source: Primary Data, 2016.

The Kaiser criterion has a weakness as observed by Brown (2015) as its tendency to overstate the number of factors. Ledesma, Valero-Mora and Macbeth (2015) propose the use of a scree plot in determining the number of components to retain when the sample size is greater than 200. The scree plot graphs the eigenvalues against the component number and displays a point of inflexion on the curve, which can be used in determination of number of components to extract. In a scree plot, the components before this point indicate the number of factors to retain while the components after

the point of inflexion show that each successive factor is accounting for smaller and smaller amounts of variations hence should not be retained.

According to Teman, Minter and Kasten (2016), the plot most often shows a distinct break between the steep slope of the large factors and the gradual trailing off of the rest of the factors, the scree that forms at the foot of a mountain. Only factors before the scree begins should be used. The scree plot in Figure 5.1 shows a point of inflexion after the fifth component and for this reason only the first five components were considered adequate descriptors of the variations in the combined data set.

Figure 5.1: Scree Plot of Combined urban and rural Data
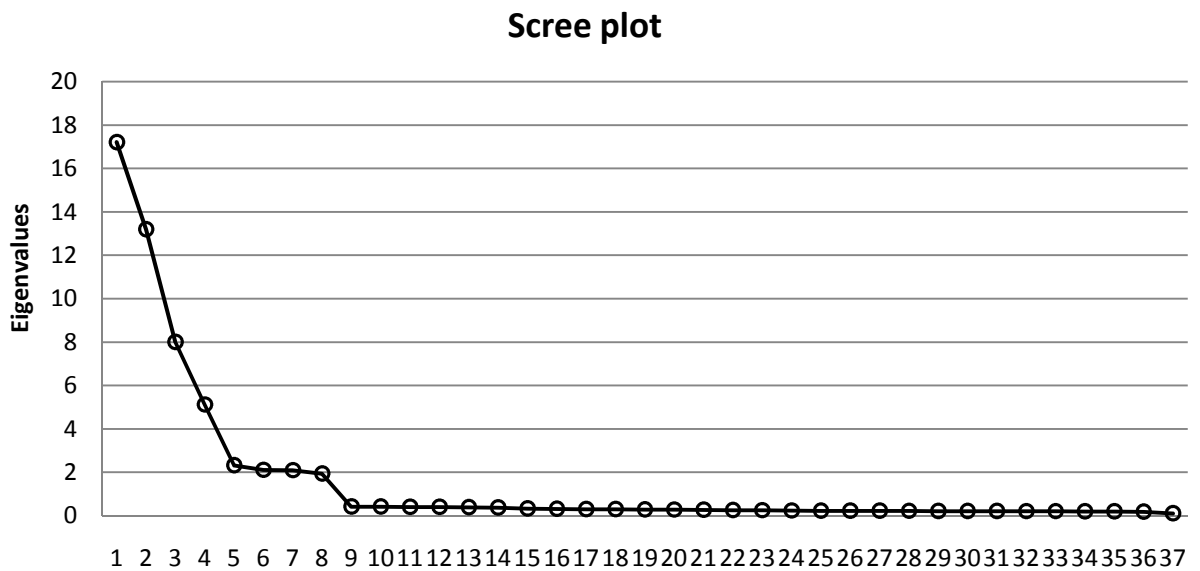
Source: Primary Data, 2016.

The unrotated component matrix of the combined data in Appendix 15, led to the extraction of 7 components with 26 items loading on component one, 1 item loaded on components two, three and five. No items loaded on components four, six and seven which meant they remained unexplained. This necessitated factor rotation to explain the components which had not been explained by the initial extraction. Scholars including Williams, Onsman and Brown (2010), Comrey and Lee (2013), Kline (2014) and Brown, (2015) acknowledge the lack of consensus in literature on the cut-off point for factor loading but they propose using a cut off of 0.4.

A varimax with Kaiser normalization rotation method revealed a five component structure as shown in Table 5.18. The original 29 items in the instrument had been

reduced to 28 items that loaded on the five components. Most of the items loaded on the first three components, meaning they explained the variations to a great extent.

Component one had 6 items loading on it with the item, "Cameroonians are welcoming" reflecting the highest factor loading of 0.901, followed by "Waiters at restaurants are skilled" (0.828), "Cameroon airport staff are polite and competent" (0.811), "Tour guides are skilful" (0.783), "Dishes are delicious" (0.654) and "Travel agents understand customer needs" (0.589).

Only 2 items loaded on component two; "Hotel staff are diligent" (0.735) and "Police officers are ready to help" (0.618). Those two items were interpreted as human elements dimension - responsiveness.

A set of 7 items loaded on component three. "Hotel rooms are comfy" (0.837), "Taxis and buses are comfortable and clean" (0.749), "Lifts are fully working" (0.703), "Touristic sites are easy to reach" (0.665), "Conference halls are well furnished" (0.581), "Running water and electricity are always available" (0.529) and "Toilets are hygienic" (0.502). An analysis of those 7 items revealed them as Non-human elements factors.

A total of five items loaded on component four. The greatest variations were explained by the items "Food is served on time" (0.758), "Cameroon visa process is stress free and rapid" (0.711), "Wi-Fi broadband is speedy" (0.603), "You feel safe in urban places" (0.598) and "Healthcare services are convenient" (0.587). A close examination of those 5 items led to their interpretation as Service blue print dimension.

8 items loaded on component five. "A relative recommended you Cameroon destination" (0.817), "You opted for Cameroon because it is a safe destination" (0.801), "Media reports on Cameroon are generally positive" (0.736), "You chose Cameroon for its amazing cultural diversity" (0.712), "You picked Cameroon because of its natural wonders" (0.572), "You selected Cameroon because of Samuel Eto'o / Roger Milla" (0.539), "You chose Cameroon because it has a powerful brand image" (0.483) and "Cameroon successfully fights international terrorism" (0.481). Those 8 items were interpreted as destination image dimension.

The study established five constructs under EFA that are precursors to customer satisfaction in Cameroon tourism industry as shown in Table 5.18. The five were human elements - reliability dimension, human elements - responsiveness dimension, non-human elements, service blue print and destination image. No item

loaded on the dimension core service, instead the variables that had been conceptualized as the core service concept loaded on reliability dimension of human elements. Hence, core service was dropped from further analysis.

In order to establish the reliability of the five constructs extracted following the EFA process, the items that loaded on each construct were transformed into five new variables and labeled human elements - reliability dimension, human elements - responsiveness dimension, non-human elements, service blue print and destination image. Following the transformation process, the constructs were subjected to a scale test using the Cronbach's alpha method, resulting in an overall scale of α = 0.883 for the 5 items as shown in Table 5.18.

The reliability test results showed that human elements - reliability had α = 0.902, human elements - responsiveness α = 0.874, non-human elements α = 0.821, service blueprint α = 0.749 and destination image α = 0.836. All those five constructs having an alpha value greater than 0.7, it meant they displayed internal consistency and met the criteria of reliability as outlined by Francis, Kamble and Robbins (2016). They were hence considered the main dimensions of service quality in the context of the Cameroon tourism industry.

Table 5.18: Rotated component matrix of Cameroon Regions

Item	Component					Factor
	1	2	3	4	5	
Cameroonians are welcoming	.901					Human elements (Reliability)
Waiters at restaurants are skilled	.828					
Cameroon airport staff are polite and competent	.811					
Tour guides are skilful	.783					
Dishes are delicious	.654					
Travel agents understand customer needs	.589					
Hotel staff are diligent		.735				Human elements (Responsiveness)
Police officers are ready to help		.618				
Hotel rooms are comfy			,837			Non-human elements
Taxis and buses are comfortable and clean			.749			
Lifts are fully working			703			
Touristic sites are easy to reach			.665			
Conference halls are well furnished			.581			
Running water and electricity are always available			.529			
Toilets are hygienic			.502			

Food is served on time				.758	
Cameroon visa process is stress free and rapid				.711	
Wi-Fi broadband is speedy				.603	Service blue print
You feel safe in urban places				.598	
Healthcare services are convenient				.587	
A relative recommended you Cameroon destination					.817
You opted for Cameroon because it is a safe destination					.801
Media reports on Cameroon are generally positive					.736
You chose Cameroon for its amazing cultural diversity					.712
You picked Cameroon because of its natural wonders					.572	Destination image
You selected Cameroon because of Samuel Eto'o / Roger Milla					.539
You chose Cameroon because it has a powerful brand image					.483
Cameroon successfully fights international terrorism					.481
Cronbach's alpha value of factor	.902	.874	.821	.749	.836	Overall α = .883

Source: Primary Data, 2016.

5.6 Factors Influencing Customer Satisfaction in Cameroon rural Regions

The combined data set was split into two, rural and urban Regions. Subsequent analysis was performed based on the separated data set. The rural Regions data were analyzed using factor analysis to determine the factors that attract and satisfy tourists in rural Regions in Cameroon.

These rural Regions data were subjected to KMO Test and Bartlett's Test. The KMO Test of rural Regions data resulted in KMO statistics = 0.879, as shown in Appendix 19 which was considered adequate for the study to use factor analysis. The Bartlett's Test of sphericity produced significant results with the p-value = 0.000. This meant the variables in the rural Regions data set were correlated and could hence be used in factor analysis.

Factor extraction from the rural Regions data was performed in two steps: Unrotated solution (PCA method) and rotated solution analysis (varimax with Kaiser Normalization rotation method). Preceding the extraction, the results of the total variance explained was examined based on the presentation in Table 5.19 and a total of 7 components were extracted. The 7 components explained 69.756 percent of the variations, leaving 30.244 percent of the variations to be explained by the remaining 29 components. The greatest variations were explained by component one (24.057%)

and two (18.448%). The eigenvalues greater than or equal to 1 were 7 in total, further confirming that the first 7 components were the most important in explaining the variations.

Table 5.19: Total Variance Explained in rural Regions data

Component	Initial eigenvalues			Extraction sums of squared loadings		
	Total	Percent of variance	Cumulative percent	Total	Percent of variance	Cumulative percent
1	17.211	24.057	24.057	17.211	24.057	24.057
2	13.192	18.448	42.505	13.192	18.448	42.505
3	8.002	11.673	54.178	8.002	11.673	54.178
4	5.118	7.012	61.19	5.118	7.012	61.19
5	2.319	3.178	64.368	2.319	3.178	64.368
6	2.105	2.773	67.141	2.105	2.773	67.141
7	2.092	2.615	69.756	2.092	2.615	69.756
8	0.829	0.887	70.643			
9	0.416	0.449	71.092			
	-					
	-					
35	0.182	0.254	98.969			
36	0.104	0.169	99.138			
37	0.639	0.862	100.000			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis

Source: Primary data, 2016.

A Kaiser normalization rotation method was applied for better explanation of the components and the data is shown in Table 5.20 below. An orthogonal rotation based on a five factor structure, consistent with the combined data set analysis resulted in five components. A total of 5 items loaded on component one, with the item, "Cameroonians are welcoming" reflecting the highest factor with 0.837, followed by "Tour guides are skilful" (0.819) and "Waiters at restaurants are skilled" (0.721). Table 5.20 displays the other items that loaded on component one. The 5 items were interpreted as Human elements factor – reliability dimension.

The 2 items that loaded on component two were: "Police officers are ready to help" (0.813), and "Hotel staff are diligent" (0.729). Both items were interpreted as human elements factor - responsiveness dimension.

Variations in component three were explained to a great extent by 6 items. The item, "Touristic sites are easy to reach" had the highest factor loading = 0.905, followed by "Running water and electricity are always available" (0.832), "Hotel rooms are comfy" (0.691), "Taxis and buses are comfortable and clean" (0.627) and "Toilets are hygienic" (0.601), "Conference halls are well furnished" (0.579). All 6 items were categorised as the Non-human elements factor.

Five items converged on component four. The item, "You feel safe in urban places" had the highest factor loading 0.849, followed by "Healthcare services are convenient" (0.782), "Food is served on time" (0.735), "Wi-Fi broadband is speedy" (0.611) and "Cameroon visa process is stress free and rapid" (0.609). All five items were interpreted as the Service blue print factor.

Component five had 8 items loading on it. The item with the highest factor loading was, "A relative recommended you Cameroon destination" (0.891), followed by "You chose Cameroon for its amazing cultural diversity" (0.843), "You picked Cameroon because of its natural wonders" (0.822). These items were descriptive of the Cameroon destination image.

The EFA process described above led to the extraction of five factors from the rural Regions data. The study therefore deduced that there are five factors that influence tourist satisfaction in Cameroon, including human elements reliability dimension, human elements responsiveness dimension, non-human elements, service blueprint and destination image. No items loaded on the core service dimension. it was consequently dropped from further analysis. The five factors extracted from the rural Region data set using EFA were subjected to a reliability test resulting in an overall Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.893$ as shown in Table 4.15. This meant the five factors were very reliable in explaining variations in customer satisfaction in rural Regions. The resulting reliability values based on Cronbach's alpha were human elements reliability $\alpha = 0.918$, human elements responsiveness $\alpha = 0.862$, non-human elements $\alpha = 0.833$, service blueprint $\alpha = 0.776$ and destination image $\alpha = 0.829$. All five factors had α value greater than 0.7 hence were reliable and internally consistent.

Table 5.20: Rotated component matrix of rural Regions data

Item	Component					Factor
	1	2	3	4	5	
Cameroonians are welcoming	.837					Human elements (Reliability)
Tour guides are skilful	.819					
Waiters at restaurants are skilled	.721					
Dishes are delicious	.708					
Travel agents understand customer needs	.572					
Police officers are ready to help		.813				Human elements (Responsiveness)
Hotel staff are diligent		.729				
Touristic sites are easy to reach			.905			Non-human elements
Running water and electricity are always available			.832			
Hotel rooms are comfy			.691			
Taxis and buses are comfortable and clean			.627			
Toilets are hygienic			.601			
Conference halls are well furnished			.579			
You feel safe in urban places				.849		Service blue print
Healthcare services are convenient				.782		
Food is served on time				.735		
Wi-Fi broadband is speedy				.611		
Cameroon visa process is stress free and rapid				.609		
A relative recommended you Cameroon destination					.891	Destination image
You chose Cameroon for its amazing cultural diversity					.843	
You picked Cameroon because of its natural wonders					.822	
Media reports on Cameroon are generally positive					.726	
You opted for Cameroon because it is a safe destination					.683	
You selected Cameroon because of Samuel Eto'o / Roger Milla					.572	
You chose Cameroon because it has a powerful brand image					.549	
Cameroon successfully fights international terrorism					.506	
Cronbach's alpha value of factor	.918	.862	.833	.776	.829	Overall α = .893

Extraction method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

Source: Primary data, 2016.

5.7 Factors influencing customer satisfaction in Cameroon urban Regions

Factor analysis of the urban Regions revealed KMO statistics = 0.918. Appendix **19**
shows that the Bartlett's Test of sphericity resulted in p-value = 0.000, which was
significant and meant the variables in the urban Regions data were correlated and

good for factor analysis. Analysis of the data set using the correlation matrix revealed that the data did not have singularity problems and that the variables were related to each other and hence suitable for factor analysis. The communalities results also showed that the variables fitted well with each other. Using EFA, factors were extracted from the urban Regions data set in two steps, unrotated solution and rotated solution analysis. The initial output of the EFA process was the total variance explained results in Table 5.21.

Using PCA method, 6 components were extracted and they explained 58.223 percent of the cumulative variations. The remaining 41.777 percent of the variations were explained by the remaining 31 components. Component one explained 24.057 percent of the variations, component two 14.206 percent of the variations and component three 8.072 percent of the variations. The total initial eigenvalues column shows that the first 6 components had eigenvalues greater than or equal to 1, also confirming that those 6 components were the most important.

Table 5.21: Total variance explained in urban Regions

Component	Initial eigenvalues			Extraction sums of squared loadings		
	Total	Percent of variance	Cumulative percent	Total	Percent of variance	Cumulative percent
1	19.017	24.057	24.057	19.017	24.057	24.057
2	11.221	14.206	38.263	11.221	14.206	38.263
3	6.748	8.072	46.335	6.748	8.072	46.335
4	3.819	4.951	51.286	3.819	4.951	51.286
5	3.004	4.108	55.394	3.004	4.108	55.394
6	1.993	2.829	58.223	1.993	2.829	58.223
7	0.899	1.371	59.594			
8	0.724	1.003	60.597			
	-					
	-					
35	0.182	0.254	98.969			
36	0.104	0.169	99.138			
37	0.639	0.862	100.000			

Extraction method: Principal Component Analysis

Source: Primary data, 2016.

An orthogonal rotation based on eigenvalues resulted in 6 components, with most of the items loading on component one and the other components remaining unexplained. In a repeat procedure, the rotation was based on five factors and it

resulted in five components structure as displayed in Table 5.22. Component one was explained by 6 items. The item with the greatest factor was "Cameroonians are welcoming" (0.929), followed by "Travel agents understand customer needs" (0.648), "Cameroon airport staff are polite and competent" (0.532), "Waiters at restaurants are skilled" (0.517) and "Dishes are delicious" (0.493) and "Tour guides are skilful" (0.445). The 6 items that explained variations in component one exhibited convergent validity for human elements factors – reliability dimension. 2 items loaded on component two: "Hotel staff are diligent" (0.802), "Police officers are ready to help" (0.749).

7 items loaded on component three as displayed in Table 5.22. The item with the highest factor was "Hotel rooms are comfy" (0.973), "Running water and electricity are always available" (0.725) and "Taxis and buses are comfortable and clean" (0.694). All 7 items were interpreted as the non-human elements factors.

The fourth component had a total of 5 items loading on it. The item that explained the greatest variation on component four was, "You feel safe in urban places" (0.803), "Wi-Fi broadband is speedy" (0.659), "Cameroon visa process is stress free and rapid" (0.572), "Food is served on time" (0.506) and "Healthcare services are convenient" (0.491). These items were interpreted as the service blue print factor.

A total of nine items loaded on component five. The most important items were "A relative recommended you Cameroon destination" (0.795), "Media reports on Cameroon are generally positive" (0.739) and "You chose Cameroon for its amazing cultural diversity" (0.701). All nine items referred to the destination image.

The preceding analysis of urban Regions based on EFA led to the derivation of five components. It was inferred from the analysis that there were five factors that exert the greatest influence on tourist satisfaction in urban Regions including human elements reliability, human elements responsiveness, non-human elements, service blue print and destination image. No items loaded on the core service dimension, and it was dropped from further analysis.

The five components were tested for their reliability resulting in an overall Cronbach's α = 0.873. This meant the five factors were very reliable in explaining variations in tourist satisfaction within urban Regions. The reliability results of the respective factors showed that human elements reliability dimension had α value = 0.869, human elements responsiveness dimension α value = 0.814, non-human elements α value = 0.927, service blueprint α value = 0.749 and destination image α

value = 0.782. All five components had Cronbach's alpha value greater than 0.7, meaning they were all reliable in explaining variations in tourist satisfaction.

Table 5.22: Rotated Component Matrix of urban Regions data

Item	Component					Factor
	1	2	3	4	5	
Cameroonians are welcoming	.929					Human elements (Reliability)
Travel agents understand customer needs	.648					
Cameroon airport staff are polite and competent	.532		.511			
Waiters at restaurants are skilled	.517					
Dishes are delicious	.493				.472	
Tour guides are skilful	.445		..417			
Hotel staff are diligent		.802				Human elements (Responsiveness)
Police officers are ready to help		.749				
Hotel rooms are comfy			.973			Non-human elements
Running water and electricity are always available			.725			
Taxis and buses are comfortable and clean			.694			
Touristic sites are easy to reach			.658	.629		
Lifts are fully working			574			
Toilets are hygienic			.503			
Conference halls are well furnished			.464			
You feel safe in urban places				.803		Service blue print
Wi-Fi broadband is speedy				.659	.601	
Cameroon visa process is stress free and rapid				.572		
Food is served on time				.506		
Healthcare services are convenient				.491		
A relative recommended you Cameroon destination					.795	Destination image
Media reports on Cameroon are generally positive					.739	
You chose Cameroon for its amazing cultural diversity					.701	
You selected Cameroon because of Samuel Eto'o / Roger Milla					.682	
You opted for Cameroon because it is a safe destination					.648	
You chose Cameroon because it has a powerful brand image					.599	
You picked Cameroon because of its natural wonders					.523	
Cameroon is a democratic country					.473	
Cameroon successfully fights international terrorism					.456	
Cronbach's alpha value of factor	.869	.814	.927	.749	.782	Overall α = .873

Extraction method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation method: varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

Source: Primary data, 2016.

Using factor analysis, the study established that the most reliable factor in explaining customer satisfaction in Cameroon tourism sector based on the combined data set results in Table 5.18 was human elements reliability dimension, followed by human element responsiveness dimension, destination image, non-human elements and service blueprint. The most reliable factor in explaining variations in customer satisfactions in rural Regions according to Table 5.20 was human elements reliability, followed by destination image, human elements responsiveness, non-human elements and service blueprint respectively. It was established that the most reliable factor in explaining variations in customer satisfaction in urban Regions according to Table 5.22 was non-human elements, followed by human elements reliability, human elements responsiveness, destination image and service blueprint. These findings are summarized in Table 5.23.

The summary in Table 5.23 shows that factor analysis using EFA approach led to the derivation of four service quality dimensions: human element reliability, human element responsiveness, non-human elements and service blue print. While human elements reliability emerged the most important service quality dimension, the other dimensions differed along service context. Destination image was an important predictor of customer satisfaction.

Table 5.23: Factor ranking based on Exploratory Factor Analysis and Reliability test

Factor	Rural Regions		Urban Regions		Combined rural and urban data	
	Cronbach α	Rank	Cronbach α	Rank	Cronbach α	Rank
Human elements reliability	0.918	1	0.869	2	0.902	1
Human elements responsiveness	0.862	2	0.814	3	0.874	2
Non-human elements	0.833	3	0.927	1	0.821	4
Service blue print	0.776	5	0.749	5	0.749	5
Destination image	0.829	4	0.782	4	0.836	3

Source: Primary data, 2016

5.8 Comparative Analysis of Service Quality in rural and urban Regions

The preceding factor analysis output in Table 5.23 showed that factors that satisfy tourists in rural Regions are different from those pleasing urban tourits. With this observation, the study sought to examine whether the difference is significant or not.

