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GAPS IN GUESTS' AND MANAGERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE MARKETING STRATEGIES OF FOUR AND FIVE STAR HOTELS IN KENYA

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ABSTRACT

This study assessed guests' and managers' perceptions of the extent to which the marketing strategies of four and five star hotels in Kenya addressed the factors which influence the guests' purchase decisions. The research question answered was "what are guests' and managers' perceptions of the marketing strategies of the hotels?". Adopting a survey and as the second phase of a three phase mixed methods sequential exploratory design, questionnaires were self-administered to a convenient sample of one hundred and two managers and one hundred and ninety eight guests. Four gaps in guests' and managers' perceptions of the marketing strategies of the hotels were explored. The first gap analysis compared guests' expectations and perceptions. The second gap analysis compared managers' expectations and perceptions. The third gap analysis compared managers' and guests' perceptions. Meanwhile, the last gap analysis compared managers' and guests' expectations. The data was therefore analysed using Mann Whitney and Wilcoxon signed rank tests. The results showed that there were some gaps in managers' and guests' expectations and perceptions of the marketing strategies of the hotels thus indicating that the respondents had positive and negative perceptions of the marketing strategies.

Keywords: *Gaps, Perceptions, Marketing Strategies, Hotels*

Introduction

In a bid to satisfy customers, efforts to identify and meet customers' expectations by bridging the gaps between managers' and customers' perceptions of customers' purchase needs and the marketing strategies of firms have led to the adoption of the gap analysis concept (Fifield, 1998). According to Fifield (1998) a gap may exist between managements' and customers' perceptions of the appropriateness of the marketing activities of firms. This gap is called the "activity gap". Thus studies conducted in hotels outside Kenya have looked at these gaps (Heung, 2000; Lockyer, 2002; Juwaheer & Ross, 2003). Nonetheless, similar gaps in four and five star hotels in Kenya have not been identified.

Literature Review

Gaps in Guests' and Managers' Perceptions of the Marketing Strategies of Hotels

Heung (2000) revealed that guests' expectations of the location, room service, staff competencies, benefits, appearance of the hotel, prices of rooms, value of the meal, security, service speed, complementary amenities, reliability of front desk staff and courtesy of staff exceeded their perceptions. Yet, Juwaheer & Ross (2003) found that guests' expectations of cleanliness, quality, layout and decor of the room, bar, restaurants, service speed, nutritional content of menu items, safety, security, quality, promotion strategies and courtesy, knowledge, skills and reliability of staff exceeded their perceptions. Heung (2000) in addition revealed that customers' perceptions of the variety of food, quality of food and beverages, food safety, cleanliness, reliability of front desk staff and personal amenities exceeded their expectations while Juwaheer & Ross (2003) established that customers' perceptions of guest privacy and the promotion tools exceeded their expectations. However, there are other marketing tactics for hotels such as crowd management, control of other customers and investment on the location and accessibility which fall under the people and place strategies that have not been addressed by these studies and by extension in four and five star hotels in Kenya.

Meanwhile, Lockyer (2002) found that managers' expectations of parking, cleanliness of the hotel, food service efficiency, courtesy and enthusiasm of staff exceeded those of customers. Juwaheer & Ross (2003) on the other hand found that management had overestimated guests' expectations of the

appearance of communication media such as brochures, layout and decor of the rooms, restaurants and bars, levels of service and courtesy of staff. Lockyer (2002) and Juwaheer & Ross (2003) did not however address other marketing tactics that are important in hotels such as the management of the room service, accessibility, location, security and quality of food which fall under the product, service and place strategies and also gaps in managers' and guests' perceptions of the same. In addition, similar studies need to be replicated among four and five star hotels in Kenya.

Methodology

The study was a survey involving the administration of questionnaires at the second phase of a mixed methods sequential exploratory research design involving three phases. Mixed methods research approach combines qualitative and quantitative approaches in order to overcome the weaknesses of using a single approach while taking advantage of the strengths of each approach (Masadeh, 2012). Creswell & Plano-Clark (2011) explains that the sequential exploratory design begins the study with a qualitative strand which is then followed by a quantitative strand. Meanwhile, Baker (1988, p. 96) defines survey research as “a method of describing attitudes and behaviours of a population of people by selecting in a representative way a sample of individuals and soliciting their response to a set of questions”. This could involve interviews (Porta & Keating, 2010) and questionnaires (Kombo & Tromp, 2006).

The unit of analysis was the hotel. The population of study comprised of managers and guests in star rated hotels in Kenya. The sampling frame was made up of managers and guests in four and five star hotels in Mombasa and Nairobi. A convenient sample of one hundred and two managers and one hundred and ninety eight guests participated in the study.