To achieve this, a one way ANOVA test was performed to determine whether there were any significant differences between the means of service quality dimensions that influence customer satisfaction in rural and urban Regions. This involved testing hypothesis nine (H_9) which stated that: The service quality perception in rural Regions is significantly different from that in urbans.

Items that loaded on the five factors under EFA were transformed into new constructs and labelled human elements reliability dimension, human elements responsiveness dimension, non-human elements, service blueprint and destination image. In performing the one way ANOVA test, all five were considered as dependent variables and Region category (rural or urban) as the factor.

The combined data set was subjected to five assumptions of ANOVA including assessing the level of measurement, independence, non-significant outliers, normality and homogeneity of variance. The first assumption of ANOVA analysis like other parametric test is that the dependent variables must be measured on an interval or ratio scale (Mayers, 2013). The instrument in Appendix 4 provides evidence that the variables under investigation were measured using an interval scale, hence were suitable for ANOVA analysis.

The second assumption of ANOVA is the independence of observations. Which means there is no relationship between the observations in each group or between the groups themselves. This study reports two independent groups, tourists in rural Regions (n = 238) and tourists in urban Regions (n = 159). The assumption of independence of observation was therefore not violated. The third assumption was that there were no significant outliers in the data set. At the data cleaning stage, descriptive analysis was used to check for existence of any outliers and none was reported. Hence, the dependent variables were good for ANOVA analysis. Test of normality using Q-Q plots showed no violation of this assumption and the study therefore proceeded with ANOVA analysis.

The fifth assumption was that of homogeneity of variance. The test of homogeneity showed no violation of this assumption. And given the large sample size (n = 397), the distribution tends toward normal. Sultan and Wong (2010) observed that the homogeneity test is sensitive to sample size and tends to be significant in large samples; while Gu (2013) notes that ANOVA is reasonably robust to violations of this assumption, provided the sample sizes are reasonably similar.

According to Table 5.24, tourists satisfaction differs significantly between rural and urban Regions along the service quality dimension of human elements reliability with $F (1, 394) = 74.921$, p-value = 0.000. Visitors satisfaction also differs significantly between rural and urban Regions along the service quality dimension of human elements responsiveness with $F (1, 395) = 165.034$ and p-value = 0.000. The difference is also significant due to the service quality dimension of non-human elements with $F (1, 396) = 99.307$ and p-value = 0.000.

The level of tourist satisfaction differs significantly between rural and urban Regions on the service quality dimension of service blueprint with the results in Table 5.24 showing $F (1, 394) = 21.882$ and p-value = 0.000. It was observed that satisfaction also significantly differs on the factor destination image with $F (1, 395) = 37.139$ and p-value = 0.000. From the outcome of the analysis in Table 5.24, hypotheses H_9 was confirmed at a 5 percent level of significance, meaning the dimensions of service quality that influenced customer satisfaction were significantly different between rural and urban Regions tourists.

Table 5.24: Analysis of Variance of combined urban and rural data

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Human element reliability	Between groups	32.918	1	32.917	74.921	.000
	Within groups	211.833	394	.361		
	Total	244.751	395			
Human element responsiveness	Between groups	54.732	1	54.732	165.034	.000
	Within groups	199.427	395	.349		
	Total	254.159	396			
Non-human elements	Between groups	48.239	1	48.239	99.307	.000
	Within groups	317.655	396	.428		
	Total	365.894	397			
Service blue print	Between groups	16.438	1	16.438	21.882	.000
	Within groups	274.934	394	.317		
	Total	291.372	395			
Destination image	Between groups	19.647	1	19.647	37.139	.000
	Within groups	176.881	395	.265		
	Total	196.528	396			

Source: Primary data, 2016

Using descriptive statistics in Table 5.25, it was established that tourists in rural Regions were most satisfied by human elements responsiveness evidence with a mean score of 3.9215; while urban regions visitors were moderately satisfied with

human elements responsiveness evidence with a mean score of 3.0438. Tourists in urban Regions were most satisfied with service blueprint of 4.3774. Comparatively, tourists in rural Regions registered a moderate mean score for service blueprint of 3.1246. The level of tourist satisfaction was moderate for non-human elements in urban Regions of 3.4114 and lower in rural Regions of 2.5561.

Table 5.25 shows that both tourists in rural and urban Regions were satisfied to a moderate extent with human elements reliability. But tourists in urban Regions were relatively more satisfied with mean score of 3.8692 than the urban tourists (3.1929). While rural visitors are just fairly satisfied by destination image (mean = 3.4957), urban tourists register a higher score (4.0043).

Table 5.25: Descriptive of the service quality dimensions

		Sample size	Mean	Standard deviation	95 percent confidence interval for mean	
					Lower bound	Upper bound
Human elements reliability	Rural	238	3.1929	.58921	2.9831	3.4028
	Urban	159	3.8692	.49283	3.7367	4.0018
	Total	397	3.4009	.55824	3.2109	3.5912
Human elements responsiveness	Rural	238	3.9215	.69838	3.8402	4.0029
	Urban	157	4.1938	.58237	3.9904	4.3972
	Total	395	4.0036	67001	3.9025	4.1048
Non-human elements	Rural	238	2.5561	.89235	2.4017	2.7106
	Urban	158	3.4114	.79287	3.1938	3.6291
	Total	396	2.8498	.90032	2.5993	3.1004
Service blue print	Rural	238	3.1246	.72938	2.9485	3.3007
	Urban	159	4.3774	.60851	4.1953	4.5596
	Total	397	3.5002	.70198	3.5012	3.4992
Destination image	Rural	238	3.4957	.98403	3.2091	3.7824
	Urban	158	4.0043	.68471	3.9003	4.1084
	Total	396	3.8059	.87743	3.6026	4.0093

Source: Primary data, 2016

We can conclude that the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction in rural and urban Regions is significantly different.

A cross tabulation of Region category and level of customer satisfaction in Table 5.26, shows that 43.70 percent of tourists in rural Regions were strongly satisfied with services offered, compared to 35.03 percent from urban Regions. Overall, 30.67 percent of tourists in rural Regions were fairly satisfied relative to 26.75 percent of

those in urban Regions. On the contrary, only 6.30 percent of rural tourists were not satisfied, compared to 9.55 percent of urban tourists. 7.01 percent of urban visitors were strongly dissatisfied relative to 5.04 percent of rural ones.

These results showed that tourists in rural Regions were more satisfied than those in urban Regions.

Table 5.26: Cross Tabulation of Region Category and Overall Satisfaction

		Overall, you are satisfied by Cameroon destination					Total
		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	
Region category	Rural	12	15	34	73	104	238
	Percentage	5.04%	6.30%	14.29%	30.67%	43.70%	100%
	Urban	11	15	34	42	55	157
	Percentage	7.01%	9.55%	21.66%	26.75%	35.03%	100%
	Total	23	30	68	115	159	395

Source: Primary data, 2016

Relating results in Table 5.26 to the outcome in Table 5.25, what satisfied tourists in rural Regions the most was human elements responsiveness, while urban Regions tourists expressed more satisfaction with service blue print. What dissatisfied the most both tourists in urban and rural Regions were non-human elements.

5.9 Relationship between service quality, destination image and customer satisfaction

This section presents the results of the research hypotheses test. Reference was made to the conceptual model in Figure 4.10 and the proposed hypotheses (H_1, H_2, H_3, H_4, H_5, H_6, H_7, and H_8). The study assumed a linear relationship between predictor and dependent variables (customer satisfaction); and adopted Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) method of estimation in examining the relationship between predictor, mediating and dependent variables. OLS allowed for derivation of a regression line of best fit while keeping errors at minimum.

Hierarchical regression analysis was employed to examine the relationship between factors derived from factor analysis and dependent variables in both rural and urban Regions. Regression analysis was used to model relationships between factors that

define service quality, destination image and customer satisfaction. Second, it was essential in determination of the magnitude of the resulting relationships. Third, it was used to make predictions based on the resulting models. The estimated multiple linear regression model was defined as:

$$CS = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \beta_5 X_5 + \varepsilon_0 \quad (1)$$

Where

CS is customer satisfaction,

β_0 is constant associated with the regression model,

$\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3, \beta_4$ and β_5 are parameters

X_1 is human elements,

X_2 is non-human elements,

X_3 is service blue print,

X_4 is core service,

X_5 is destination image

ε_0 is error term associated with the regression model.

As a pre-test requirement, the following assumptions of linear regression were checked to ascertain that the dependent variable was measured on a continuous scale, the independent variable was continuous or categorical, linearity, homoscedasticity, multicollinearity with no significant outliers and residuals approximately normally distributed.

Assumption one; the dependent variable was measured on a continuous scale. The dependent variable in this study was customer satisfaction. Appendix 4, Part D shows that the variable customer satisfaction was measured using an interval scale where A = Strongly disagree, B = Disagree, C = Neither agree nor disagree, D = Agree, E = Strongly agree. This means that the first assumption of linear regression was met.

Assumption two; the independent variable is continuous or categorical. The independent variable in this study was service quality (with four dimensions: human elements reliability/responsiveness, non-human elements, service blueprint and core service) and the mediator variable was destination image as shown in Figure 5.2. The study instrument in Appendix 4 evidence the fact that the independent variable (made up of functional service quality and technical service quality), together with the moderator variable were all measured on a five point Likert scale, where A stood

for Strongly disagree, B = Disagree, C = Neither agree nor disagree, D = Agree, E = Strongly agree. The second assumption of linear regression was not violated.

Assumption three; linearity was tested between the dependent variable (customer satisfaction) and the independent variable collectively (service quality). A scatter plot was used in examining these relationships and the results are shown in Appendix 20. The study established that the data set did not violate the assumption of linearity.

Assumption four; the error terms (ε_i) are normally and identically independently distributed with mean zero and constant variance (homoscedasticity). Homoscedasticity refers to the assumption that the dependent variable exhibits similar amounts of variance across the range of values for an independent variable. The study tested the hypothesis that variance in customer satisfaction is homogeneous along the service quality dimensions, using a graphical methods as displayed in Appendix 21. The concentration of the variance of the error term along the line of best fit meant that the error variance in customer satisfaction was constant along the service quality dimensions. Hence, the data did not violate heteroscedasticity and instead was homoscedastic.

Assumption five; test of multicollinearity. Multicollinearity occurs when any single independent variable is highly correlated (r greater than or equal to 0.7) with a set of other independent variables. This leads to problems with understanding which independent variable contributes to the variance explained in the dependent variable, as well as technical issues in calculating a multiple regression model. In this study, tolerance, the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) and Pearson correlation coefficient (r) were adopted as two collinearity diagnostic factors that could help identify multicollinearity.

Tolerance is a measure of collinearity reported as 1-R^2. A small tolerance value indicates that the variable under consideration is almost a perfect linear combination of the independent variables already in the equation, and that it should not be added to the regression equation. If the tolerance value is very small (less than 0.10) it indicates that the multiple correlations with other variables is high; suggesting the possibility of multicollinearity (Ray-Mukherjee, et al., 2014). None of the tolerance values in Appendix 22 was less than 0.1 and hence the data set did not violate multicollinearity based on tolerance.

The Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) provides a measure of how much the variance for a given regression coefficient is increased compared to if all predictors were uncorrelated (Lewis-Beck and Lewis-Beck, (2015). This meant that the extent to which the given predictor is highly correlated with the remaining predictors is the extent to which VIF will be large. Lewis-Beck and Lewis-Beck (2015), suggest that VIF less than 3 shows no multicollinearity, while VIF greater than 10 shows multicollinearity exist. A regression analysis of the independent variables (human elements reliability, human elements responsiveness and non-human elements) on service blueprint shown in Appendix 23 resulted in VIF values less than three and all the tolerance values were greater than or equal to 0.1. Meaning the independent variables were not highly correlated to service blueprint and hence the data set have a problem of multicollinearity.

To test the correlation between bivariate factors, Pearson correlation coefficient (r) was used to determine the level of significance of the relationships. Appendix 23 shows that the non-human elements have a significant positive relationship (p = 0.000, r = 0.539) with human elements reliability at the 5 percent level of significance in a 1-tailed test. Non-human elements had a significant positive relationship (p = 0.000, r = 0.527) with human elements responsiveness at the 5 percent level of significance a 1-tailed test. Non-human elements are significantly and positively related (p = 0.000, r = 0.584) to service blueprint at the 5 percent level of significance a 1-tailed test. It was established that none of the independent variables were highly correlated, because in all the bivariate relationships there was no r greater than or equal to 0.9. Hence based on correlation analysis results in Appendix 23, the assumption of multicollinearity was not violated.

Assumption six; no significant outliers, unusual cases or highly influential points. Outliers, leverage and influential points are different terms used to represent observations in a data set that are in some way unusual when performing a multiple regression analysis. The study adopted the use of descriptive statistics in examining the existence of outliers. A descriptive analysis of the five factors that influence customer satisfaction was performed with specific interest on z-scores.

The resulting z-scores were subjected to another descriptive analysis, with specific focus on minimum and maximum z-scores as displayed in Appendix 24. It shows that non-human Elements have the highest z-score of 2.773, followed by human elements reliability with a z-score of 2.001 and human elements responsiveness (z-

score = 1.938). The factor with the least z-score is service blueprint with a z-score of -3.501. The threshold is a z-score of 3.00. Any z-score greater than 3.00 would have meant that the factor was 3.00 standard deviations away from the mean. This would have been considered as an indicator of existence of an outlier on the said factor. It was therefore inferred that the data did not violate the assumption of non-significant outliers.

To check whether there are outliers that have undue influence on the results for the regression model, Cook's distance in the residuals statistics in Appendix 24 was interpreted. According to Pinho, Nobre and Singer (2015), cases with values larger than 1 are potential problem. The maximum value for Cook's distance is 0.284, suggesting no major problem. Hence there are no outliers likely to influence the regression model.

Assumption seven; normal distribution of residuals. The study used a histogram with a superimposed normal curve to test the data set for normality as shown in Appendix 25. The standardized residuals show a normal distribution curve, with a concentration of the variables at the centre of the histogram. The concentration of the data set around zero shows the data are normally distributed and hence adequate for regression analysis.

5.10 Relationship between human elements and customer satisfaction

The first research objective was to identify the service quality dimensions that influence international tourists' satisfaction in Cameroon. Service quality have four dimensions according to the conceptual framework in Figure 4.10, namely human elements, non-human elements, service blueprint and core service. The individual influence of these dimensions was sought followed by an examination of the overall influence of service quality on customer satisfaction.

The human element dimension was defined by four variables responsiveness, reliable, assurance and empathy. Factor analysis showed that human elements are multidimensional, with two reliable dimensions revealed as reliability and responsiveness. The predicted model relating human elements reliability, human elements responsiveness and customer satisfaction was presented using the linear regression model as:

$CS = \beta_0 + \beta_6 \, HEREL + \beta_7 \, HERES + \varepsilon_0$ (2)   where

CS is customer satisfaction

HEREL is human elements reliability

HERES is human elements responsiveness

β_0 is a constant associated with the regression model

ε_0 is error term associated with the regression model

The relationship between human elements and customer satisfaction was examined using OLS method of estimation, testing the first research hypothesis H_1: There is a significant relationship between human elements and customer satisfaction.

Hierarchical multiple regression was used to assess the ability of human elements to predict levels of customer satisfaction. Hierarchical regression was preferred because it allowed assessment of what one independent variable or a block of independent variables added to the prediction of the dependent variable, while controlling the previous variables. Once all the independent variables were entered, the overall model was evaluated in terms of its ability to predict customer satisfaction.

The model summary of human elements and customer satisfaction in Table 5.27 shows the coefficient of determination (R^2) under model one is 0.506. It means the human elements (reliability and responsiveness) explain 50.6 percent of the variations in customer satisfaction and with 49.4 percent of the variations remaining unexplained. Model two had $R^2 = 0.538$, which meant that model two explained 53.8 percent of the variation in customer satisfaction and left 46.2 percent of the variations unexplained. Model two provided a relatively good fit, meaning human elements would explain 53.8 percent the variation in customer satisfaction according to model two.

Table 5.27: Model summary of human elements and customer satisfaction

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of Estimate	Change statistics				
					R Square change	F change	df1	df2	Significant change
1	.682	.506	.504	.70291	.506	587.832	1	392	.000
2	.706	.538	.537	.68254	.073	52.944	1	394	.000

Source: Primary data, 2016.

The ANOVA, Table 5.28, was used to assess the overall significance of the regression model. Under model one in Table 5.28, the F-value (1, 394) = 429.647 and the p-value = 0.000. For model two, the F (2, 393) = 311.563 and its p-value =

0.000. This means that model one and two are both significant with p-values less than 0.05 at α = 0.05 level in explaining the linear relationship between human elements reliability, human elements responsiveness and customer satisfaction.

Table 5.28: Analysis of variance statistics of human elements

Model		Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Significance
1	Regression	193.901	1	193.901	429.647	.000
	Residual	172.638	394	.499		
	Total	366.539	395			
2	Regression	181.227	2	112.745	311.563	.000
	Residual	185.312	393	.471		
	Total	366.539	395			

Source: Primary data, 2016.

The study examined the significance of the individual variables (human elements reliability and human elements responsiveness) using Table 5.29. Human elements reliability had a p-value of 0.000 and human elements responsiveness had a p-value of 0.000. Both variables were significant. We therefore rejected the null hypothesis and deduced that there is a significant relationship between human elements and customer satisfaction, defined by human elements reliability and human elements responsiveness.

Table 5.29: Coefficients of human elements

Model		Unstandardised coefficients		Standardised coefficients	t-value	Sig.	95 percent confidence interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower bound	Upper bound
1	(Constant)	.288	.092		3.372	.028	.056	.671
	Human elements reliability	.631	.029	.337	31.039	.000	.721	.802
2	(Constant)	.206	.078		1.921	.033	.073	.492
	Human elements reliability	.469	.037	.389	18.546	.000	.398	.558
	Human elements responsiveness	.343	.034	.212	9.551	.000	.276	.345

Source: Primary data, 2016.

It was established that a significant relationship existed between human elements and customer satisfaction and model two provided a moderate fit, while model one

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presented a weak fit. Model two has an adjusted coefficient of determination (R^2) = 0.538. This means 53.8 percent of the variations in the customer satisfaction are explained by two independent variables (human elements reliability and human elements responsiveness). This implies the two variables have the greatest effect on the relationships between human elements dimension of service quality and customer satisfaction in a two factor model. This relationship is represented by the fitted model as:

CS = 0.206 + 0.469 HEREL + 0.343 HERES
     (0.014)   (0.000)   (0.000)
R^2 = 0.538

Human elements reliability have the highest beta value, $\beta 6$ = 0.469 as shown above. A unit increase in human elements reliability would therefore result in a 46.9 percent increase in customer satisfaction in a linear relationship with only two independent variables. Human elements responsiveness have a beta value ($\beta 7$) of 0.343. Which meant a unit increase in human elements responsiveness would result in a 34.3 percent increase in customer satisfaction. The fitted regression model above shows a positive relationship between human elements reliability, human elements responsiveness and customer satisfaction. Overall, this means that the higher the levels of human elements dimension of service quality, the higher the levels of tourist satisfaction.

5.11 Relationship between non-human elements and customer satisfaction

The relationship between non-human elements and customer satisfaction was examined by using linear regression analysis. The predicted model relating non-human elements and customer satisfaction was presented as:

CS = β_0 + β_8NHE + ε_0 (3)

In this equation, β_0 is the estimate of the intercept and ε_0 is the associated regression error term. β_8 is the beta value associated with Non-Human Elements (NHE) and CS stands for customer satisfaction. The relationship between non-human elements and customer satisfaction was examined by testing the second research hypothesis H_2: There is a significant relationship between non-human elements and customer satisfaction.

Using OLS method of estimation under linear regression analysis, the study proceeded to determine the effect of non-human elements on customer satisfaction. The model summary in Table 5.30 shows that under model one, the value of R^2 is 0.273. It means non-human elements explain only 27.34 percent of the variations in customer satisfaction in a linear relationship between the two, leaving out 72.66 percent of the variations unexplained. This was interpreted to mean model one provids a weak fit.

Table 5.30: Model summary of non-human elements and customer satisfaction

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of Estimate	Change statistics				
					R Square change	F change	df1	df2	Significant change
1	.488	.273	.271	.62519	.273	304.861	1	392	.000

Source: Primary data, 2016.

The resulting ANOVA in Table 5.31 shows that under model one, the F-value (1, 394) is 314.693 and the p-value = 0.000. This implies that model one is statistically significant (α = 0.05 level) in explaining the linear relationship between non-human elements and customer satisfaction.

Table 5.31: Analysis of variance statistics of non-human elements

Model		Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Significance
1	Regression	175.392	1	175.392	314.693	.000
	Residual	211.005	394	.355		
	Total	386.397	395			

Source: Primary data, 2016.

The significance of the coefficient of non-human elements or physical evidence was examined as presented in the Table below. Under model one, non-human elements have a significant p-value of 0.000 and therefore the null hypothesis was rejected. Meaning there is a significant relationship between non-human elements and customer satisfaction.

Table 5.32: Coefficients of non-human elements and customer satisfaction

Model		Unstandardised coefficients		Standardised coefficients	t-value	Sig.	95 percent confidence interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower bound	Upper bound
1	(Constant)	1.217	.106		9.637	.000	1.197	2.013
	Non-human elements	.481	.022	.319	21.536	.000	.383	.559

Source: Primary data, 2016.

The significant relationship between non-human elements and customer satisfaction was followed by an evaluation of the model. The Model has an $R^2 = 0.273$, meaning the model provided a weak fit. This relationship is represented by the following model:

CS = 1.217+ .481 NHE
         (0.000)   (0.000)
$R^2 = 0.273$

From the equation above, the beta value (β_8) of non-human element is 0. 481, meaning a unit increase in non-human elements would result in a 48.13 percent increase in customer satisfaction in a direct relationship between non-human elements and customer satisfaction. The regression model in equation above shows a positive relationship between non-human elements and customer satisfaction. Overall, this implies that the higher the levels of non-human elements, the higher the levels of tourist satisfaction.

5.12 Relationship between service blueprint and customer satisfaction

The study used linear regression analysis to examine the relationship between service blueprint and customer satisfaction. The predicted model relating service blueprint and customer satisfaction was presented as:

CS = β_0 + β_9SBP + ε_0 (4)

From this equation, β_0 is the estimate of the intercept and ε_0 is the associated regression error term, β_9 is the beta value associated with Service Blueprint (SBP) and CS stands for customer satisfaction. The relationship between service blueprint and customer satisfaction was examined by testing the third research hypothesis

which was H_3: There is a significant relationship between service blueprint and customer satisfaction

A linear regression analysis using OLS method of estimation was adopted in determining the effect service blueprint on customer satisfaction. The model one in Table 5.33 has a R^2 of 0.317. This means service blueprint explaines 31.72 percent of the variations in customer satisfaction, leaving 68.28 percent of the variations unexplained. This was interpreted to mean model one provides a weak fit.

Table 5.33: Model summary of service blueprint and customer satisfaction

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of Estimate	Change statistics				
					R Square change	F change	df1	df2	Significant change
1	.528	.317	.316	.59823	.317	299.185	1	392	.000

Source: Primary data, 2016.

The significance of the resulting model was examined under the associated ANOVA output presented in Table 5.34. The model has F-value $(1, 394) = 405.831$ and the p-value $= 0.000$. It means the model is statistically significant at $\alpha = 0.05$ level in explaining the simple linear relationship between service blue print and customer satisfaction.

Table 5.34: Analysis of Variance statistics of service blueprint

Model		Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Significance
1	Regression	145.927	1	145.927	405.831	.000
	Residual	181.005	394	.391		
	Total	326.932	395			

Source: Primary data, 2016.

The study examined the coefficients of service blueprint as presented in Table 5.35. The p-value of 0.000 meant that service blueprint has significant coefficients and therefore the null hypothesis was rejected. There is therefore a significant relationship between service blueprint and customer satisfaction.

Table 5.35: Coefficients of service blueprint and customer satisfaction

Model		Unstandardised coefficients		Standardised coefficients	t-value	Sig.	95 percent confidence interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower bound	Upper bound
1	(Constant)	.729	.134		10.411	.000	.731	1.776
	Service blueprint	.603	.105	.392	19.038	.000	.532	.718

Source: Primary data, 2016.

An evaluation of the model relating service blue print and customer satisfaction was done. The model had an $R^2 = 0.317$, which means the model provides a weak fit. The relationship between service blue print and customer satisfaction was presented as:

CS = 0.729 + 0.603 SBP
    (0.000)   (0.000)
$R^2 = 0.317$

Service blueprint has a beta value (β_9) of 0.603 as shown above. This means a unit increase in service blueprint would result in a 60.34 percent increase in customer satisfaction in a direct relationship between those two variables. The regression model above shows a positive relationship exists between service blueprint and customer satisfaction, and that the higher the levels of service blue print, the higher the levels of tourist satisfaction in Cameroon.

5.13 Relationship between core service and customer satisfaction

In a service business a lot of emphasis is usually placed on the procedures, processes and context for service to the extent that organization tend to overlook the core service (Mok, Sparks and Kadampully, 2013). Using CFA Wallace and Buil (2013) demonstrated the significance of core service in defining customer perceived service quality in the banking context. But a factor analysis using EFA in this study established that core service quality loaded on the factor human elements reliability, and this led to drop core service from further analysis. The predicted model relating core service and customer satisfaction was presented as:

$CS = \beta_0 + \beta_{10}\, CoS + \varepsilon_0$ (5)

From this equation, β_0 is the estimate of the intercept and ε_0 is the associated regression error term, β_{10} is the beta value associated with core service (CoS) and CS

stands for customer satisfaction. The study tested hypothesis four H_4: There is a significant relationship between core service and customer satisfaction.

A linear regression analysis output in Table 5.36 under OLS estimation method, shows that the model had an R square value of 0.338. This meant that core service could explain 33.81 percent of the variations in customer satisfaction on a direct linear relationship, leaving out 66.19 percent of the variations unexplained. This shows that core service had a weak influence over customer satisfaction.

Table 5.36: Model summary of core service and customer satisfaction

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of Estimate	Change statistics				
					R Square change	F change	df1	df2	Significant change
1	.492	.338	.337	.61842	.338	403.729	1	392	.000

Source: Primary data, 2016.

An examination of the significance of the model under ANOVA Table 5.37 shows model one had a p-value of 0.000. This means that the model is significant in explaining the linear relationship between core service and customer satisfaction.

Table 5.37: Analysis of variance statistics of core service and customer satisfaction

Model		Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Significance
1	Regression	163.039	1	202.776	381.732	.000
	Residual	151.632	394	.411		
	Total	314.971	395			

Source: Primary data, 2016.

After establishing that the model is significant in explaining the relationship between core service and customer satisfaction, the coefficient of model one was examined in Table 5.38. It was observed that the coefficients model one is significant with p-value of 0.000. From this analysis, the null hypothesis was rejected at α = 0.05 level and therefore there was a significant relationship between core service and customer satisfaction. As an individual construct, core service quality significantly influenced customer satisfaction.

Table 5.38: Coefficients of core service elements and customer satisfaction

Model		Unstandardised coefficients		Standardised coefficients	t-value	Sig.	95 percent confidence interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower bound	Upper bound
1	(Constant)	.618	.108		9.453	.000	.621	1.208
	Service blueprint	.599	.053	.318	17.984	.000	.488	.819

Source: Primary data, 2016.

An evaluation of the model shows a direct relationship between core service quality and customer satisfaction. The model has an R^2 = 0.338. The coefficient of determination shows model one provides a weak fit, indicating that core service quality has a moderate positive effect on customer satisfaction. The direct relationship between core service and customer satisfaction is presented as:

CS = 0.618 + 0.599 CoS
    (0.000)   (0.000)
R^2 = 0.338

Core service has a beta value (β_{10}) of 0.599 as shown above. It means a unit increase in core service would result in a 59.94 percent increase in customer satisfaction in a direct relationship between those two variables. The resulting positive relationship means that an increase in core service would result in an increase in customer satisfaction.

5.14 Mediating effect of destination Image

The study sought to examine the effect of destination image in mediating the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction. To achieve this, OLS method was used in regression analysis, and the procedure for testing mediation proposed by MacKinnon, Coxe and Baraldi (2012) was adopted. The mediating role was examined by undertaking a first and second order test of the proposed equation. The first test began with regressing service quality on customer satisfaction to determine if this relationship exists. The second step examined the existence of a significant relationship between the independent variable (service quality) and the mediating variable (destination image) and if it does, the last step would be to examine the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction, and

determine whether the relationship still exists even after introduction of destination image in the regression model.

5.14.1 Relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction

The first step in testing the mediated relationship was to determine the nature of relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction. The predicted model relating service quality and customer satisfaction was presented in a simple linear regression model as:

$$CS = \beta_0 + \beta_{11}\,SQ + \varepsilon_0 \quad (6)$$

In this equation, β_0 is the estimate of the intercept, ε_0 is the associated regression error term, β_{11} is the beta value associated with service quality, CS stands for customer satisfaction and SQ for service quality. The relationship between these variables was presented by hypothesis five as H_5: There is a significant relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction.

The composite construct of service quality (made up of human elements reliability, human elements responsiveness, non-human elements, service blue print and core service) was regressed against customer satisfaction. The model summary associated with the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction was presented in Table 5.39. The model has $R^2 = 0.516$ which means that service quality explains 51.62 percent of the variations in customer satisfaction, leaving 48.38 percent of the variations unexplained. Service quality therefore provides a moderate fit in explaining variations in customer satisfaction.

Table 5.39: Model summary of service quality and customer satisfaction

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of Estimate	Change statistics				
					R Square change	F change	df1	df2	Significant change
1	.571	.516	.515	.57198	.516	683.812	1	392	.000

Source: Primary data, 2016.

The ANOVA Table 5.40, shows the model has an F value (1, 394) = 623.902, p-value = 0.000. Meaning the model is significant at $\alpha = 0.05$ level in explaining the linear relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction.

Table 5.40: Analysis of variance statistics of service quality and customer satisfaction

	Model	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Significance
1	Regression	201.933	1	301.843	623.902	.000
	Residual	149.834	394	.372		
	Total	351.767	395			

Source: Primary data, 2016.

The coefficients of the model presented in Table 5.41 shows the results are significant (p-value = 0.000). Service quality is therefore significant in predicting changes in customer satisfaction. Following this result, the null hypothesis was rejected at $\alpha = 0.05$ level and hence there is a significant relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction.

Table 5.41: Coefficients of service quality elements and customer satisfaction

	Model	Unstandardised coefficients		Standardised coefficients	t-value	Sig.	95 percent confidence interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower bound	Upper bound
1	(Constant)	.284	.93		2.984	.012	.019	.292
	Service blueprint	.711	..057	.391	27.683	.000	.627	1.275

Source: Primary data, 2016.

On evaluating the model relating service quality and customer satisfaction the following relationship was derived:

CS = 0.284 + 0.711 SQ

    (0.012) (0.000)

$R^2 = 0.516$

The unstandardised beta coefficient in equation above shows that, service quality has a beta value (β_{11}) of 0.711. This means a unit increase in service quality would result in a 71.15 percent increase in customer satisfaction. The regression model in equation above shows a positive relationship between service quality and customer

satisfaction. Hence the higher the level of service quality, the higher the level of tourist satisfaction with service in Cameroon.

5.14.2 Relationship between service quality and destination image

After establishing the existence of a significant relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction, and that β_{11} related with service quality is not equal to zero, the test of whether the mediating effect of destination image is direct or mediated was undertaken. To do this, two regression equations were estimated (equation 7 and 8). Equation (6) sought to establish the existence of a significant relationship between service quality and destination image and confirming that β_{11} was different from zero. The linear regression analysis took the form:

DI= $\beta_0 + \beta_{12}$ SQ + ε_0 (7)

In this equation, β_0 is the estimate of the intercept and ε_0 is the associated regression error term. β_{12} is the beta value relating to service quality to destination image. DI stands for destination image. The relationship between these variables is presented in hypothesis six as H_6: There is a significant relationship between service quality and destination image.

Using destination image as the dependent variable and service quality as the independent variable, a regression analysis was performed. The model summary in Table 5.42 shows the relationship between service quality and destination image. The coefficient of determination under model one was 0.512. This means service quality explains 51.21 percent of the variations in perceived destination image, leaving 48.79 percent of the variations unexplained.

Table 5.42: Model summary of service quality and destination image

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of Estimate	Change statistics				
					R Square change	F change	df1	df2	Significant change
1	.628	.512	.512	.49217	.512	638.901	1	394	.000

Source: Primary data, 2016.

Table 5.43 shows that the regression model has F value (1, 394) of 479.811 and had a p-value = 0.000. The model is therefore significant at $\alpha = 0.05$ level of significance in explaining the linear relationship between service quality and destination image.

Table 5.43: Analysis of variance statistics of service quality and destination image

Model		Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Significance
1	Regression	189.372	1	183.943	479.811	.000
	Residual	113.005	394	.319		
	Total	302.377	395			

Source: Primary data, 2016.

The coefficients of service quality in the relationship between service quality and destination image are presented in Table 5.44. The p-value = 0.000 means that service quality is significant in predicting changes in destination image. Therefore the null hypothesis was rejected at α = 0.05, meaning there is a significant relationship between service quality and destination image and the test for the mediated relationship could be done.

Table 5.44: Coefficients of service quality and destination image

Model		Unstandardised coefficients		Standardised coefficients	t-value	Sig.	95 percent confidence interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower bound	Upper bound
1	(Constant)	.671	.926		7.732	.002	.441	.892
	Service blueprint	.699	.031	.673	22.834	.000	.628	1.033

Source: Primary data, 2016.

The model relating service quality and destination image was evaluated. The model has an $R^2 = 0.512$, which implies that the model provides a moderate fit. Following the linear regression analysis of service quality and destination image using OLS, the fitted model was determined as:

DI = 0.671 + 0.699 SQ

    (0.002)   (0.000)

$R^2 = 0.512$

The equation shows that service quality has a coefficient (β_{12}) of 0.699. A unit change in service quality would therefore result in a 69.91 percent change in perceived destination image. This also shows that a positive relationship exists between service quality and destination image. The higher the level of service

quality, the higher the level of perceived destination image by tourists in Cameroon. The fitted model further shows that the value of β_{12} associated with service quality is not equal to zero and therefore the test of the mediating effect of destination image could be done, but this was preceded by the test of the relationship between destination image and customer satisfaction.

5.14.3 Relationship between destination image and customer satisfaction

The study sought to establish whether there is a significant relationship between destination image and customer satisfaction; and whether the value of β_{13} is different from zero. Using simple linear regression analysis, the predicted model is presented as follows:

$$CS = \beta_0 + \beta_{13} DI + \varepsilon_0 \quad (8)$$

In equation (8), β_0 is the estimate of the intercept and ε_0 is the associated regression error term. β_{13} was the beta value associated with destination image, CS stands for customer satisfaction and DI for destination image. The relationship between these variables was presented in hypothesis seven H7: There is a significant relationship between destination image and customer satisfaction.

Regression analysis was used to assess the ability of destination image to predict levels of customer satisfaction. The model summary relating destination image and customer satisfaction is presented in Table 5.45 and it shows the model had R^2 of 0.427. This means 42.74 percent of the variations in customer satisfaction are explained by destination image, leaving 57.26 of the variations unexplained.

Table 5.45: Model summary of destination image and customer satisfaction

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of Estimate	Change statistics				
					R Square change	F change	df1	df2	Significant change
1	.591	.427	.426	.58329	.427	656.821	1	392	.000

Source: Primary data, 2016.

The ANOVA results associated with the model are presented in Table 5.46 and shows that F value (1, 394) is 372.803 and the p-value is 0.000. The model is therefore significant and that there is a significant relationship between destination image and customer satisfaction.

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Table 5.46: Analysis of variance statistics of destination image and customer satisfaction

	Model	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Significance
1	Regression	192.045	1	192.045	372.803	.000
	Residual	160.984	394	.382		
	Total	314.971	395			

Source: Primary data, 2016.

The coefficients of the model relating destination image and customer satisfaction are presented in Table 5.47. It shows destination image has a significant p-value = 0.000, which means destination image is significant in predicting changes in customer satisfaction. Hypothesis seven was rejected at $\alpha = 0.05$, meaning there is a significant relationship between destination image and customer satisfaction. These results confirm that the final step of assessing the meditated effect could be undertaken.

Table 5.47: Coefficients of destination image and customer satisfaction

Model	Unstandardised coefficients		Standardised coefficients	t-value	Sig.	95 percent confidence interval for B	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower bound	Upper bound
1 (Constant)	.217	.98		6.093	.004	.429	.807
Service blueprint	.812	.076	.504	17.633	.000	.639	.911

Source: Primary data, 2016.

The resulting model was evaluated and the coefficient of determination $R^2 = 0.427$. It shows that the model provides a weak fit. The fitted model resulted in the following relationship:

CS = 0.217 + 0.812 DI
$\quad$ (0.004)　(0.000)
$R^2 = 0.427$

The equation above presents the coefficient (β_{13}) of destination image = 0.812. A unit increase in destination image would consequently result in a 81.24 percent

increase in customer satisfaction. We can therefore conclude that destination image has a strong positive influence on customer satisfaction. This also means the higher the levels of destination image, the higher the levels of tourist satisfaction with services in Cameroon.

5.14.4 Mediating effect of destination image

After establishing the existence of a significant relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction, service quality and destination image, and destination image and customer satisfaction, we proceeded to the final step of testing mediation which entails assessing whether service quality still affects customer satisfaction, once controlling for the effect of destination image on customer satisfaction. To make this assessment, the regression equation (9) was estimated using hierarchical regression method and was stated as:

$$CS = \beta_0 + \beta_{14}\,SQ + \beta_{15}\,DI + \varepsilon_0 \quad (9)$$

In equation (9), β_0 is the estimate of the intercept, ε_0 is the associated regression error term, β_{14} is the beta value associated with service quality, β_{15} is the beta value associated with destination image, CS stands for customer satisfaction, SQ for service quality and DI for destination image. The relationship between these variables was presented by hypothesis eight as H8: There is a significant mediating effect of destination image on the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction.

The procedure of testing mediation provided by Shaver (2005) and adopted by MacKinnon, Coxe and Baraldi (2012) was assumed. According to MacKinnon, et al. (2012), the first condition is, if β_{13} is statistically significant and given that β_{11} was statistically significant in equation (6), the results would be interpreted to mean that destination image mediates the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction. The second condition is, if the estimation of β_{14} in non-significant, then the interpretation would be that destination image fully mediates the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction. The third condition is, if β_{14} is statistically significant then the interpretation would be that destination image partially mediates the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction. Hierarchical multiple regression was used to assess the ability of service quality to explain variations in customer satisfaction in the presence of destination image. Hierarchical regression was preferred because it allowed assessment of the

contribution of service quality while controlling for destination image in the mediated effect. Once the independent variable (service quality) and the mediating variable (destination image) were entered, the overall model was evaluated in terms of its ability to predict customer satisfaction. Pre-test analysis indicated no violation of assumptions of normality, linearity, multicollinearity and homoscedasticity. Hence, the study proceeded with the test of the mediated effect using regression analysis.

The model summary in Table 5.48 shows the coefficient of determination values for models one and two as $R^2 = 0.516$ and $R^2 = 0.573$ respectively. Model one can shows service quality and destination image could explain 51.6 percent of the variations in customer satisfaction, while model two shows that service quality and destination image could explain 57.32 percent of the variations in customer satisfaction. This means that model two provides a relatively more moderate fit compared to model one.

Table 5.48: Model summary of model mediated by destination image

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of Estimate	Change statistics				
					R Square change	F change	df1	df2	Significant change
1	.571	.516	.515	.57198	.516	683.812	1	392	.000
2	.629	.573	.572	.49782	.105	63.984	1	393	.000

Source: Primary data, 2016.

The resulting ANOVA Table 5.49 was generated showing that model one has a F (1, 394) of 548.009 and a p-value = 0.000. Model two shows a F (2, 393) of 453.881 and a p-value of 0.000. This means models one and two are both significant (p-value less than 0.05) at 0.05 level of significance in explaining the multiple relationship between service quality, destination image and customer satisfaction.

Table 5.49: Analysis of variance statistics of model mediated by destination image

	Model	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Significance
1	Regression	196.039	1	298.384	548.009	.000
	Residual	150.943	394	.323		
	Total	346.982	395			
2	Regression	180.743	2	172.986	453.881	.000
	Residual	168.732	393	.299		
	Total	349.475	395			

Source: Primary data, 2016.

Under model two in Table 5.50, the coefficients of the service quality and the coefficients of the destination image both have a p-value of 0.000. This means the coefficients of both the independent variable and the mediating variable are both significant at 0.05 levels of significance. However the constants are not significant. The beta coefficients of service quality β_{14} are not equal to zero and are statistically significant. The beta coefficients of destination image β_{15} are not equal to zero and are statistically significant. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected at $\alpha = 0.05$ and it was deduced that destination image has a significant mediating effect on the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction.

Reference was made to the rule of testing for mediation effect provided by Baron and Kelly (1986) and adopted by Shaver (2005). The first order condition was examined as follows. According to the results in Table 5.44 and the fitted model, the coefficient of the independent variable (service quality) $\beta_{12} = 0.699$ and was significant. According to the results of model two in Table 5.50, the coefficient of the independent variable (service quality) $\beta_{14} = 0.373$ and was significant. In line with the recommendation of Shaver (2005), if β_{14} is statistically significant and given that β_{12}, was statistically significant, the results are interpreted to mean that destination image mediates the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction, and hence the first order condition for mediation is met.

The second order condition was subsequently examined and Table 5.50. It shows that the coefficient of the independent variable (service quality) $\beta_{14} = 0.373$ and is statistically significant (p-value = 0.000). Given that β_{12} was not equal to zero and was significant, the results are interpreted to mean that destination image do not fully

mediate the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction, and the second order condition is therefore not supported. These results led to the examination of the third order condition. Table 5.50 shows that $\beta_{14} = 0.373$ and is statistically significant with a p-value = 0.000. It followed that β_{14} is not equal to zero and is significant. Then, destination image partially mediates the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction.

Table 5.50: Coefficients of model mediated by destination image

Model		Unstandardised coefficients		Standardised coefficients	t-value	Sig.	95 percent confidence interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower bound	Upper bound
1	(Constant)	.208	.89		2.946	.045	-.112	.201
	Service quality	.504	.074	.645	21.006	.000	.607	1.302
2	(Constant)	-.083	.271		-.978	.076	-.209	.053
	Service quality	.674	.105	.301	8.716	.000	.445	.816
	Destination image	.511	.82	.099	9.043	.000	.309	.618

Source: Primary data, 2016.

The coefficient of the mediated model in Table 5.50 shows a significant relationship exist between service quality, destination image and customer satisfaction under model two, with resulting $R^2 = 0.573$, F change (1, 393) = 63.984, p-value = 0.000. This means that the model provides a moderately good fit. Table 5.50 shows that two control variables are statistically significant; service quality and destination image. Using the resulting coefficients, the fitted model was:

CS = - 0.083 + 0.674 SQ + 0.511 DI

    (-.978)   (0.000)   (0.000)

$R^2 = 0.573$

According to the equation above service quality has a coefficient (β14) of 0.674. This means that a unit change in service quality would result in a 67.41 percent increase in customer satisfaction if destination image was to remain unchanged. From the equation above, the coefficient (β_{15}) of destination image is 0.511. This means that a unit change in destination image would result in a 51.1 percent increase in customer satisfaction if service were to remain the same. This results show that

both variables (service quality and destination image) have a significant positive effect on customer satisfaction. Increased levels of tourist satisfaction could be achieved by giving better service quality. However this relationship partly hinges on the destination image.

5.15 Influence of service quality and destination image on tourist satisfaction

This study sought answers to the research question, "what is the nature of the relationship between service quality, destination image and customer satisfaction amongst international tourists in Cameroon?". These variables were modelled into a multiple linear regression model as indicated in equation (1).

Service quality had been conceptualized as a multiple dimensions construct, with four dimensions as shown in equation (1). Following the process of factor analysis using EFA, one dimension (core service) loaded on the factor human elements reliability. The construct service quality was subsequently defined by three dimensions: human elements, non-human elements, and service blue print. The multidimensionality of human elements led to the splitting of the variable human elements into two; human element reliability and human elements responsiveness. The independent construct (service quality) was finally defined by four variables human element reliability, human elements responsiveness, non-human elements, and service blue print. The dimensions of service quality resulting from EFA were regressed against customer satisfaction, in the presence of destination image as the mediating variable. Preliminary analyses indicated no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity, multicollinearity and homoscedasticity.

The model summary in Table 5.51 shows five models generated using hierarchical regression analysis. Model one has R^2 value of 0.506, which means that 50.6 percent of the variation in customer satisfaction is explained by human elements reliability, leaving 49.4 percent of the variations unexplained. Model two has R^2 value of 0.541, which means that 54.12 percent of the variation in customer satisfaction is explained by human elements reliability and human elements responsiveness, leaving 45.88 percent of the variations unexplained. Model three has R^2 value of 0.578, meaning that 57.8 percent of the variations in customer satisfaction are explained by human

elements reliability, human elements responsiveness and non-human elements (physical evidence), leaving 42.2 percent of the variations unexplained.

In the Table below model four has R^2 value of 0.639, meaning 63.9 percent of the variations in customer satisfaction are explained by human elements reliability, human elements responsiveness, non-human elements (physical evidence) and service blue print, leaving 36.1 percent of the variations unexplained. Model five has R^2 value of 0.721, meaning that 72.13 percent of the variations in customer satisfaction are explained by human elements reliability, human elements responsiveness, non-human elements (physical evidence), service blue print and destination image. Model five with a R^2 value of 0.721 provided a good fit, but relative to the other four models, it provides the best fit.

Table 5.51: Model summary of service quality, destination image and customer satisfaction

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of Estimate	Change statistics				
					R Square change	F change	df1	df2	Significant change
1	.682	.506	.504	.70291	.506	587.832	1	392	.000
2	.706	.541	.542	.68254	.073	52.944	1	394	.000
3	.721	.578	.580	.59962	.016	20.758	1	394	.002
4	.758	.639	.641	.60177	.065	34.891	1	393	.000
5	.779	.721	.722	.61298	.114	61.773	1	391	.000

Source: Primary data, 2016.

The ANOVA statistics in Table 5.52 shows that model one has an $F_{(1, 394)}$ of 429.647 and a p-value of 0.000; model two, has an $F_{(2, 393)}$ of 311.563 and a p-value of 0.000; model three has an $F_{(3, 392)}$ of 267.363 and a p-value of 0.000; model four, has an $F_{(4, 391)}$ of 215.759 and a p-value of 0.000 and model five, has an $F_{(5, 390)} = 202.337$ and a p-value of 0.000. This results show that model one, two, three, four and five are all significant (p-value less than 0.05) at 0.05 levels in explaining the multiple relationship between service quality, destination image and customer satisfaction.

Table 5.52: Analysis of variance statistics of service quality, destination image and customer satisfaction

	Model	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Significance
1	Regression	193.901	1	193.901	429.647	.000[a]
	Residual	172.638	394	.499		
	Total	366.539	395			
2	Regression	181.227	2	112.745	311.563	.000[b]
	Residual	185.312	393	.471		
	Total	366.539	395			
3	Regression	201.046	3	107.938	267.363	.000[c]
	Residual	193.745	392	.428.436		
	Total	394.791	395			
4	Regression	217.847	4	83.847	215.759	.000[d]
	Residual	211.733	391	389.718		
	Total	429.48	395			
5	Regression	285.003	5	71.559	202.337	.000[e]
	Residual	237.162	390	362.553		
	Total	522.165	395			

Source: Primary data, 2016.

a. Predictors: (Constant), Human elements reliability

b. Predictors: (Constant), Human elements reliability, Human elements responsiveness

c. Predictors: (Constant), Human elements reliability, Human elements responsiveness, Non-human elements

d. Predictors: (Constant), Human elements reliability, Human elements responsiveness, Non-human elements, Service blue print

f. Predictors: (Constant), Human elements reliability, Human elements responsiveness, Non-human elements, Service blue print, Corporate image

In reference to model five in the coefficients Table 5.53, the five independent variables and their significance values are: human elements reliability (p-value = 0.000), human elements responsiveness (p-value = 0.012), non-human elements (p-value = 0.000), service blueprint (p-value = 0.000) and destination image (p-value = 0.000). This output shows all the five variables are significant at $\alpha = 0.05$ level of significance in explaining variations in customer satisfaction. There is therefore a

significant relationship between service quality, destination image and customer satisfaction.

Table 5.53: Coefficients of the integrated model of service quality, destination image and customer satisfaction

Model		Unstandardised coefficients		Standardised coefficients	t-value	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.288	.092		3.372	.028
	Human elements reliability	.631	.029	.337	31.039	.000
2	(Constant)	.206	.078		1.921	.033
	Human elements reliability	.469	.037	.389	18.546	.000
	Human elements responsiveness	.343	.034	.212	9.551	.000
3	(Constant)	.152	.098		1.536	.017.
	Human elements reliability	.371	.038	.321	13.938	.000
	Human elements responsiveness	285	.065	.206	7.352	.000
	Non-human elements	.174	.014	.096	.103	.003
4	(Constant)	.023	.106		0.722	.104
	Human elements reliability	.292	.041	.289	9.374	.000
	Human elements responsiveness	.156	.083	.194	4.992	.002
	Non-human elements	.128	.036	.072	.044	.045
	Service blueprint	.267	.055	.177	3.466	
5	(Constant)	-.165	.89		-.173	.007
	Human elements reliability	.234	.027	.273	3.948	.000
	Human elements responsiveness	.119	.046	.161	1.465	.012
	Non-human elements	-.085	.052	-.026	.637	.000
	Service blueprint	.164	.039	.135	1.298	.000
	Destination image	.401	.018	.221	7.341	.000

Source: Primary data, 2016.

After establishing that service quality dimensions and destination image significantly influence customer satisfaction, the study sought a model that would provide the best fit and explain the resulting relationship. The fitted model was presented in mathematical form as:

CS = -0.165 + 0.234 HEREL + 0.119 HERES - 0.085 NHE + 0.164 SBP + 0.401 DI

       0.002   0.000   0.000   0.022   0.000   0.000

$R^2 = 0.721$

The integrated model in the equation above shows that model five has an $R^2 = 0.721$. This is interpreted to mean model five provides a good fit; implying service quality and destination image have a significant positive effect on customer satisfaction. The $R^2 = 0.721$ further means that 72.1 percent of the variations in the customer satisfaction is explained by five variables: human elements reliability, human elements responsiveness, non-human elements, service blueprint and destination image. Human elements reliability has a beta value ($\beta_1 = 0.234$). This means on an integrated scale, a unit change in human elements reliability would imply a 23.4 percent change in customer satisfaction. A unit change in service blue print ($\beta_4 = 0.164$) would result in a 16.4 percent change in customer satisfaction. A unit change in human elements responsiveness would result in 11.9 percent increase in customer satisfaction levels. A unit decrease in non-human elements ($\beta_3 = 0.085$) leads to a 8.5 percent change in customer satisfaction. This also means that lack of a unit of non-human elements considered by tourists as vital results in a 8.5 percent drop in customer satisfaction. A unit change in destination image ($\beta_5 = 0.401$) resulted in a 40.1 percent change in customer satisfaction, further affirming that destination image played a significant mediating role on the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction. This analysis demonstrates that increased levels of service quality will result in better customer satisfaction in rural and urban Regions in Cameroon, and that the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction can be enhanced if the country improves on its image.

Resulting from the analysis, the empirical model in Figure 5.2 was derived. The model shows that there is a strong positive relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction as evidenced by the path marked H_5: CS = 0.284 + 0.711 SQ, $R^2 = 0.516$, p-value = 0.000; sig., where the $\beta_{11} = 0.711$. The other service quality dimensions also have a significant positive relationship with customer satisfaction as shown by the paths marked (H_1, H_2, H_3 and H_4). The resulting mediated relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction is displayed by the path marked H_8: CS = -0.083 + 0.674 SQ + 0.511 DI where the $\beta_{14} = 0.674$. The empirical model therefore shows that destination image mediates the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction as shown by the dotted path and that the relationship is positive and strong ($\beta_{14} = 0.674$).

Figure 5.2: Empirical model of service quality, destination image and customer satisfaction

Mediating variable

Independent variable

H₆: DI = 0.671 + 0.699 SQ
R² = 0.512, p-value = 0.000; Sig

Destination Image

☐ Posts and comments on social platforms about Cameroon
☐ Perception of the country by residents
☐ Country's destination communication campaigns
☐ Media reports on Cameroon

H₇: CS = 0.217 + 0.812 DI
R² = 0.427, p-value = 0.000; Sig

Dependent variable

Service Quality Dimensions

Human Elements
☐ Responsiveness
☐ Reliability
☐ Assurance
☐ Empathy

H₈: CS = -0.083 + 0.674 SQ + 0.511 DI

R² = 0.573, p-value = 0.000; Sig

Customer Satisfaction

☐ Smooth visa process
☐ Positive experience at the Cameroon airport
☐ Overall satisfaction with the service quality in hotels / restaurants / tourist sites
☐ Willingness to come back to the country
☐ Willingness to recommend the country to friends / acquaintances

H₁: CS = 0.206 + 0.469 HEREL + 0.343 HERES, R² = 0.538, p-value = 0.000; Sig

Non-human Elements
☐ Modern facilities
☐ Scenery beauty
☐ Employees appearance
☐ Personal safety

H₂: CS = 1.217+ 0.481 NHE, R² = 0.273, p-value = 0.000; Sig

Service Blue Print
☐ Visa process
☐ Information at the embassy
☐ Payment process
☐ Reception at the Cameroon airport
☐ Transportation means

H₃: CS = 0.729 + 0.603 SBP, R² = 0.317, p-value = 0.000; Sig

Core Service
☐ Service in restaurants & hotels
☐ Reception and information on touristic sites
☐ Beauty of cultural events

H₄: CS = 0.618 + 0.599 CoS, R² = 0.338, p-value = 0.000; Sig

H₅: CS = 0.284 + 0.711 SQ, R² = 0.516, p-value = 0.000; Sig

Source: Primary data, 2016.

Table 5.54 gives a summary of the results of the tested hypotheses, shows the coefficient of determination associated with each analytical model, p-values and the decision made. The results show that all nine research hypotheses were confirmed and hence there is a significant relationship between the study variables. Service quality has a significant influence on customer satisfaction, but this influence is significantly mediated by destination image.

Table 5.54: Summary of results of hypotheses testing

Hypothesis	Analytical model	R-square value	ANOVA (p-value)	β value	Coefficient (p-value)	Decision
H_1: There is a significant relationship between human elements and customer satisfaction.	$CS = \beta_0 + \beta_6 HEREL + \beta_7 HERES + \varepsilon_0$	0.506	P = 0.000	$\beta_6 = 0.469$	P = 0.000	Confirm H_1
		0.538	P = 0.000	$\beta_7 = 0.343$	P = 0.000	
H_2: There is a significant relationship between non-human elements and customer satisfaction.	$CS = \beta_0 + \beta_8 NHE + \varepsilon_0$	0.273	P = 0.000	$\beta_8 = 0.481$	P = 0.000	Confirm H_2
H_3: There is a significant relationship between service blueprint and customer satisfaction.	$CS = \beta_0 + \beta_9 SBP + \varepsilon_0$	0.317	P = 0.000	$\beta_9 = 0.603$	P = 0.000	Confirm H_3
H_4: There is a significant relationship between core service and customer satisfaction.	$CS = \beta_0 + \beta_{10} CoS + \varepsilon_0$	0.338	P = 0.000	$B_{10} = 0.599$	P = 0.000	Confirm H_4
H_5: There is a significant relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction.	$CS = \beta_0 + \beta_{11} SQ + \varepsilon_0$	0.516	P = 0.000	$\beta_{11} = 0.711$	P = 0.000	Confirm H_5
H_6: There is a significant relationship between service quality and destination image.	$DI = \beta_0 + \beta_{12} SQ + \varepsilon_0$	0.512	P = 0.000	$\beta_{12} = 0.699$	P = 0.000	Confirm H_6
H_7: There is a significant relationship between destination image and customer satisfaction.	$CS = \beta_0 + \beta_{13} DI + \varepsilon_0$	0.427	P = 0.000	$\beta_{13} = 0.812$	P = 0.000	Confirm H_7
H_8: There is a significant mediating effect of destination image on the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction.	$CS = \beta_0 + \beta_{14} SQ + \beta_{15} DI + \varepsilon_0$	0.516	P = 0.000	$\beta_{14} = 0.674$	P = 0.000	Confirm H_8
		0.573		$\beta_{15} = 0.511$	P = 0.000	
H_9: The service quality perception in rural Regions is significantly different from that in urban Regions.			P = 0.000		P = 0.000	Confirm H_9
			P = 0.000		P = 0.000	

Note: β_1 to β_5 were examined under the integrated model and were not specific to any hypothesis

Source: Primary data, 2016.

5.16 Discussion of the Results

The resulting output of the data analysis was discussed and compared with findings of other scholars across the globe. Most of the results corroborate existing knowledge and some of the findings add on to existing knowledge. The findings are consistent with the industry practice, while parts of the findings suggest areas of improvement to service stakeholders as presented in the following section.

5.16.1 Dimensions of service quality that influence customer satisfaction

The first research objective was to identify the dimensions of service quality that influenced customer satisfaction. The study established that there were four dimensions of service quality impacting customer satisfaction amongst tourists in Cameroon. Table 5.23 provides a summary of these dimensions in their order of magnitude as encompassing human elements reliability, human elements responsiveness, non-human elements and service blue print.

These results confirmed the shortfall of SERVQUAL scale in terms of dimensionality as observed by Buttle (1996). In their conceptualization of SERVQUAL, Parasuraman, et al. (1988) suggested five dimensions of service quality: Reliability, Assurance, Tangibility, Empathy and Responsiveness also acronymed RATER by Buttle (1996). The findings of this study corroborate two dimensions from the RATER scale; reliability and responsiveness. The factors assurance and empathy are subsumed in human elements reliability and human elements responsiveness. To enhance the content validity and inclusivity of the tangibles dimension, this study proposed the name non-human elements, which Sureshchandar, et al. (2002) endorses as more encompassing of the physical evidence in the servicescape.

Unlike SERVQUAL, the findings of this study suggest an additional dimension of service quality, in the form of service blue print. It is also evident that these findings compare closely to the works of Sureshchandar (2002) who had identified five dimensions of service quality as including: human elements, non-human elements, core service, social responsibility and servicescape. One point of disparity is that in this study, the construct human element was further split into two; human elements reliability and human elements responsiveness. In the Cameroon context, core service loaded on human elements reliability, while social responsibility was a subcomponent of destination image and servicescape was defined as non-human elements resulting in a four factor model. These findings also compare to the work of

Che and Ting (2002) who identified twelve dimensions of service quality in the following order: communication, security, understanding the customer, competency, reliability, courtesy, accessibility, tangibles, responsiveness and credibility. They posit that there exist a positive relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction and that reliability is the dimension of service quality with the greatest influence on customer satisfaction.

The research results are consistent with the findings of Sultan and Wong (2010) who derived the PHEd model reflective of six important service quality dimensions including dependability, effectiveness, capability, efficiency, competencies, assurance, unusual situation management. But unlike the PHEd model, this study established a four dimension model. On replication in this study the factors dependability, effectiveness, capability, efficiency, competencies under PHEd loaded on one factor (human elements reliability), while assurance and unusual situation management loaded on the factor human elements responsiveness.

5.16.2 Comparative analysis of dimensions of service quality in regions

The second research objective sought to establish whether there is a significant difference in service quality dimensions between rural and rural Regions. A one way ANOVA test led the study to establish that tourists satisfaction differ significantly between urban and rural Regions along service quality dimensions of human elements reliability, human elements responsiveness, non-human elements and service blueprint as evidenced in Table 5.24. Limited literature exist on comparative analysis of service quality and customer satisfaction, however Tao (2011) concluded that the application of SERVQUAL in urban areas can produce different service quality dimensions from those found in rural regions. He added that reliability was the most important dimension for all customers, and that the greatest improvement in service quality would be achieved through improved service reliability.

The results of factor analysis in Table 5.23 gives a summary showing the service quality dimension that satisfies or dissatisfies tourists the most. The most reliable service quality dimension in explaining variations in customer satisfactions in rural Regions was captured in the rotated component matrix in Table 5.20 as including human elements reliability followed by human elements responsiveness, non-human elements and service blueprint. The study also established that the service quality dimension impacting the most customer satisfaction in urban Regions, according to the rotated component matrix in Table 5.22 was non-human elements, followed by

human elements reliability, human elements responsiveness and service blueprint respectively. For the combined data set, the most important service quality dimension was human elements reliability.

5.16.3 Influence of service quality on customer satisfaction

The third research objective was to examine the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction. Given the multidimensionality of service quality, this objective resulted in the formulation of four research hypotheses (H_1, H_2, H_3 and H_4). The four dimensions of service quality resulting from the factor analysis were: human elements, non-human elements, service blueprint and core service.

The first research hypothesis (H_1) sought to examine the relationship between human elements and customer satisfaction. Using linear regression analysis results in Tables 5.28 and 5.29, the study observed that human elements significantly influence customer satisfaction. Two significant dimensions of human elements were found to be human elements reliability and human elements responsiveness. The regression model shows a positive relationship between human elements reliability, human elements responsiveness and customer satisfaction. Human elements reliability has a greater influence on customer satisfaction as compared to human elements responsiveness. Human elements reliability was defined in Table 5.18 to a great extent by the variables "Cameroonians are welcoming", "Waiters at restaurants are skilled", "Cameroon airport staff are polite and competent", "Tour guides are skilful". This means tourists get more satisfied in cities where agents and staff members are able to offer excellent service. Human elements responsiveness was defined in Table 5.18 by the variables "Hotel staff are diligent" and "Police officers are ready to help". While human elements reliability centres on peoples' ability, human elements responsiveness focuses on their willingness to deliver the best service quality possible.

The relationship between non-human elements and customer satisfaction was examined by testing the second research hypothesis (H_2). The results of linear regression analysis in Tables 5.31 and 5.32 show that a significant relationship exist between non-human elements and customer satisfaction. The regression model shows a positive relationship between human elements reliability, human elements responsiveness and customer satisfaction. Human elements reliability has a greater influence on customer satisfaction as compared to human elements responsiveness. Table 5.18 identified non-human variables that influence customer satisfaction in

Regions to a great extent as including "Hotel rooms are comfy", "Taxis and buses are comfortable and clean", "Lifts are fully working", etc. These non-human elements are also referred to by Siow, et al. (2013) as the servicescape. This means that an increase in the value of the servicescape would result in an increase in customer satisfaction.

The study also sought to determine the relationship between service blueprint and customer satisfaction. This was achieved by testing the third research hypothesis (H_3). A linear regression analysis using OLS method of estimation led to the output in Tables 5.36 and 5.37 both of which confirm that there exists a significant relationship between service blueprint and customer satisfaction. The resulting regression equation shows a positive relationship exists between service blueprint and customer satisfaction. Service blueprint also refers to the process flow in service provision. Table 5.18 identifies the following variables as defining service blueprint that greatly influence customer satisfaction as including: "Food is served on time", "Cameroon visa process is stress free and rapid", "Wi-Fi broadband is speedy", "You feel safe in public places" and "Healthcare services are convenient". This means that the clearer the service blue print is, the higher is the level of tourist satisfaction. Table 5.25 showed that tourists in rural Regions are less satisfied with the service blue print, indicating that the service process flow in some rural areas was not explicit and hence dissatisfy visitors.

An examination of the relationship between core service and customer satisfaction was performed by testing the fourth research hypothesis (H_4). Upon regressing core service on customer satisfaction in a simple regression analysis using OLS estimation method, a significant relationship was established. This means that holding other variables constant, core service has a significant influence on customer satisfaction. The coefficient shown in Table 5.20 indicates that core service has a significant positive effect on customer satisfaction. An increase in the value of core service would result in an increase in customer satisfaction level. While core service loaded on human element reliability under EFA (Table 5.18), simple linear regression shows it can play a significant role in predicting level of customer satisfaction on a direct relationship.

The four dimensions of service quality were transformed into one construct, service quality. The fifth research hypothesis (H_5) was tested and the results in Tables 5.40 and 5.41 confirmed that there is a significant relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction. The resulting regression equation shows a strong positive

relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction, meaning that higher level of service quality could result in higher level of tourist satisfaction in both Cameroon Regions. Similar results were found by Levesque and McDougall (1996) who demonstrated that positive relationship exists between service quality and customer satisfaction. According to their study, the key explanatory variables in the service quality domain were service relational factors, core service and service features. In this study human elements represent the service relational factors and non-human elements service features.

These findings support the position taken by Ryu, Lee and Gon Kim (2012), who posits that there are three components of service quality that exercise a positive and statistically significant effect on the satisfaction level reached by the tourists. Of the three components that act as explanatory variables, the variable that groups together the aspects related to hotels / restaurants staff skills and local population / police officer willingness to help, is the one that exercises the greatest influence on the overall tourist satisfaction level. Second are aspects related to the availability of essential commodities (water, electricity and Wi-Fi) and finally aspects linked to transport means.

Related findings were reported by Jayasundara, Ngulube, Majanja (2010) who posit that customers' expectations and perceptions, as well as performances of services, are formed by service quality determinants that are specific to each service organization. These dimensions have conceptual and empirical relevance to the customer satisfaction construct in tourism destinations. They deduce that service quality in particular has positive influence over customer satisfaction.

Findings that service quality and customer satisfaction are positively related are also supported by Hanif, Hafeez, and Riaz (2010) who demonstrated the existence of a significant positive relationship between customer service and customer satisfaction.

5.16.4 The Relationship between service quality and destination image

The fourth research objective was to determine the relationship between service quality and destination image. This was achieved by testing hypothesis six. Assuming destination image as the dependent variable and service quality as the independent variable, the study used simple regression analysis, leading to the output in Tables 5.44 and 5.45, which shows a significant relationship exist between service quality and destination image. The resulting regression equation confirms the existence of a strong positive relationship between service quality and destination

image. Table 5.18 identified the variables that define destination image to a great extent as including: "A relative recommended you Cameroon destination", "You opted for Cameroon because it is a safe destination", "Media reports on Cameroon are generally positive", "You chose Cameroon for its amazing cultural diversity", "You picked Cameroon because of its natural wonders", "You selected Cameroon because of Samuel Eto'o / Roger Milla", "You chose Cameroon because it has a powerful brand image" and "Cameroon successfully fights international terrorism". That means a city/Region that provides excellent service quality is more likely to have a very positive destination image.

This finding is in line with the work of Yan, Yurchisin, and Watchravesringkan, (2007) who established that service quality expectations have a significant positive impact on consumers' store image perceptions. The results are also consistent but converse to the observation made by Bloemer, Ruyter and Peeters (1998) that image has a clear positive influence on the quality perception.

5.16.5 Influence of destination image on customer satisfaction

The fifth research objective was to establish the relationship between destination image and customer satisfaction. Hypothesis seven was tested and the resulting output in Table 5.46 and Table 5.47 confirmed that destination image has a significant positive influence over customer satisfaction. This means that increased efforts of a country to build a strong destination name results in enhanced customer satisfaction. Walsh, Dinnie and Wiedmann, (2006) demonstrate that destination reputation has a strong positive relationship with customer satisfaction and that destination image and customer satisfaction have a significant negative influence on customer defection. A similar finding by Davies et al. (2002, p. 151) note that "reputation and customer satisfaction have been seen as interlinked". These findings are equally supported by Kandampully and Hu (2007), who observe that customer satisfaction and destination image have a statistically significant positive relationship.

5.16.6 Mediating effect of destination image on the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction

The sixth research objective was to assess the extent to which destination image meditates the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction. Tables 5.49 and 5.50 show that service quality has a significant influence over customer

satisfaction on a direct relationship ($\beta_{14} = 0.674$) and that destination image also has a significant relationship with customer satisfaction on a simple linear relationship ($\beta_{15} = 0.511$). Using hierarchical regression analysis, the study established as evidenced by Tables 5.52 and 5.53 that destination image significantly mediated the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction. This means that improving service quality and destination image can result in enhanced customer satisfaction. These findings are consistent with Kang and James (2002) results which noted that image played an important moderating role in influencing an individual's perception of overall service quality. Tourists would therefore be more satisfied with a country with a strong destination image and which entities deliver excellent service quality.

5.17 Summary

Following factor analysis, it was established that the most reliable factor in explaining tourist satisfaction in Cameroon based on the combined data set is human elements reliability, followed by human element responsiveness, destination image, non-human elements and service blueprint respectively. Factors influencing visitors satisfaction in rural Regions are human elements reliability, followed by human elements responsiveness, non-human elements, destination image and service blue print. Concerning urban tourists, factors impacting the most on their satisfaction are non-human elements followed by human elements reliability, human elements responsiveness, destination image and service blueprint respectively.

Using regression analysis, the study ascertained that service quality significantly influences customer satisfaction, but this relationship is partially mediated by destination image. The introduction of destination image strengthens the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a summary, conclusions and recommendations of the study findings as stipulated in research objectives. It draws managerial implications and identifies policy recommendations reminiscent of the study outcomes. Research limitations are elucidated and areas of further studies identified.

6.2 Summary

The general objective of this study was to investigate the relationship between service quality, destination image and customer satisfaction among international tourists in Cameroon. The study determined that there is a significant relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction, mediated by destination image. The first objective of the study was to determine the dimensions of service quality that influence customer satisfaction. Four dimensions, human elements reliability, human elements responsiveness, non-human elements and service blue print were identified as the most reliable dimensions in the destination set up.

The second research objective was to establish the differences in service quality dimensions between rural and urban Regions. The study observed that the tourist perception of service quality differs significantly from rural to urban Regions. The third research objective was to examine the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction. The study determined the existence of a significant positive relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction. The fourth research objective was to establish the relationship between service quality and destination image. The study noted that a significant relationship exist between service quality and destination image paving way for an examination of the mediated relationship.

The fifth objective, which also marked the initial step of testing for mediation, sought to ascertain the relationship between destination image and customer satisfaction. It was observed that destination image significantly influenced customer satisfaction. The last objective was to assess the extent to which destination image meditates the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction. It was established that

destination image partially mediates the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction.

6.3 Conclusion

The study concluded that service quality has a significant influence on international tourist satisfaction in Cameroon. Four service quality dimensions have the greatest predictive power on customer satisfaction and these are human elements reliability, human elements responsiveness, service blue print and non-human elements. An increase in service quality results in tourist satisfaction enhancement. Destination image has a significant partial mediating effect on the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction. An increase in the value of destination image strengthens the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction.

The nine null research hypotheses were all rejected, indicating that service quality and destination image have a significant influence on customer satisfaction, based on a linear relationship. However, factor analysis shows that core service is not significant in explaining changes in customer satisfaction. As a result, core service was dropped from analysis of the integrated model and instead its variables were subsumed in the factor human elements. On an integrated scale, destination image can have strong mediating influence on the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction. It was further established that the dimension of service quality with the highest influence on customer satisfaction is human elements reliability, followed by human element responsiveness, non-human elements and service blueprint respectively.

The position deduced from this study was consistent with the findings of Smith et al. (2007) who identified reliability as the most important dimension of service quality, A similar position was taken by Kandampully and Hu (2007) who reported the existence of a significant relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction, moderated by destination image.

6.4 Implications

The preceding data analysis and discussion on the study findings pointed at theoretical and managerial implications. These implications focus on scholarly input and contributions to tourism industry management.

6.4.1 Theoretical implications

This study hypothesized the existence of a significant relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction, mediated by destination image in the Cameroon tourism industry context. The results confirmed the existence of a statistically significant relationship between those three variables. By so doing, this work contributes to the existing literature by uncovering the mediating effect of destination image on the relationship between service quality and tourist satisfaction. The findings indicate that the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction is significant and positive, but that relationship can be enhanced by building a strong destination image. These outcomes add new elements to the general body of knowledge on service quality by providing basis for the linkage of three isolated constructs: service quality, destination image and customer satisfaction; and present a meaningful association between the three.

Second, the research provides a scale for measuring levels of tourist satisfaction in Regions of Cameroon. Using empirical evidence, this study questions the completeness of the SERVQUAL scale on the basis of paradigmatic objections, process orientation, dimensionality and item composition. This position is supported by Buttle (1996), Abdullah (2005) and Sultan and Wong (2010). The findings prove that a performance only paradigm can produce significant results and act as a parsimonious tool of measuring customer satisfaction in the place of the complex disconfirmation process.

Third, this study results show that service quality dimensions are incomplete and service quality theorists can therefore uncover more dimensions in different service context. The research unveiled four dimensions in the tourism service quality context and went ahead to rate their predictive power in the following order: human elements reliability, human elements responsiveness, non-human elements and service blue print. The research acknowledges that service blue print in particular has been ignored in service quality theory before, but this study demonstrates that an appreciation of service process flow has a significant positive influence on tourist satisfaction. Its role in service quality theory cannot therefore be ignored.

Fourth, the findings show that in designing an instrument for measuring customer satisfaction, the item composition might vary depending on the service context. Hence, instead of prescribing a universal instrument to all service situations, this study proposes the adoption of a specific service quality instrument for similar or

related services. This further means that an instrument that produces excellent results in a tourism context might not fit a banking context and may require modifications.

6.4.2 Managerial Implications

The study established a strong positive correlation between service quality and tourist satisfaction. Countries / cities perceived as offering better services tend to attract more tourists, as the satisfied ones spread positive word of mouth about the specific destination. Tourism stakeholders are now aware that the total service quality is a strong antecedent to customer satisfaction. Those seeking to pursue tourist satisfaction as a winning strategy can use these study outcomes.

The research identified two important human elements as reliability and responsiveness. The reliability of businesses and public services staff influence tourist satisfaction. This means companies managers and the public administration should recruit personnel based on their ability to deliver top service quality and their diligence to help. Staffs are deemed reliable if they fully offer services as promised, perform accurately and in a timely way, and keep tourists records precisely.

It would be judicious to always train new employees on excellent customer service; and regularly recycle experienced ones. Managers must prioritize front office staff training on responsiveness as follows: be courteous at all time; be quick at responding to customer queries; communicate effectively to customers of any new development affecting them; always be ready to help customers; perform service right the first time and maintain tourist's records in an organized way.

To sustain tourist satisfaction through employees, managers in both rural and urban Regions must adopt a regular staff evaluation program, with an objective of persistently improve their customer satisfaction index. This also means bosses should stop just relying on industry quality models and adopt the instrument in Appendix 4 as a standard tool for evaluating tourists satisfaction. A customer satisfaction index indicating tourist dissatisfaction would be a pointer to the decision maker of service failure and need for prompt service recovery to remain competitive.

Tourism managers must recognize service blue print as an important determinant of customer satisfaction. It is more satisfying to tourists in both rural and urban Regions if short and clear. Executives should pay attention to some of the critical service process:

- The Cameroon visa application procedure must be trouble-free and speedy;
- Airports entry checks should be diligent but stress-free;

- The process of registering as a tourist has to be clear;
- Make tourists fully aware of specific security measures;
- Visitors must be sensitized on cities / sites specific policies;
- Tourists orientation process must be very informative;
- Police officers should be welcoming and ready to help.

Our findings indicate that a Region / city / site can be more competitive if authorities / the management inculcate tourist's perception of destination image in assessing tourist's satisfaction. Tourists use beliefs, mental perceptions, form feelings and develop attitude towards the destination resulting in image building. A powerful brand image can help a destination attract new tourists, make former visitors come back, neutralize competitors' actions and above all maximize its international market share. A positive image communicates a strong brand equity and makes prospective tourists more receptive to word of mouth information about the destination. The development of a powerful community of satisfied clients can also help strengthen the country's positioning on the international tourism market and truly enhance its destination image.

The research outcomes provide empirical backing that decision makers must pay attention to the servicescape (non-human elements). Non-human elements likely to influence tourist satisfaction to a great extent include: "Hotel rooms are comfy", "Taxis and buses are comfortable and clean", "Lifts are fully working", "Touristic sites are easy to reach", "Conference halls are well furnished", "Running water and electricity are always available", "Toilets are hygienic". This means tourism industry decision makers must leverage on regulating transports corporations, improving the national traffic network, assuring commodities maintenance and upgrading.

This study evidence that destination image has a strong influence over customer satisfaction. While corporate brand building has so far been highly practiced by business entities, tourism destinations just recently embraced it. Findings suggest that tourism managers must increasingly pay attention to brand building strategies as it is reminiscent of their customer satisfaction and overall destination performance.

6.6 Policy Recommendations

Based on the study outcomes, we find it crucial to make necessary policy recommendations and suggest areas for further research on the subject matter of service quality, destination image and customer satisfaction.

Arising from the results, it was established that international tourists in urban and rural Regions do not experience the same service quality level. The research recommends that the regulatory authority - the Cameroonian ministry of tourism - must strive towards the standardization of the service quality to ensure all tourists of equal value irrespective of where they experience the service. Standardization in this context means while the ministry of tourism put in place standard policy guidelines, enforcement actions must be operationalised. Standardization policies should set out minimum qualification requirements for tourism administrations and businesses staff members, a consistent and clear procedure to obtain a tourist visa at any Cameroon embassy around the world, a touristic code of conduct for police officers, minimum sizes and equipments set for hotel rooms, minimum hygienic and safety conditions to run a hotel / restaurant / touristic site.

Second, efforts made by the government of Cameroon to regulate the tourism industry are to be appreciated, but there are still areas of improvement. The rise of the Cameroon destination in the early 2000 decade led to the anarchic development of accommodation infrastructures labeled as hotels. Many of them do not even have required licenses. While some uphold service quality and give tourists great value for their money, other hotels operate with little regards to hygienic conditions and the quality of service they deliver. It is also the case for a number of restaurants and leisure centres. We recommend that the government should move quickly to summon structures that do not offer adequate service quality. They should be given a prior notice to meet policy requirements. Once the notice period is over, businesses which did not made necessary improvements should purely be stamped out. The regulatory authority must also make sure the quality of service offered in all Regions is in tandem with the policy guidelines.

Third, the research unveils service blue print / process flow as a vital dimension of service quality. Regions in Cameroon are in competition for international tourists, and for this and other reasons, some travel agents sharply lower their packages prices to maximize on bookings. We urge that the ministry of tourism should not allow this trend to continue as it results in poor service quality, and consequently dissatisfied tourists. Constant scrutiny must be made to ensure that all activities marketed by agents or business managers are truly performed, within standards. They should also make sure terms and conditions are clear and fair.

Fourth, most visitors have really appreciated local people friendliness and sociability. It helped them feel more comfortable and secure everywhere they went to. Reliability

being much related to tourist satisfaction, the government of Cameroon needs to put extensive efforts in enhancing tourism spirit in people minds and habits; so that they will be even more enthusiastic to welcome international tourists in their villages, in their homes. Conferences and seminars on cultural and economic impact of tourism could frequently be held in different Regions of the country. Tourism and international culture subjects must be introduced in education programs form early classes. The creation of tourism clubs in every high school and university should be promoted.

Fifth, this study has designed an instrument that addresses service quality and international tourist satisfaction in both rural and urban Regions. The instrument in Appendix 4 has been tested, validated and proven to be effective. Business managers can infuse this instrument in their internal quality assurance mechanism to enhance visitors experience and satisfaction. The industry regulator could also design a policy framework that will push for the adoption of such an instrument as a standard index of measuring tourist satisfaction all over the country.

Last, destination image has been revealed as a key factor influencing tourist satisfaction. Cameroon authorities and tourism industry big players must therefore undertake necessary actions to boost its image worldwide. We are talking about:

- Encouraging the buildup of strong communities on social networks where positive information about Cameroon will be shared.

- Participating to international fairs where its vibrant cultural diversity will be marketed.

- Pushing powerful adverts through international renowned medias.

- Leveraging on Cameroonian international icons like Samuel Eto'o and Roger Milla to amplified communication campaigns. There are loads of Europeans who knew about Cameroon and located it on the map just by the name of those two football legends. Eto'o, Milla and other celebrities' image can truly boost Cameroon's visibility worldwide if exploited accurately.

Fairs, medias and social platforms could also be used to reassure all and everyone about Cameroon's ability to guaranty optimum safety, despite renewed threats from the terrorist group Boko haram and the crisis occurring in the North-West / South-West Regions of the country.

6.7 Limitations of the Study

As can be said for all research, the present study does not proceed without limitations. The recognition of those weaknesses will help refine future research efforts.

First, the number of service quality dimensions tested in this study was limited to those which had been selected through the literature review. Although the validated dimensions explained a large amount of variance in predicting customer satisfaction, there may be other dimensions, which have a critical contribution in evaluation of tourist satisfaction.

Second, considering this study was conducted in Cameroon, some of the findings might be more appropriate to the Cameroon context. Cameroon cultural specificities may have a significant influence on service quality and customer satisfaction.

Third, the study reported here was mostly skewed toward American and European tourists. But with the increasing interest from Canadian travelers for Cameroon, future studies should really integrate them as serious players.

Fourth, because of Boko Haram official presence in Cameroon's Far-North Region from October 2013, we could not conduct our survey in that part of the country. Far-North being the most important touristic Region of Cameroon[3], there were certainly loads of useful information missing in our data set. Hence, these research findings and recommendations may not be applicable to the whole country.

6.8 Recommended areas for further research

This research was a cross sectional survey. It is hoped that a longitudinal one will provide a basis for more informed interpretations in upcoming works.

Our results unveiled that:

→ Tourists can display different levels of satisfaction towards a same service, based on their nationality (Table 5.6) and their country of residence (Table 5.7). Future studies could go deeper in analyzing the impact of tourists nationality or country of residence on their satisfaction level.

→ The number of days spent in Cameroon may affect visitors' level of satisfaction (Table 5.11). The nature of the relationship between the length of stay and customer satisfaction could be examined further.

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[3] www.mintour.gov.cm/en/regionscategory/far-north/

→ While most tourists prefer rural areas, Americans (76.47%) and British (61.4%) principally stay in urban cities. Other researchers could focus on scrutinizing the influence of nationality on the destination choice.

These new studies outcomes might give additional keys to design more effective tour packages.

What about examining the impact of tourist satisfaction on the destination performance?

6.9 Critical reflexion

Due to the reflective nature of this section, I am going to drop the third person language and conclude this work in the first person pronoun. The purpose of this section is to try to capture in just few paragraphs the research journey I experienced. Its aim is to give an understanding and meaning to the unfolding events, actions, encounters and experiences that led to the completion of this thesis.

Throughout the course of our learning lives we are at times presented with the opportunity to reflect on what we have achieved, to consider the experiences and people that helped ourselves. I think Scott-Maxwell (1968) put it best in the following quotation:

> *... You only need to claim the events of your life to make yourself*
> *yours. When you truly possess all you have been and done, which*
> *may take some time, you are fierce with reality.*

The past five years have been instrumental in moulding and shaping my own sense of self discipline. They have, without doubt, been my greatest learning experience so far. In this research journey there have been times of major self-doubt and fear, which were paralleled by times of a sense of achievement, pride, and the realisation of my ability to rise from the most difficult of challenges.

I began this work with limited knowledge and experience of conducting research. The few previous experiences I had were based on dissertations I completed in the final year of my undergraduate degree and my MBA. I therefore started this journey of self learning almost like a novice. As past studies have never really come to agreement on how customer satisfaction is actually built, and indeed extant models focus on the inter-relationships between service quality dimensions as an explanation for building satisfaction. It came to my attention, particularly in the tourism context,

how the destination image variable in relation to building customer satisfaction had never been incorporated into a satisfaction model previously. This is where the whole process began.

I believed based, on my own experience as a tourist and on the preliminary literature reviewed, that there lay a major gap in both the academic and practitioner knowledge. Once I delved further into the literature, it became apparent to me that there was a whole lacuna of theories that contributed to the service quality concept. However, the model that I, as a researcher, felt most adequately summarised service quality construct was Parasuraman et al. (1988) theory. It proposed that service quality was composed of five critical clues – tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy. I found the whole area of service quality particularly interesting as I could relate to a number of theories and concepts that were proposed. The next area I concentrated on was the whole concept of customer satisfaction.

Once the literature on service quality, destination image and customer satisfaction had been extensively investigated and compiled, I went about examining the relationships between each of the variables. I have to admit that when I look back at my research diary, I found this part quite difficult as there were very few empirical studies conducted on the three sets of experiences clues. Hence, as a researcher, I really had to probe to identify links and relationships between those variables.

In relation to the methodology, I felt that focus groups with people who have already visited Cameroon and those who have not would provide meaningful information, very useful to prepare semi-structured interviews with UK travel agents, Cameroon tourism authorities and managers of tourism-business related. Tourist survey instrument in phase three was fully designed based on data extracted from focus group sessions, and those obtained in interviews. With respect to the tourist questionnaire, I found it particularly challenging trying to adapt and develop measures and scales that would produce reliable and valid results.

Concerning data gathering process, I do recall days when conducting, transcribing and analysing 3 focus group sessions (in London), 42 interviews (in London and Yaoundé) and later performing 412 surveys in Cameroon across 8 cities took a lot of time, energy and finances. I even got arrested in suspicion to be linked to the Boko haram terrorist group. Fortunately enough, my details were carefully checked, my researcher status confirmed, and the following day I was free to continue with my data collection activities. However, it was worth it all in the end.

I believe this work shows the level of knowledge and experience I have gained, from conducting focus groups and interviews to carrying out large scale customer surveys; as well as a greater understanding for the analysis and interpretation of results using SPSS software. After conducting this study, I feel more comfortable with undertaking different research methods, which in essence does not preclude me from investigating any particular research problem.

Finally, I would like to conclude by saying that I would love to embark on this research journey all over again, as it is only after having gone through partaking in the whole process and learning by doing that I now truly understand what is involved in the research process. It is only now that I have a richer understanding of the service quality and the destination image roles in relation to improving tourist satisfaction; and now have more questions to ask. Therefore, I would like to wind up this thesis with the following quotation from Morris (1967):

> *We never stop investigating. We are never satisfied that we know enough to get by. Every question we answer leads on to another question. This has become the greatest survival trick of our species.*

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Research Permission letter

PRIFYSGOL CYMRU
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
UNIVERSITY OF WALES
Trinity Saint David

Yr Athro/Professor Medwin Hughes DL DPhil DPS FRSA FLSW
Is-Ganghellor/Vice-Chancellor

Swyddfa Ymchwil Ôl-raddedig
Postgraduate Research Office
01570 424900
pgresearch@tsd.uwtsd.ac.uk

12 Mawrth/March 2014

I BWY BYNNAG A FYNNO / TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Annwyl Syr/Fadam / Dear Sir/Madam,

Enw / Name:	Mr. Joel Ngabiapsi Kamdem
Hunaniaeth Myfyrwyr / Student University Number:	1202596
Cwrs / Course:	PhD by Research
Dyddiad Dechrau / Start Date:	10 Hydref/October 2012
Dyddiad gorffen / End date:	30 Medi/September 2015
Cyfeiriad Cartref y DU / UK Home Address:	529a Norwood Road
	West Norwood
	LONDON
	SE27 9DL

Mae hyn er mwyn cadarnhau bod yr uchod a enwir wedi ei gofrestru fel myfyriwr ôl-raddedig. Mhrifysgol Cymru Y Drindod Dewi Sant. Cynnig Ymchwil a Methodoleg arfaethedig wedi cael eu cymeradwyo gan y Brifysgol a'r myfyriwr yn gallu ymgymryd ei ymchwil yn unol â hynny.

This is to confirm that the above named is currently registered as a Postgraduate student at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David. The Research Proposal and Proposed Methodology have both been approved by the University and the student is able to undertake his research accordingly.

Yr eiddoch yn gywir / Yours faithfully,

Alison Sables MSc
Uwch Swyddog Gweinyddol/ Senior Administrative Officer

Campws Caerfyrddin | Carmarthen Campus SA31 3EP | 01267 676767
Campws Llanbedr Pont Steffan | Lampeter Campus SA48 7ED | 01570 422351
www.ydds.ac.uk | www.tsd.ac.uk

UNIVERSITY AWARDS Winner 2013

BUDDSODDWYR | INVESTORS
MEWN POBL | IN PEOPLE

Appendix 2: Information sheet

Tourism industry development in Cameroon:
Evaluating the influence of service quality and destination image on customer satisfaction among international tourists.
By **Joel N. Kamdem**, PhD Candidate

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study, which takes place from October 2012 to October 2015 in the United Kingdom and Cameroon. This paper details the research objectives, the methods used and a description of your required involvement. Your rights as a participant are presented in *the Informed Consent Form*.

Research objectives

The present research aims at:

- Examining the relationship between service quality and tourist satisfaction;

- Establishing the relationship between service quality and destination image;

- Ascertaining the relationship between destination image and tourist satisfaction;

- Assessing the extent to which destination image mediates the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction;

- Making better known the Cameroon's great tourism potential.

Methods

The methods used to achieve those objectives include:

- Focus groups of 5 to 9 participants;

- Semi-structured interviews;

- Questionnaire surveys.

Your participation

Your involvement in this study will consist of an interview lasting 30 to 60 minutes. You will be asked questions about your socio-demographic profile and tourism experiences. You may pass on any question that makes you feel uncomfortable. At

any time you can notify the researcher that you would like to stop the interview and your participation in the study. There is no penalty for discontinuing partaking.

Benefits and Risks

The benefit of your participation is to contribute to the development of the tourism industry in African developing countries. This may assist tourism stakeholders (government authorities, tourism businesses and local communities) to improve the industry's quality standards. There are no risks associated with participating in the research.

Confidentiality

The interview will be audio recorded. However, your name and any other identifying information will not be mentionned. These details will not be associated with any part of the written report of this research. All of your information and interview responses will be kept confidential. The researcher will not share your individual responses with anyone other than the research supervisory team (Prof Robin Matthews – Director of studies, Dr John Koenigsberger – Supervisor).

You are encouraged to ask questions or raise concerns at any time about the nature of the study or the methods I am using. Feel free to contact the researcher (kamdem_joel@yahoo.fr; +44 7534560090) or his supervisors Prof Robin (robindcmatthews@gmail.com) and Dr John (armadales2@gmail.com).

_____

Date

Appendix 3: Informed consent form

Tourism industry development in Cameroon:
Evaluating the influence of service quality and destination image on customer satisfaction among international tourists.

By **Joel N. Kamdem**, PhD Candidate

I, the undersigned participant, confirm that (please tick boxes as appropriate):

1	I have read and understood the information about the project, as provided in the Information Sheet dated _____.	
2	I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the project and my participation; and have had these answered satisfactorily.	
3	I understand that this research study has been reviewed and approved by the Ethics Committee of the University of Wales Trinity Saint David.	
4	I understand that my participation in the project is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving reasons.	
5	I understand that my name and any other identifying information will not appear in any reports, articles or presentations.	
6	I understand that any information given by me may be used in future reports, articles or presentations by the researcher.	
7	I understand that our discussion will be audio recorded to help the researcher accurately capture my insights in my own words. The audio files will only be listened by the researcher and his academic supervisors for the purpose of this study.	
8	I understand that in the event I choose to withdraw from the study all information I provided (including recordings) will be destroyed and omitted from the final paper.	
9	I understand that if I feel uncomfortable with the recorder, I can ask it to be turned off at any time.	
10	I agree to take part in this research.	

_____   _____   _____

Name of the Participant   *Signature*   *Date*

Joel N. Kamdem   _____   _____

Name of the Researcher   *Signature*   *Date*

Appendix 4: Questionnaire

Y Drindod Dewi Sant
PRIFYSGOL CYMRU
UNIVERSITY OF WALES
Trinity Saint David

Survey for international tourists in Cameroon

Sir / Madam, good morning / good evening,

We are conducting a research on the development of Cameroon's tourism industry. The purpose of this questionnaire is to have your opinion on the subject. The results of this study will be operated exclusively as part of preparing our PhD dissertation at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David.

Information collected during this survey will be strictly confidential in accordance with Act No. 91/023 of 16 December 1991 on censuses and statistical surveys, which provides in Article 5 that "individual information of economic or financial nature appearing on any statistical survey questionnaire may in no circumstances be used for purposes of monitoring or economic repression".

Thank you in advance for honest answers that you will provide; and know that there is no right or wrong answers, only your opinion does matter.

SECTION 1 : GENERAL INFORMATION		
1.1 – Tourist location		
S1Q1	**A- City** : _____	**B- Enumeration area**: _____
1.2 – Information about the tourist		
S1Q2	**A- Gender:** |__| *1= Male 2= Female*	**B- Nationality** :_____ **C- Country of residence**: _____
	D- Age : **1**- [18 – 25] |__| **2**-]25 – 35] |__| **3**-]35 – 45] |__| **4**-]45 – 55] |__| **5**- Over 55|__|	
	E- Profession : _____	**F- Length of stay (in days)** : |___|___|
	G- Purpose of your stay : **1**- Tourism |__| **2**- Business |__| **3**- Family visit |__| **4**- Healthcare |__| **5**- Seminar/Congress |__| **6**- Sports competition |__| **7**- Others |__| If Others:…………………………..	
	H- Accompanied by: **1**- No one |__| **2**- Parents |__| **3**- Partner |__| **4**- Children |__| **5**- Friends |__| **6**- Colleagues |__| **7**- Others |__| If Others:……………………………………………	
	I- Entry point to Cameroon: **1**- Ydé Nsimalen airport |__| **2**- Douala airport |__| **3**- Others |__| If others:…………………………………	
1.3 – Administrative section		
S1Q3	**A**- **Date of collection**: |__|__|__|__|__|__|	**B- Investigator** :_____

Please tick (√) the appropriate box to indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements on service quality in Cameroon tourism industry

A = Strongly disagree   B = Disagree   C = Neither agree nor disagree   D = Agree

E = Strongly agree

	Service quality dimension	A	B	C	D	E
1	Cameroon visa process is stress free and rapid					
2	Cameroon airport staff are polite and competent					
3	Cameroonians are welcoming					
4	Hotel staff are diligent					
5	Hotel rooms are comfy					
6	Wi-Fi broadband is speedy					
7	Lifts are fully working					
8	Waiters at restaurants are skilled					
9	Dishes are delicious					
10	Food is served on time					
11	Toilets are hygienic					
12	Tour guides are skilful					
13	Touristic sites are easy to reach					
14	Travel agents understand customer needs					
15	Taxis and buses are comfortable and clean					
16	Conference halls are well furnished					
17	You feel safe in public places					
18	Police officers are ready to help					
19	Healthcare services are convenient					
20	Running water and electricity are always available					

Please tick (√) the appropriate box to indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements on Cameroon destination image.

A = Strongly disagree   B = Disagree   C = Neither agree nor disagree   D = Agree

E = Strongly agree

	Destination image dimension	A	B	C	D	E
1	Media reports on Cameroon are generally positive					
2	You opted for Cameroon because it is a safe destination					
3	You chose Cameroon because it has a powerful brand image					
4	You selected Cameroon because of Samuel Eto'o / Roger Milla					
5	You chose Cameroon for its amazing cultural diversity					
6	You picked Cameroon because of its natural wonders					
7	Cameroon is a democratic country					
8	Cameroon successfully fights international terrorism					
9	A relative recommended you Cameroon destination					

SECTION 3: DETERMINANTS OF CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

Please tick (√) the appropriate box to indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements on Customer satisfaction.

A = Strongly disagree   B = Disagree   C = Neither agree nor disagree   D = Agree

E = Strongly agree

	Customer satisfaction dimension	A	B	C	D	E
1	You experienced a positive relationship with Cameroonians					
2	You enjoyed cultural attractions					
3	You liked scenic beauties					
4	Local dishes are delicious					
5	You are satisfied with hotels service quality					
6	You are willing to come back to Cameroon					
7	You would be happy to recommend Cameroon to your relatives					
8	Overall, you are satisfied by Cameroon destination					

Thank you for your valuable participation.

Appendix 5: Service quality battery

<u>Reliability</u>

1. Providing services as promised.

2. Dependability in handling customers' service problems.

3. Performing services right the first time.

4. Providing services at the promised time.

5. Maintaining error-free records.

<u>Responsiveness</u>

6. Keeping customers informed about when services will be performed.

7. Prompt service to customers.

8. Willingness to help customers.

9. Readiness to respond to customers' requests.

<u>Assurance</u>

10. Employees who instill confidence in customers.

11. Making customers feel safe in their transactions.

12. Employees who are consistently courteous.

13. Employees who have the knowledge to answer customer questions.

<u>Empathy</u>

14. Giving customers individual attention.

15. Employees who deal with customers in a caring fashion.

16. Having the customer's best interest at heart.

17. Employees who understand the needs of their customers.

18. Convenient business hours.

<u>Tangibles</u>

19. Modern equipment.

20. Visually appealing facilities.

21. Employees who have a neat, professional appearance.

22. Visually appealing materials associated with the service.

Source: Parasuraman, A., Zeithaml, V.A. & Berry, L.L. 1988, "Servqual", *Journal of Retailing,* vol. 64, no. 1, p. 27.

Appendix 6: Summary of Research Objectives, Hypotheses, Analytical Methods and Interpretation of Results

	Objectives	Hypotheses	Statistical tests	Analytical methods	Interpretation
1	Identify the service quality dimensions that influence international tourists' satisfaction in Cameroon		Factor analysis KMO Statistics Bartlett test of sphericity Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) Reliability test	KMO Statistics p value Extraction method: Principle Component Analysis (PCA) method Rotation method: varimax with Kaiser Normalization Cronbach's alpha (α)	KMO greater than 0.7, sample set adequate for factor analysis Value is significant if p less than or equal to 0.05 and the variables in the population correlation matrix are correlated hence proceed with factor analysis Only eigenvalues greater than or equal to 1 to be used, component with eigenvalues less than 1 should not be used because it accounts for less than the variations explained by a single variable. Eigenvalues = 0 implies perfect linear dependency, that is, an exact collinearity exists among the explanatory variables Only components with factor loadings greater than or equal to 0.4 will be considered to explain the greatest variations Factor reliable if α greater than or equal to 0.7
2	Determine if there is a significant difference in	H_9: The service quality perception in rural	ANOVA test	Levene's test of homogeneity of variances	Tests whether the variance in scores is the same for each of the two groups. If the significance

	service quality dimensions between rural and urban Regions	Regions is significantly different from that in urban Regions			value (Sig.) greater than 0.5, then the assumption of homogeneity of variance has not been violated.
				ANOVA test	If the significance column in the ANOVA output has a significance level α less than or equal to 0.05 then there is significant difference among the two groups and the study proceeds to test for existence of difference between each pair of groups in a multiple comparison. The Levine's homogeneity of variance test with a p-value less than or equal to 0.000 was interpreted to mean the ANOVA test results were significant and the study would reject H9
3	Examine the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction	H_1: There is a significant relationship between human elements and customer satisfaction	Linear regression analysis	$CS = \beta_0 + \beta_6\, HEREL + \beta_7\, HERES + \varepsilon_0$ (2) CS = customer satisfaction HEREL = human elements reliability HERES = human elements responsiveness	The coefficient is significant if related p-value less than or equal to 0.05. If the p-value associated with coefficients β_6 and β_7, less than or equal to 0.05, then H_1 is rejected and the relationship between human elements and customer satisfaction is considered significant at 5 percent level of significance.

	H$_2$: There is a significant relationship between non-human elements and customer satisfaction	Linear regression analysis	CS = β$_0$ + β$_8$NHE + ε$_0$ (3) NHE = Non-Human Elements	The coefficient is significant if related p-value less than or equal to 0.05 If the p-value associated with coefficients β$_8$ less than or equal to 0.05, then H$_2$ is rejected and the relationship between human elements and customer satisfaction is considered significant at 5 percent level of significance.
	H$_3$: There is a significant relationship between service blueprint and customer satisfaction	Linear regression analysis	CS = β$_0$ + β$_9$SBP + ε$_0$ (4) SBP = Service Blueprint	The coefficient is significant if related p-value less than or equal to 0.05 If the p-value associated with coefficients β$_9$ less than or equal to 0.05, then H$_3$ rejected and the relationship between human elements and customer satisfaction is considered significant at 5 percent level of significance.
	H$_4$: There is a significant relationship between core service and customer satisfaction	Linear regression analysis	CS = β$_0$ + β$_{10}$ CoS + ε$_0$ (5) CoS = Core service	The coefficient is significant if related p-value less than or equal to 0.05 If the p-value associated with coefficients β$_{10}$ less than or equal to 0.05, then H4 is rejected and the relationship between core service and customer satisfaction is considered significant at 5 percent level of significance.
Examine the relationship between	H$_5$: There is a significant relationship between	Linear regression analysis	CS = β$_0$ + β$_{11}$ SQ + ε$_0$ (6) SQ = Service quality	The coefficient is significant if related p-value less than or equal to 0.05

	service quality and customer satisfaction	service quality and customer satisfaction			If the p-value associated with coefficients β_{11} less than or equal to 0.05, then H_5 is rejected and the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction is considered significant at 5 percent level of significance.
4	Establish the relationship between service quality and destination image	H_6: There is a significant relationship between service quality and destination image	Linear regression analysis	$DI = \beta_0 + \beta_{12}\,SQ + \varepsilon_0$ (7) DI = Destination image SQ = Service quality	The coefficient is significant if related p-value less than or equal to 0.05 If the p-value associated with coefficients β_{12} less than or equal to 0.05, then H4 is rejected and the relationship between core service and customer satisfaction is considered significant at 5 percent level of significance
5	Ascertain the relationship between destination image and customer satisfaction	H_7: There is a significant relationship between destination image and customer satisfaction	Linear regression analysis	$CS = \beta_0 + \beta_{13}\,DI + \varepsilon_0$ (8) CS = customer satisfaction DI = Destination image	The coefficient is significant if related p-value less than or equal to 0.05 If the p-value associated with coefficients β_{13} less than or equal to 0.05, then H4 is rejected and the relationship between core service and customer satisfaction is considered significant at 5 percent level of significance
6	Assess the extent to which destination image mediates the relationship between	H_8: There is a significant mediating effect of destination image on the relationship between	Hierarchical multiple linear regression analysis	Step 1: Simple linear regression analysis of customer satisfaction (CS) and service quality (SQ)	The coefficient is significant if β less than or equal to 0.05 but $\neq 0$ The coefficient is significant if the p-value associated with β_{11} less than or equal to 0.05 but

	service quality and customer satisfaction	service quality and customer satisfaction		$CS = \beta_0 + \beta_{11}\,SQ + \varepsilon_0$ (6)	$\neq 0$. The test of whether the effect is direct or mediated can proceed.
				Step 2: Simple linear regression analysis of DI and SQ $DI = \beta_0 + \beta_{12}\,SQ + \varepsilon_0$ (7)	Two steps follow (equation 6 and 7) The coefficient is significant if the p-value associated with β_{11} less than or equal to 0.05 but $\neq 0$. If the coefficients $\beta_{10} \neq 0$ then H_8 is rejected and there is a significant relationship between service quality and corporate image.
				Step 3: Hierarchical linear regression analysis of CS, SQ and DI $CS = \beta_0 + \beta_{14}\,SQ + \beta_{15}\,DI + \varepsilon_0$ (9)	If β_{14} is statistically significant, then given that β_{11}, was statistically significant in equation (6), the results will be interpreted to mean that DI mediates the relationship between SQ and CS. If the estimate of β_{14} is not significant, then the interpretation will be that DI fully mediates the relationship between SQ and CS. But if β_{14} is statistically significant then the interpretation DI partially mediates the relationship between SQ and CS.

Appendix 7: Normality test of service quality

Mean = 2.89
Std. Dev. = 0.807
N = 396
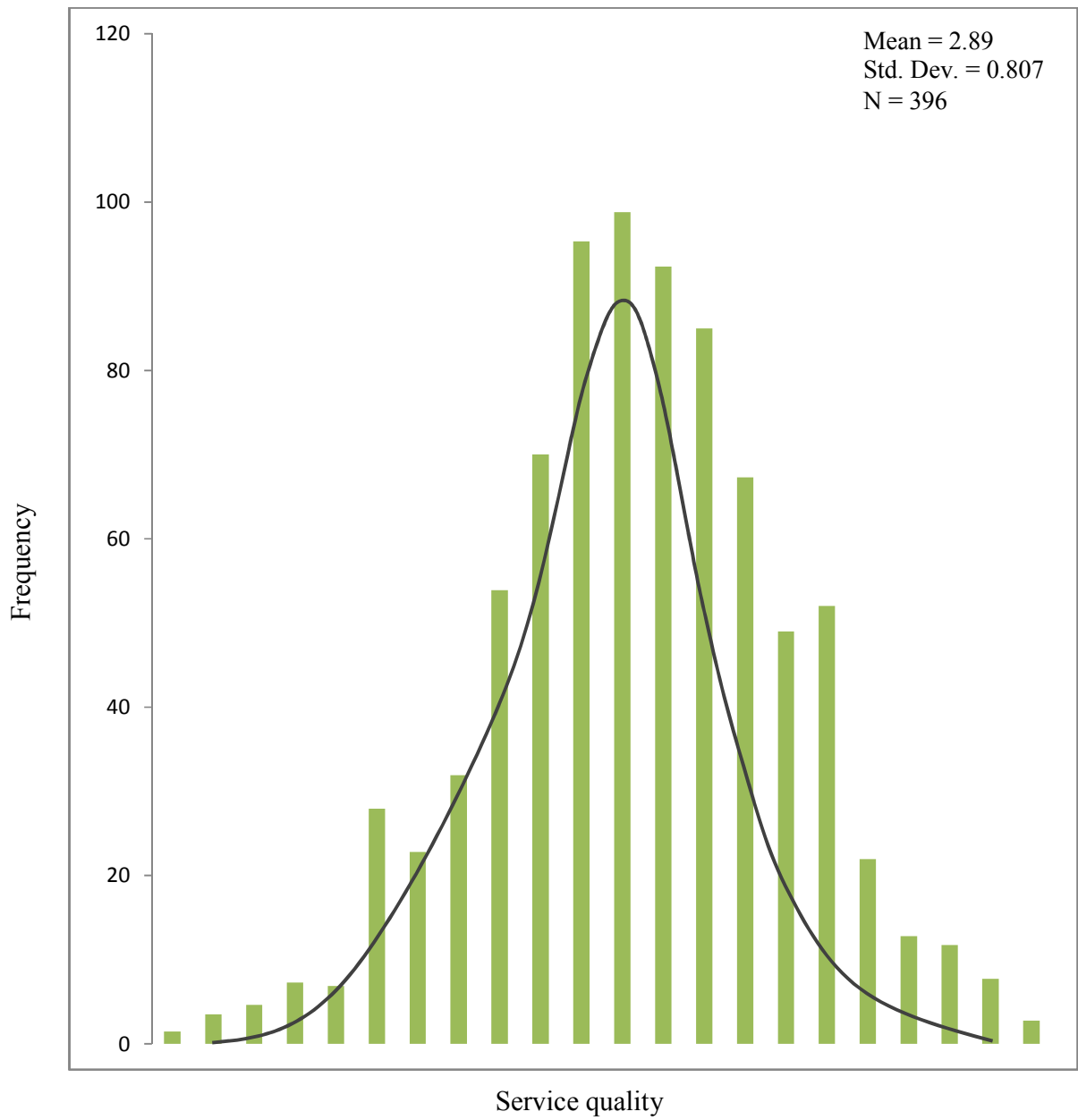
Appendix 8a: Normal Q-Q plot for service quality in rural Regions
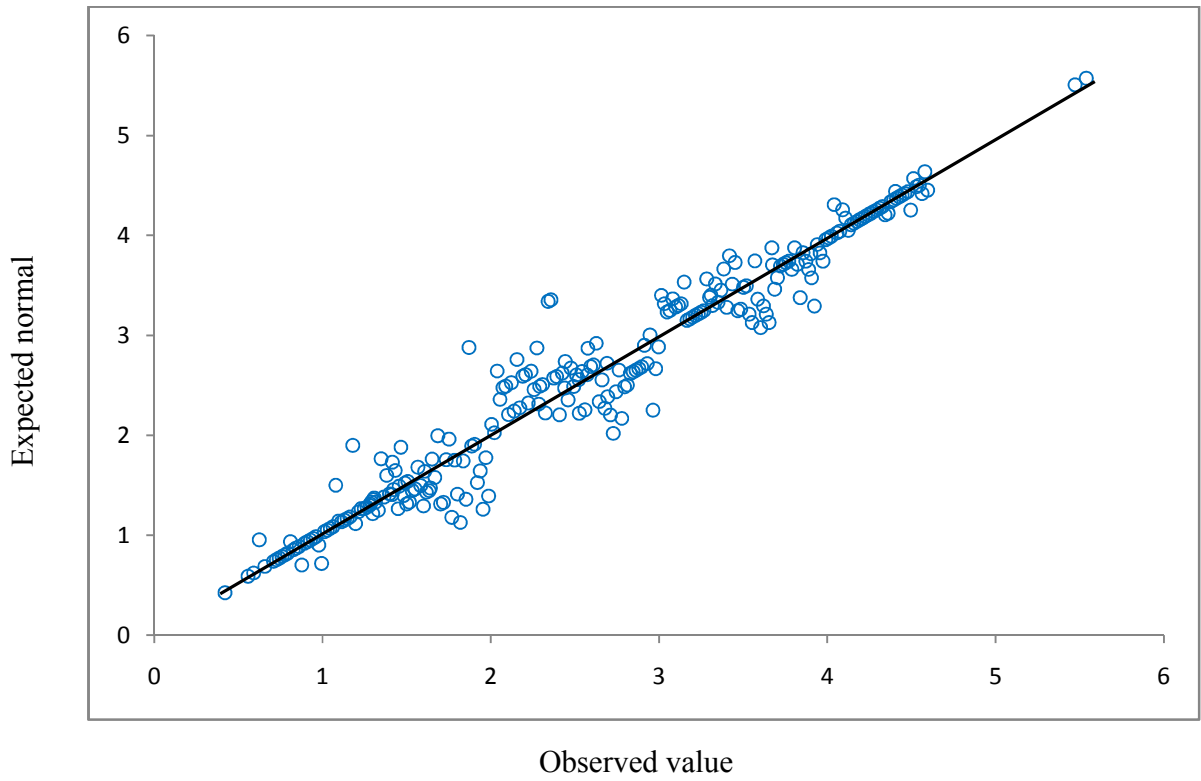
Appendix 8b: Normal Q-Q plot for service quality in urban Regions
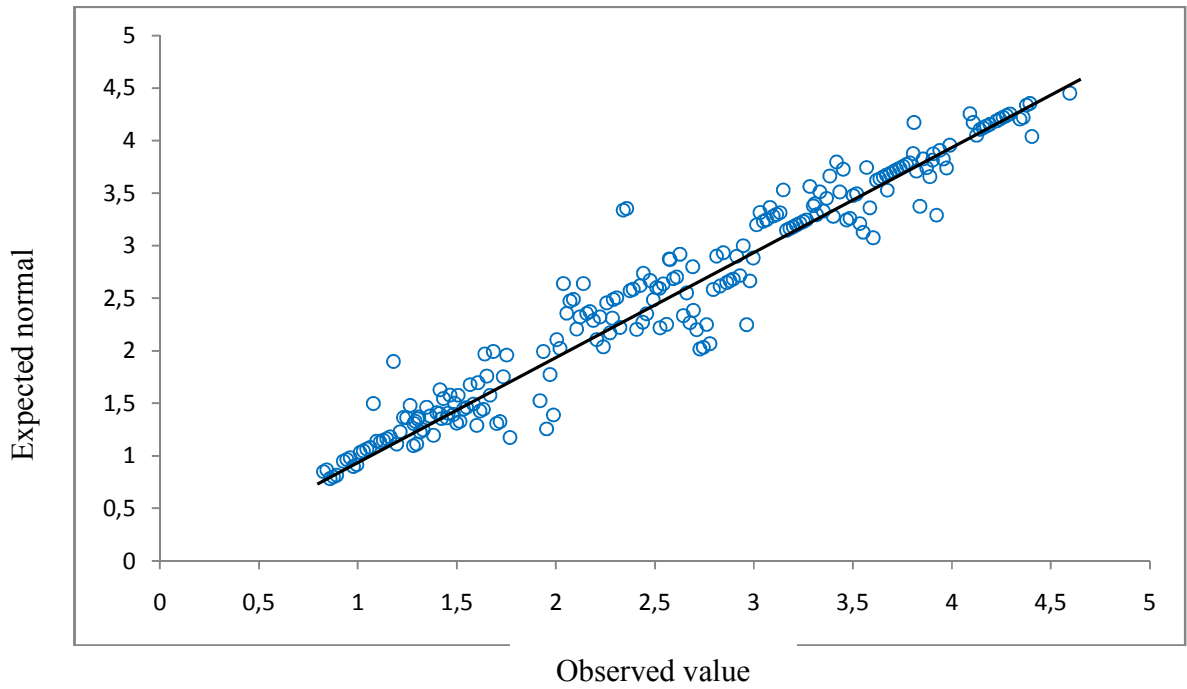
Appendix 9: Normality test using Kolmogorov-Smirnov D test

Construct	City	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Service quality	Bandjoun	.076	78	.065	.895	78	.014
	Douala	.059	21	.804	.906	21	.098
	Foumban	.105	92	.092	.918	92	.081
	Garoua	.087	27	.059	.922	27	.209
	Kribi	.112	72	.994	.899	72	.097
	Mbalmayo	.093	24	.085	.881	24	.715
	Ngaoundere	.077	40	.109	.902	40	.008
	Yaoundé	.068	41	.864	.954	41	.653
Destination image	Bandjoun	.072	77	.097	.872	77	.096
	Douala	.099	21	.113	.967	21	.559
	Foumban	.074	93	.066	.912	93	.067
	Garoua	.091	27	.128	.963	27	.841
	Kribi	.097	73	.074	.875	73	.459
	Mbalmayo	.108	24	.096	.909	24	.086
	Ngaoundere	.084	39	.091	.897	39	.197
	Yaoundé	.061	41	.057	.906	41	.789

(a) Lilliefors Significance Correction

Appendix 10: Descriptive statistics of entire data set

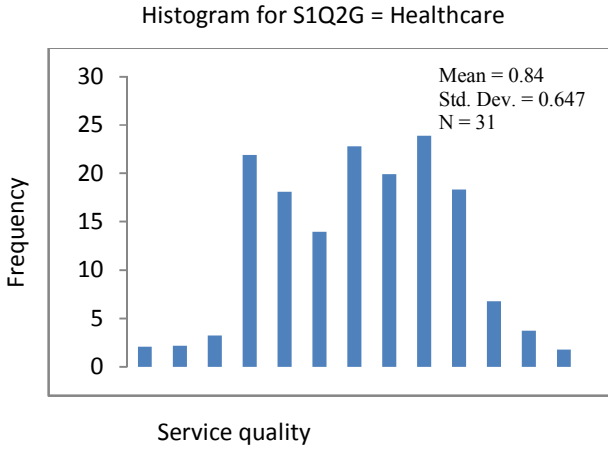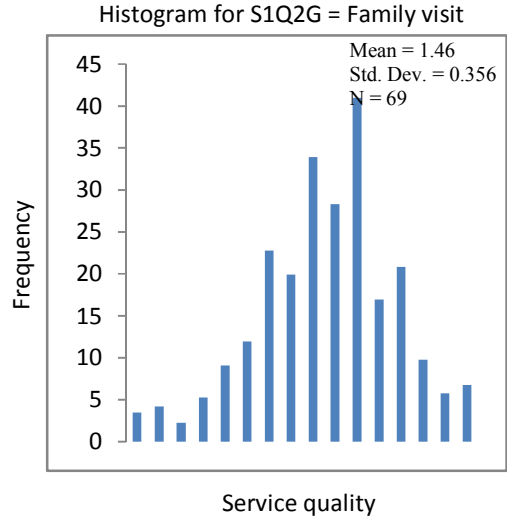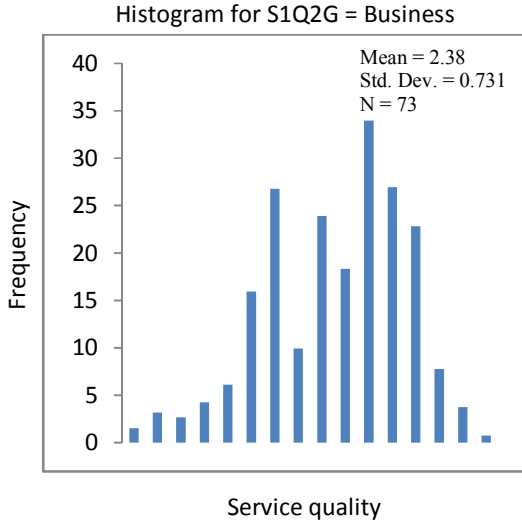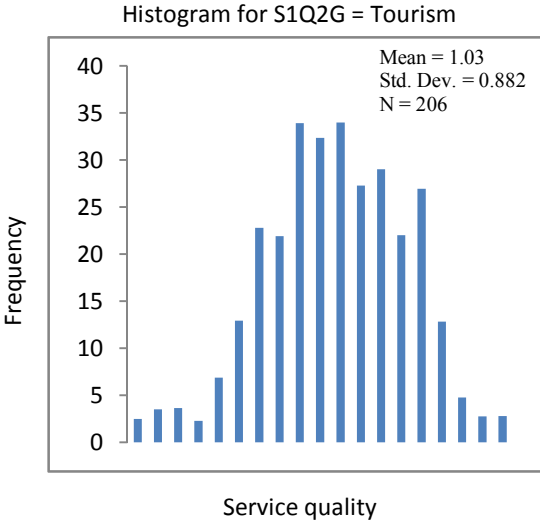| No	Study variables	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Gender	397	1	3	2.01	.921
2	Nationality	397	1	4	1.55	1.003
3	Country of residence	397	1	3	1.23	.309
4	Age	395	1	2	3.21	.982
5	Profession	397	1	3	2.94	1.834
6	Length of stay (in days)	391	1	5	1.87	1.301
7	Purpose of your stay	397	1	3	3.09	1.938
8	Accompanied by	397	1	4	2.97	1.653
9	Entry point to Cameroon	395	1	3	1.09	1.622
10	Cameroon visa process is stress free and rapid	397	1	2	4.73	1.942
11	Cameroon airport staff are polite and competent	397	1	3	2.87	1.348
12	Cameroonians are welcoming	397	1	2	3.99	1.001
13	Hotel staff are diligent	397	1	5	1.94	1.921
14	Hotel rooms are comfy	397	1	5	1.27	1.336
15	Wi-Fi broadband is speedy	391	1	5	2.98	1.749
16	Lifts are fully working	397	1	4	1.84	1.027
17	Waiters at restaurants are skilled	397	1	2	2.32	1.459
18	Dishes are delicious	397	1	2	2.47	.947
19	Food is served on time	397	1	2	3.92	.811
20	Toilets are hygienic	397	1	3	1.98	.458
21	Tour guides are skilful	397	1	4	2.11	1.298
22	Touristic sites are easy to reach	397	1	2	1.43	1.723
23	Travel agents understand customer needs	382	1	2	3.01	1.845
24	Taxis and buses are comfortable and clean	397	1	3	3.84	.927
25	Conference halls are well furnished	371	1	5	1.83	1.759
26	You feel safe in public places	397	1	5	2.92	1.006
27	Police officers are ready to help	397	1	5	4.03	1.724
28	Healthcare services are convenient	391	1	5	2.75	.739
29	Running water and electricity are always available	397	1	5	3.82	1.733
30	Media reports on Cameroon are generally positive	394	1	2	1.73	1.027
31	You opted for Cameroon because it is a safe destination	397	1	3	4.02	1.734
32	You chose Cameroon because it has a powerful brand image	397	1	5	3.78	1.222
33	You selected Cameroon because of Samuel Eto'o / Roger Milla	396	1	5	1.73	1.984
34	You chose Cameroon for its amazing cultural diversity	397	1	5	2.21	1.872
35	You picked Cameroon because of its natural	397	1	4	1.04	1.634

	wonders					
36	Cameroon is a democratic country	394	1	5	2.49	1.229
37	Cameroon successfully fights international terrorism	395	1	5	3.93	1.754
38	A relative recommended you Cameroon destination	397	1	2	4.01	1.024
39	You experienced a positive relationship with Cameroonians	397	1	3	2.91	1.409
40	You enjoyed cultural attractions	397	1	2	2.87	1.298
41	You liked scenic beauties	397	1	2	1.09	1.835
42	Local dishes are delicious	397	1	2	2.27	1.763
43	You are satisfied with hotels service quality	397	1	3	1.39	.934
44	You are willing to come back to Cameroon	397	1	2	4.13	1.732
45	You would be happy to recommend Cameroon to your relatives	397	1	5	2.21	1.239
46	Overall, you are satisfied by Cameroon destination	397	1	4	3.03	1.427
	Valid N (listwise)	395				

Appendix 11: Normality test using histograms

Histogram for S1Q2G = Tourism
Mean = 1.03
Std. Dev. = 0.882
N = 206

Histogram for S1Q2G = Business
Mean = 2.38
Std. Dev. = 0.731
N = 73

Histogram for S1Q2G = Family visit
Mean = 1.46
Std. Dev. = 0.356
N = 69

Histogram for S1Q2G = Healthcare
Mean = 0.84
Std. Dev. = 0.647
N = 31

Histogram for S1Q2G = Seminar/Congress
Mean = 2.23
Std. Dev. = 0.834
N = 18
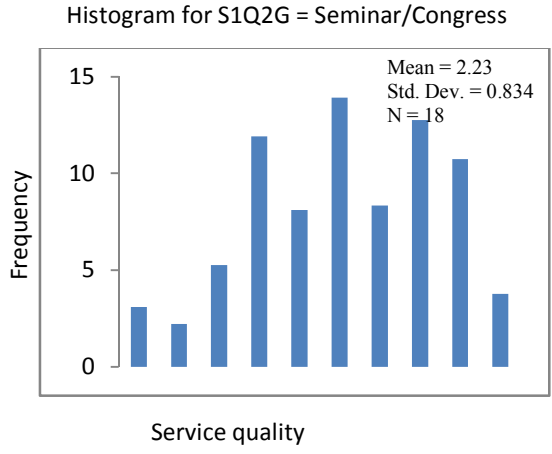
Appendix 12: Normality test using Q-Q plots

Normal Q-Q plot of service quality for S1Q2G = Tourism
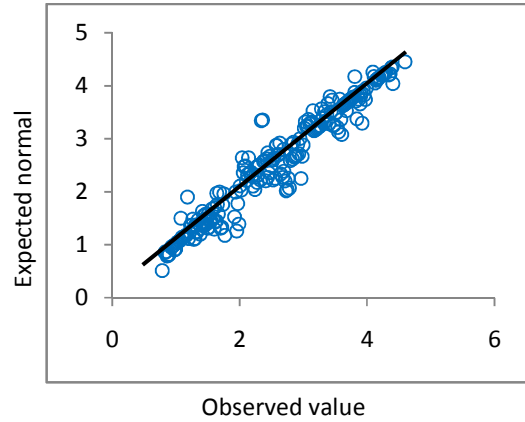
Normal Q-Q plot of service quality for S1Q2G = Business

Normal Q-Q plot of service quality for S1Q2G = Family visit

Normal Q-Q plot of service quality for S1Q2G = Healthcare

Normal Q-Q plot of service quality for S1Q2G = Seminar/Congress
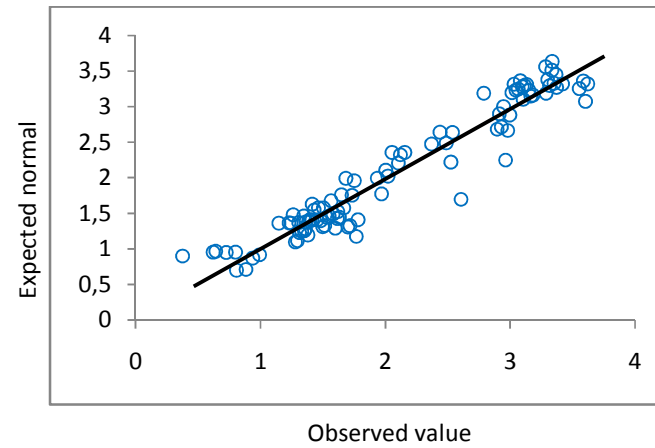
Appendix 13: Normality test Stem-and-Leaf plot

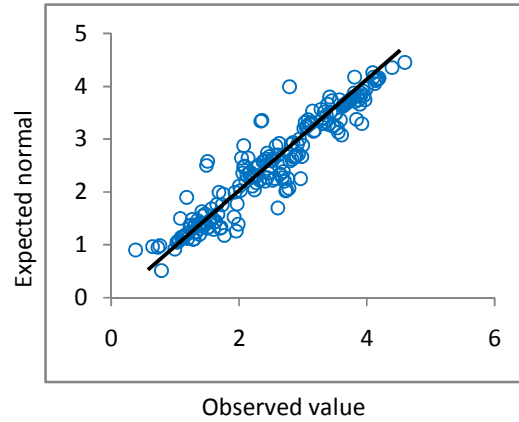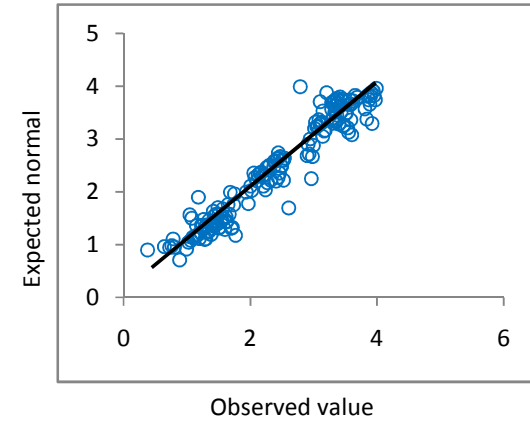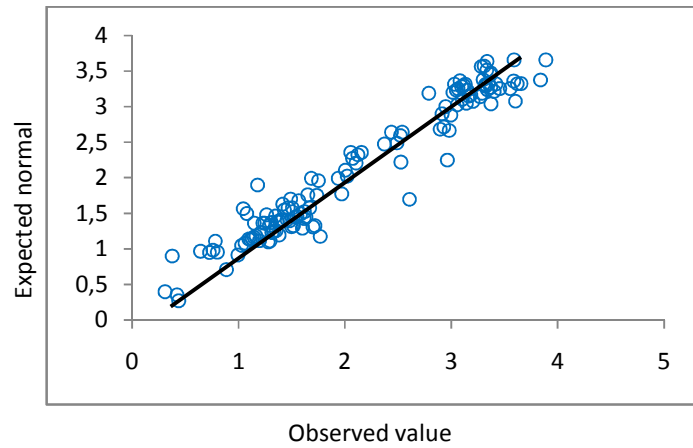| Service quality Stem-and-Leaf plot for S1Q2G = Tourism		Service quality Stem-and-Leaf plot for S1Q2G = Business		Service quality Stem-and-Leaf plot for S1Q2G = Family visit	
Frequency	Stem & Leaf	Frequency	Stem & Leaf	Frequency	Stem & Leaf
2.00	1.3934	3.00	2.633	1.00	1.03
6.00	1.834447	4.00	2.98444	3.00	1.000008
7.00	1.9000048	5.00	3.000088	4.00	1.74444
11.00	2.774645555	1.00	3.28888	1.00	1.9999997
15.00	2.99983	9.00	3.4444449	5.00	2.444444444499
16.00	3.44495855	11.00	3.55550001	7.00	2.885
19.00	3.8777773	12.00	3.6777777777	8.00	3.666666677
22.00	3.984444488888	8.00	3.699999999	9.00	3.66669
23.00	4.9999992222222	12.00	3.8888866666	11.00	3.7888888888888
26.00	5.111111111333333	13.00	3.991111	7.00	3.88888666666
28.00	5.222222255555555	14.00	4.22227777	12.00	3.99999999
29.00	5.399999999999999	16.00	4.944	19.00	4.00000222222
32.00	5.44444448888888	9.00	5.06	27.00	4.07
27.00	5.55555555555566	17.00	5.1111111	15.00	4.5555599
25.00	5.88777777	19.00	5.444488888888888	11.00	4.66666111
24.00	6.000299999999999	11.00	5.555599999999	9.00	4.777888
18.00	6.011111111111111	8.00	5.888822222	8.00	4.94444444
17.00	6.1111119999999	7.00	5.8889	5.00	5.008
12.00	6.222222233333	10.00	5.9999997	0.00	5.6669999
8.00	6.55555777777	4.00	6.11111115	1.00	5.771
3.00	6.666666668	0.00	6.222	1.00	5.82
0.00	6.998888889	0.00	6.3		
1.00	7.06	2.00	6.4444443	Stem width	1.00
				Each leaf	1 case
Stem width	1.00	Stem width	1.00		
Each leaf	1 case	Each leaf	1 case		

Appendix 14: Exploratory factor analysis descriptive statistics of combined data

Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation	Analysis N	Missing N
Cameroon visa process is stress free and rapid	4.73	1.942	397	0
Cameroon airport staff are polite and competent	2.87	1.348	397	0
Cameroonians are welcoming	3.99	1.001	397	0
Hotel staff are diligent	1.94	1.921	397	0
Hotel rooms are comfy	1.27	1.336	397	0
Wi-Fi broadband is speedy	2.98	1.749	397	12
Lifts are fully working	1.84	1.027	397	0
Waiters at restaurants are skilled	2.32	1.459	397	0
Dishes are delicious	2.47	.947	397	0
Food is served on time	3.92	.811	397	0
Toilets are hygienic	1.98	.458	397	0
Tour guides are skilful	2.11	1.298	397	0
Touristic sites are easy to reach	1.43	1.723	397	0
Travel agents understand customer needs	3.01	1.845	397	15
Taxis and buses are comfortable and clean	3.84	.927	397	0
Conference halls are well furnished	1.83	1.759	397	26
You feel safe in public places	2.92	1.006	397	0
Police officers are ready to help	4.03	1.724	397	6
Healthcare services are convenient	2.75	.739	397	6
Running water and electricity are always available	3.82	1.733	397	0
Media reports on Cameroon are generally positive	1.73	1.027	397	3
You opted for Cameroon because it is a safe destination	4.02	1.734	397	2
You chose Cameroon because it has a powerful brand image	3.78	1.222	397	0
You selected Cameroon because of Samuel Eto'o / Roger Milla	1.73	1.984	397	10
You chose Cameroon for its amazing cultural diversity	2.21	1.872	397	0
You picked Cameroon because of its natural wonders	1.04	1.634	397	0
Cameroon is a democratic country	2.49	1.229	397	23
Cameroon successfully fights international terrorism	3.93	1.754	397	12
A relative recommended you Cameroon destination	4.01	1.024	397	0

Appendix 15: Unrotated component matrix of combined data

Item	Component						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Cameroonians are welcoming	.829						
Hotel staff are diligent	.803						
Police officers are ready to help	.772						
Cameroon airport staff are polite and competent	.769						
Waiters at restaurants are skilled	.763						
Hotel rooms are comfy	.758						
Wi-Fi broadband is speedy	.757						
Lifts are fully working	.755						
Tour guides are skilful	.749						
Dishes are delicious	.721						
Food is served on time	.718						
Toilets are hygienic	.702						
You picked Cameroon because of its natural wonders	.689						
Running water and electricity are always available	.637						
Travel agents understand customer needs	.622						
Taxis and buses are comfortable and clean	.613						
You opted for Cameroon because it is a safe destination	.604						
Touristic sites are easy to reach	.572	0.438					
Conference halls are well furnished	.539						
Cameroon visa process is stress free and rapid	.524						
You chose Cameroon because it has a powerful brand image	.517						
You feel safe in public places	.505						
Healthcare services are convenient	.489		0.415				
You selected Cameroon because of Samuel Eto'o / Roger Milla	.481						
Media reports on Cameroon are generally positive	.437						
You chose Cameroon for its amazing cultural diversity	.411						
Cameroon is a democratic country							
Cameroon successfully fights international terrorism					0.406		
A relative recommended you Cameroon destination							

Extraction method: Principal component analysis
7 components extracted

Appendix 16: Communalities of combined data

Variable	Initial	Extraction
Cameroon visa process is stress free and rapid	1.000	.491
Cameroon airport staff are polite and competent	1.000	.398
Cameroonians are welcoming	1.000	.588
Hotel staff are diligent	1.000	.401
Hotel rooms are comfy	1.000	.583
Wi-Fi broadband is speedy	1.000	.379
Lifts are fully working	1.000	.445
Waiters at restaurants are skilled	1.000	.359
Dishes are delicious	1.000	.511
Food is served on time	1.000	.329
Toilets are hygienic	1.000	.436
Tour guides are skilful	1.000	.418
Touristic sites are easy to reach	1.000	.397
Travel agents understand customer needs	1.000	.463
Taxis and buses are comfortable and clean	1.000	.482
Conference halls are well furnished	1.000	.406
You feel safe in public places	1.000	.386
Police officers are ready to help	1.000	.299
Healthcare services are convenient	1.000	.473
Running water and electricity are always available	1.000	.514
Media reports on Cameroon are generally positive	1.000	.351
You opted for Cameroon because it is a safe destination	1.000	.417
You chose Cameroon because it has a powerful brand image	1.000	.495
You selected Cameroon because of Samuel Eto'o / Roger Milla	1.000	.482
You chose Cameroon for its amazing cultural diversity	1.000	.451
You picked Cameroon because of its natural wonders	1.000	.382
Cameroon is a democratic country	1.000	.308
Cameroon successfully fights international terrorism	1.000	.301
A relative recommended you Cameroon destination	1.000	.409

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Appendix 17: Unrotated component matrix of rural Regions data

Item	Component				
	1	2	3	4	5
You feel safe in public places	.723				
Cameroonians are welcoming	.719				
A relative recommended you Cameroon destination	.707				
Tour guides are skilful	.699				
You picked Cameroon because of its natural wonders	.678				
Travel agents understand customer needs	.672				
You opted for Cameroon because it is a safe destination	.668	.472			
Touristic sites are easy to reach	.663				
Police officers are ready to help	.658				
You chose Cameroon for its amazing cultural diversity	.647				
Dishes are delicious	.639	.511			
Healthcare services are convenient	.633				
Toilets are hygienic	.621				
Hotel staff are diligent	.619				
Running water and electricity are always available	.609		-.428		
Waiters at restaurants are skilled	.587				
Taxis and buses are comfortable and clean	.582				
Food is served on time	.571			.479	
Hotel rooms are comfy	.539			.414	
You selected Cameroon because of Samuel Eto'o / Roger Milla	.524				
Cameroon visa process is stress free and rapid	.518				
You chose Cameroon because it has a powerful brand image	.493				
Media reports on Cameroon are generally positive	.479				
Wi-Fi broadband is speedy	.451				
Conference halls are well furnished	.428				
Cameroon airport staff are polite and competent	.417				
Cameroon is a democratic country		-.485		-.518	
Cameroon successfully fights international terrorism	.396				
Lifts are fully working					

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

5 components extracted.

Appendix 18: Unrotated component matrix of urban Regions data

Item	Component					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Cameroonians are welcoming	.759					
Hotel staff are diligent	.736					
Police officers are ready to help	.728					
Cameroon airport staff are polite and competent	.711					
Waiters at restaurants are skilled	.709					
Hotel rooms are comfy	.698					
Wi-Fi broadband is speedy	.682					
Lifts are fully working	.681					
Tour guides are skilful	.672					
Dishes are delicious	.667					
Food is served on time	.653	-.402				
Toilets are hygienic	.641	.448				
You picked Cameroon because of its natural wonders	.637					
Running water and electricity are always available	.625					
Travel agents understand customer needs	.619					
Taxis and buses are comfortable and clean	.603		.471			
You opted for Cameroon because it is a safe destination	.588	.419				
Touristic sites are easy to reach	.559					
Conference halls are well furnished	.527			.489		
Cameroon visa process is stress free and rapid	.483					
You chose Cameroon because it has a powerful brand image	.479					
You feel safe in public places	.462					
Healthcare services are convenient	.437	-.426				
You selected Cameroon because of Samuel Eto'o / Roger Milla	.425					
Media reports on Cameroon are generally positive	.419					
You chose Cameroon for its amazing cultural diversity						
Cameroon is a democratic country						.513
Cameroon successfully fights international terrorism	.403					
A relative recommended you Cameroon destination						-.381

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

6 components extracted

Appendix 19: Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin and Bartlett's test

a) Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin and Bartlett's Test of Combined Data

| Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		0.943
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	32012.885
	df	2103
	Sig.	.000

b) Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin and Bartlett's Test of rural Region Data

| Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		0.879
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	8104.317
	df	2103
	Sig.	.000

c) Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin and Bartlett's Test of urban Region Data

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		0.918
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	17291.492
	df	2103
	Sig.	.000

Appendix 20: Linearity test of customer satisfaction and service quality

R^2 Linear = 0.761

Y = 0.27 + 0.83*X

Customer satisfaction

Service quality
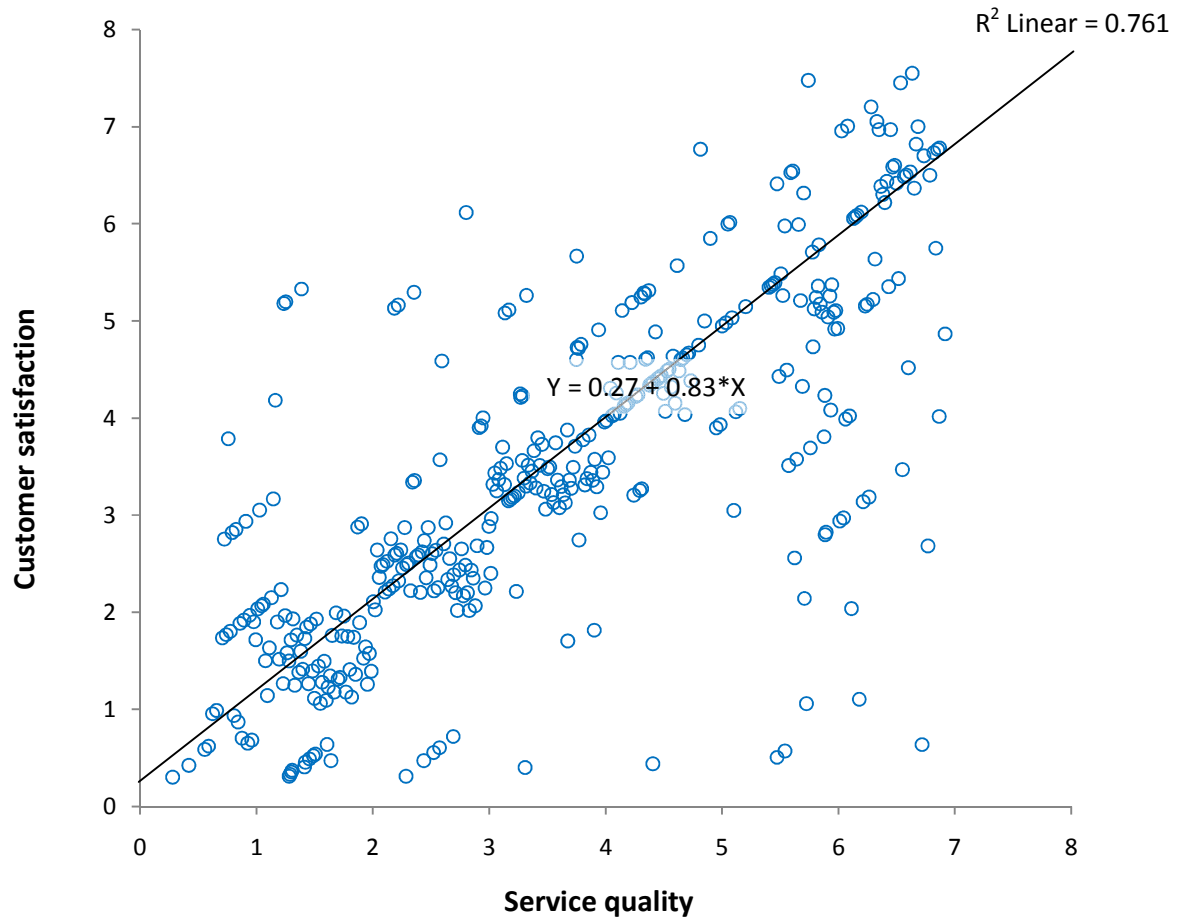
Appendix 21: Homoscedasticity test

Scatter plot
Dependent variable : Customer satisfaction
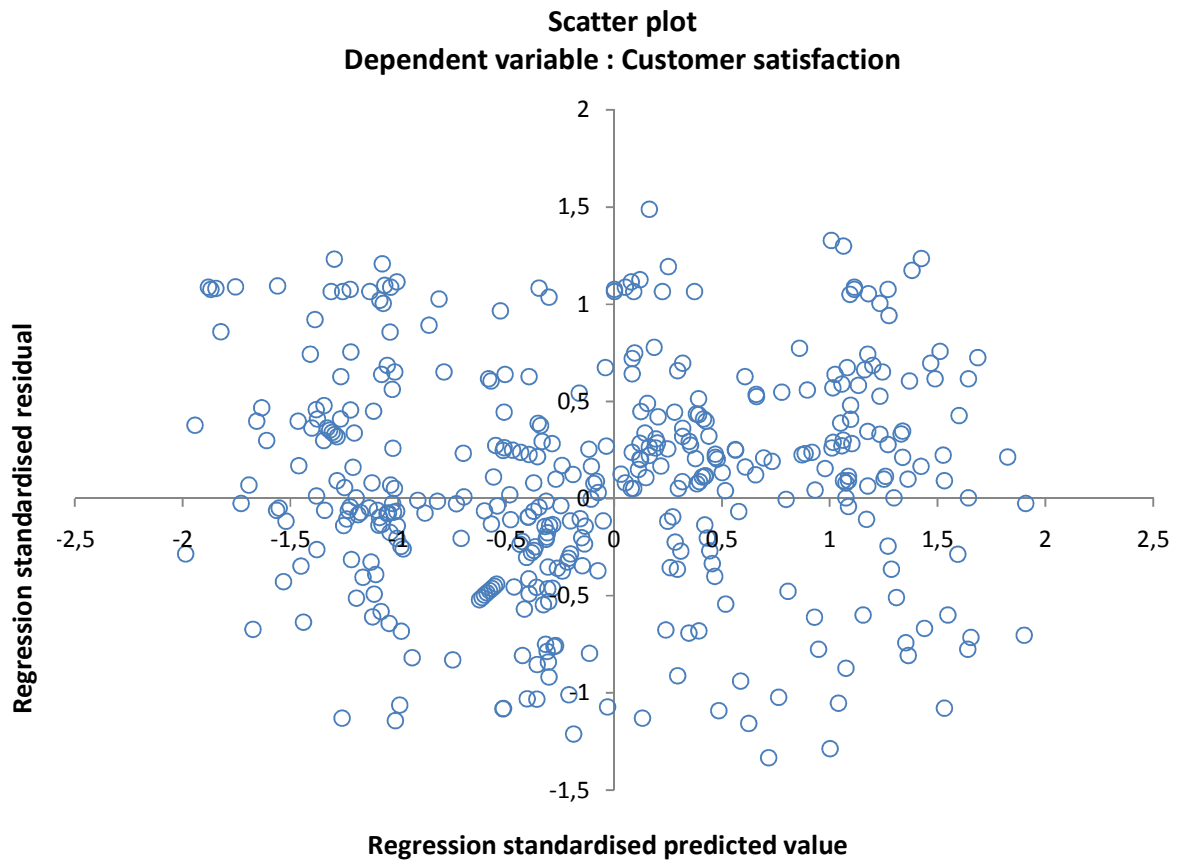
Appendix 22: Test of multicollinearity

(a) Collinearity Test with Service Blueprint as Dependent Variable

Model		Collinearity statistics	
		Tolerance	VIF
1	Human Elements Reliability	.302	2.938
	Human Elements Responsiveness	.299	2.005
	Non-Human Elements	.348	2.347

Dependent Variable: Service blueprint

(b) Collinearity Test with Human Elements responsiveness as Dependent Variable

Model		Collinearity statistics	
		Tolerance	VIF
1	Human Elements Reliability	.381	2.014
	Non-Human Elements	.405	2.372
	Service blueprint	.339	1.995

Dependent Variable: Human elements responsiveness

Appendix 23: Test of multicollinearity based on correlation between factors

	Factors	Non-Human Elements	Human Elements Reliability	Human Elements Responsiveness	Service blueprint
Pearson correlation	Non-Human Elements	1.000			
	Human Elements Reliability	.539	1.000		
	Human Elements Responsiveness	527	.692	1.000	
	Service blueprint	.584	.605	.516	1.000
Significance (1-tailed)	Non-Human Elements				
	Human Elements Reliability	.000			
	Human Elements Responsiveness	.000	.000		
	Service blueprint	.000	.000	.000	
N	Non-Human Elements	396			
	Human Elements Reliability	396	397		
	Human Elements Responsiveness	396	397	396	
	Service blueprint	396	397	396	396

Appendix 24: Examining existence of significant outliers and unusual cases

(a) Collinearity Test with non-human elements as dependent variable

Z-Scores	N	Minimum	Maximum
Z-score: Human elements reliability	397	-2.27182	2.00128
Z-score: Human elements responsiveness	397	-2.83941	1.93842
Z-score: Non-human elements	396	-2.48199	2.77291
Z-score: Service blueprint	396	-3.50126	1.43984
Z-score: Destination image	395	-2.10283	1.61047
Valid N (listwise)	395		

(b) Residual Statistics with customer satisfaction as dependent variable

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std.	N
Predicted value	2.0381	4.291	4.2825	.63298	396
Std. predicted value	-1.982	1.389	-.392	1.189	396
Standard error of predicted value	.613	.371	1.003	3.109	396
Adjusted predicted value	.994	5.107	2.034	.997	396
Residual	-1.3842	1.901	.004	.912	392
Std. residual	-2.993	3.662	.056	2.093	392
Stud. residual	-3.372	1.984	1.093	.772	394
Deleted residual	-1.039	3.943	.008	.921	396
Stud. deleted residual	-3.281	2.837	.091	4.912	395
Mahalanobis distance	.398	12.643	2.934	1.934	392
Cook's distance	.004	.284	.012	.059	396
Centered leverage value	.018	.076	.109	.052	396

Appendix 25: Normality test of with customer satisfaction as dependent variable

Dependant variable: Customer satisfaction
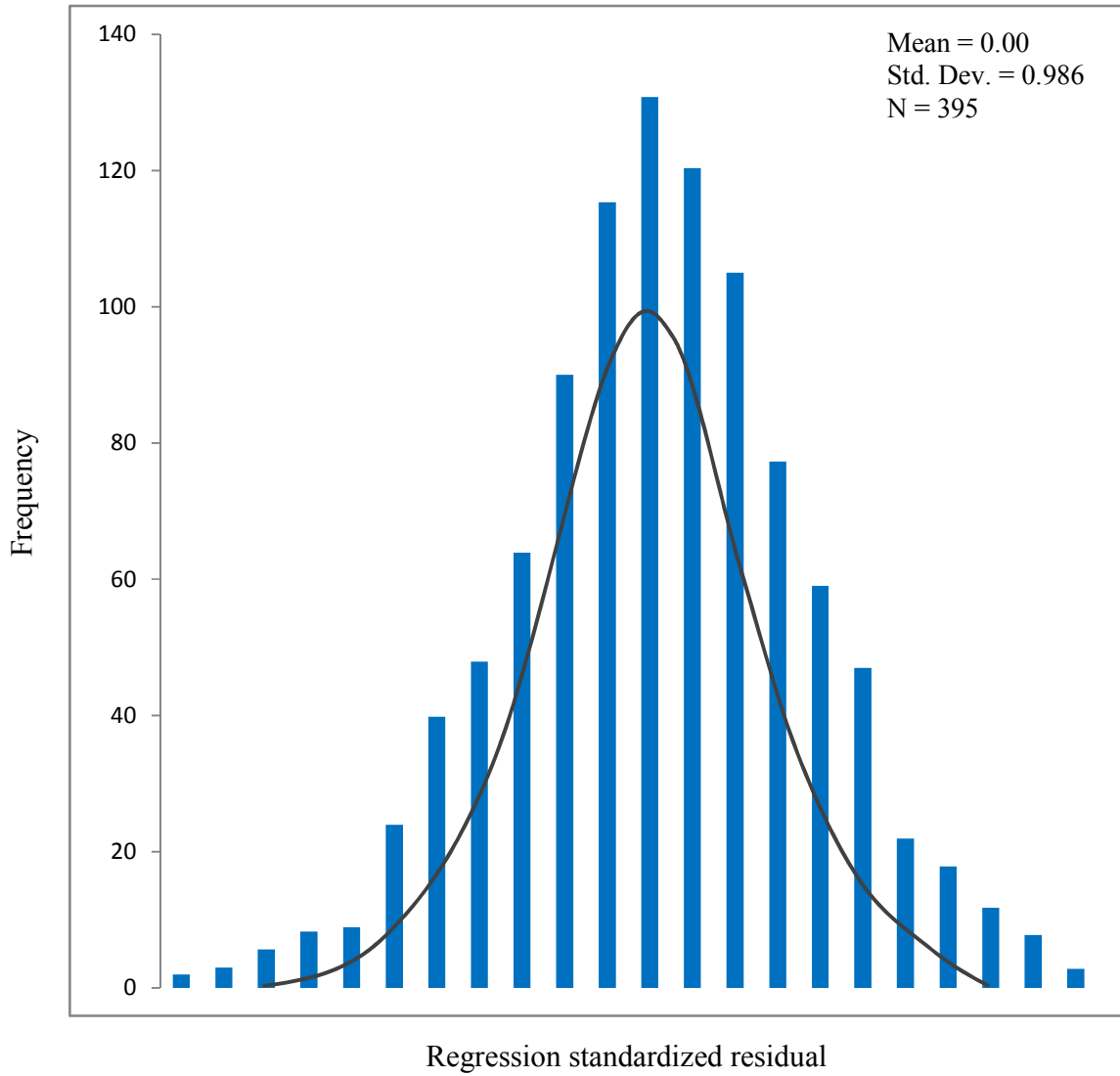
Appendix 26: Pictures of some touristic attractions by Region

<u>**Adamawa**</u>

Ngaoundéré royal rooms

Source: The researcher, June 2014

Ngaoundéré handicraft market

Source: The researcher, June 2014

Tello waterfalls in Ngaoundéré

Source: The researcher, June 2014

Benoué River in Ngaoundéré

Source: The researcher, June 2014

Centre

National museum in Yaoundé

Source: Camair Drone Boy, March 2015

Ancient Cathedral, erected in 1918 in Akono

Source: The researcher, June 2014

Catfish market in Batchenga

Source: The researcher, March 2015

Ebogo eco-touristic site in Mbalmayo

Source: The researcher, March 2015

<u>Littoral</u>

Traditional house in Melong

Source: The researcher, April 2014

Volcanic lake in Melong

Source: The researcher, April 2014

Waterfalls in Ekom Nkam

Source: The researcher, April 2014

Douala commercial centre

Source: www.smart237.com, 2016

North

Lagdo Hotel in Garoua

Source: The researcher, June 2014

Lagdo Lake in Garoua

Source: The researcher, June 2014

Bouba Ndjida national park

Source: www.smart237.com, 2016

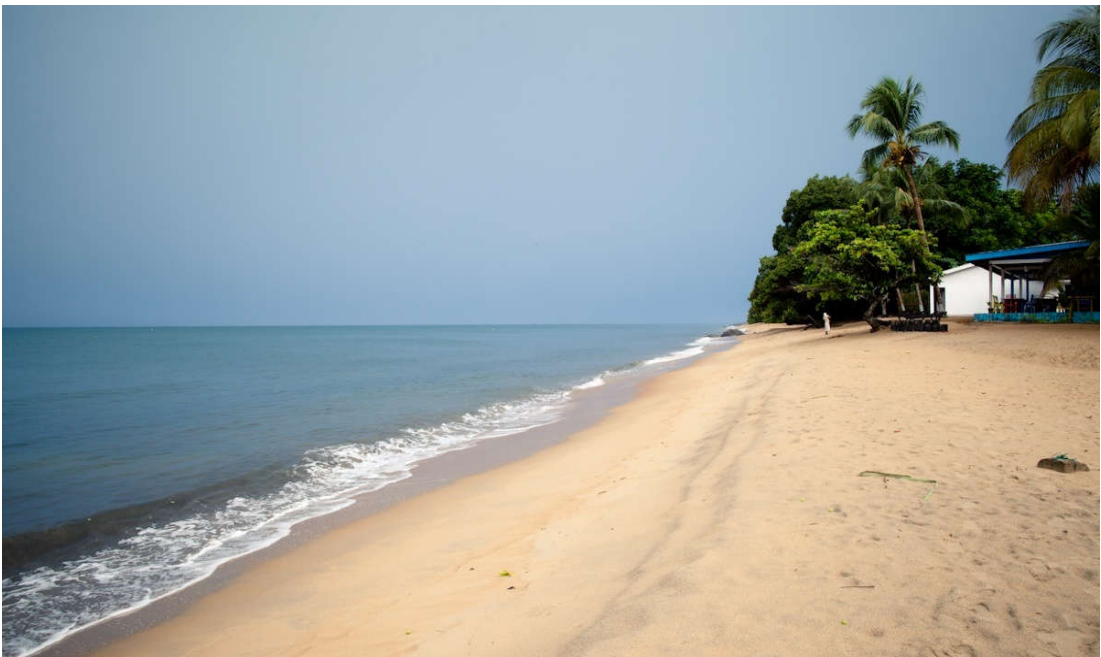Sunday market in Pitoa

Source: The researcher, June 2014

<u>South</u>

Lobe waterfalls in Kribi

Source: The researcher, May 2014

Kribi beach

Source: The researcher, May 2014

Leisure centre in Kribi

Source: The researcher, May 2014

Virgin beach in Campo

Source: The researcher, May 2014

West

Domaine du Petpenoun in Foumban

Source: The researcher, April 2014

Volcanic lake in Baleng

Source: The researcher, March 2015

Archeological museum in Dschang

Source: The researcher, March 2015

Traditional dance in Bafoussam

Source: The researcher, April 2015

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