The managers and guests filled in self-administered questionnaires which explored their perceptions and expectations of the marketing strategies of the hotels. Items on the questionnaire were measured on seven-point likert scales (1= to no extent at all and 7=to a very large extent; 1=not at all important and 7=extremely important). Likert scales present items as a declarative sentence followed by response options that indicate varying degrees of agreement with or endorsement of the statement (DeVellis, 1991). They are often used to measure opinions, beliefs and attitudes by setting up ordinal categories for degrees of agreement (Baker, 1988).

The managers' and guests' questionnaires were exactly the same. For example, in order to conduct gap analysis on their perceptions and expectations of the factors which influence the guests' purchase decisions and the marketing

strategies of the hotels and excellent hotels, the managers and guests had to answer the same set of questions. The managers' and guests' questionnaires were moreover administered at the same time, between October 2014 and January 2015. Some of the guests' and managers' questionnaires were dropped at the hotels for distribution by management and front desk staff, a few were sent via electronic mail and postal mail while others were personally administered to the guests and managers.

Gap analysis was performed to assess significant differences in the guests' and managers' perceptions and expectations of the marketing strategies of the hotels. Consequently, Mann Whitney and Wilcoxon signed-rank tests were computed. These tests are non-parametric tests and appropriate for ordinal data such as that produced by likert scales and data that is non-normally distributed (Pallant, 2003). The analysis therefore involved a gap analysis of the extent to which the marketing strategies addressed the factors which influenced the guests' purchase decisions since it was postulated that marketing strategies should address guests' needs. It was also assumed that since the study focused on guests who had spent at least one night in a four or five star hotel, then the guests who filled in the questionnaires were informed enough to answer questions on the marketing strategies of the hotels as learnt from word of mouth, experience or observation.

Results and Discussion

Guests' Expectations and Perceptions-gap Analysis

In order to explore the gaps in guests' expectations and perceptions of the marketing strategies of the hotels, Wilcoxon signed rank tests were computed. Scores on guests' perceptions of the hotels' marketing strategies addressing the following factors were significantly different from those on their expectations.

Variety of menu [$Z=-6.89$, $p=.000$]; Nutritional content of menu items [$Z=-4.45$, $p=.000$]; Food safety levels [$Z=-4.59$, $p=.000$]; Quality of food and beverages [$Z=-5.48$, $p=.000$]; Quality of rooms [$Z=-7.67$, $p=.000$]; Cleanliness of the restaurant [$Z=-4.02$, $p=.000$]; Cleanliness of the rooms [$Z=-5.02$, $p=.000$]; Room amenities [$Z=-6.52$, $p=.000$]; Room service [$Z=-6.76$, $p=.000$]; Service speed at the restaurant [$Z=-6.65$, $p=.000$]; Service speed at the front desk [$Z=-6.42$, $p=.000$.]; Level of automation of processes at the restaurant [$Z=-7.41$, $p=.000$]; Level of automation of processes at the front desk [$Z=-6.86$, $p=.000$]; Courtesy of staff at the restaurant [$Z=-3.97$, $p=.000$]; Courtesy of staff at the front desk [$Z=-3.84$, $p=.000$]; Reliability of staff at the restaurant [$Z=-6.13$, $p=.000$]; Reliability of front desk staff [$Z=-$

4.22, $p=.000$]; Knowledge and skills of restaurant staff [$Z=-7.05$, $p=.000$]; Knowledge and skills of front desk staff [$Z=-5.75$, $p=.000$];

Table 1: Gap differences on Guests' Expectations and Perceptions on the Marketing Strategies of Four and Five Star Hotels in Kenya Addressing the Factors which Influence Their Purchase Decisions

	Guests' expectations		Guests' perceptions		Guests' expectations		Guests' perceptions		Wilcoxon tests	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Median	Median	Median	Median	z	p
	Variety of menu	6.44	.88	5.84	1.06	7.00	7.00	6.00	6.00	-6.89
Nutritional content of menu items	6.55	.93	6.27	.88	7.00	7.00	6.00	6.00	-4.45	.000
Food safety at the restaurant	6.78	.58	6.53	.85	7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00	-4.59	.000
Quality of food and beverages	6.73	.58	6.44	.77	7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00	-5.48	.000
Quality of rooms	6.70	.57	6.18	.98	7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00	-7.67	.000
Cleanliness of restaurant	6.77	.48	6.58	.73	7.00	7.00	6.00	6.00	-4.02	.000
Cleanliness of rooms	6.76	.53	6.50	.87	7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00	-5.02	.000
Room amenities	6.48	.78	6.21	1.16	7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00	-6.52	.000
Room service provided at the hotel	6.48	.84	5.86	1.03	7.00	7.00	6.00	6.00	-6.76	.000
Service speed at the restaurant	6.55	.93	5.98	.96	7.00	7.00	6.00	6.00	-6.65	.000
Service speed at the front office	6.63	.76	6.12	.98	7.00	7.00	6.00	6.00	-6.42	.000
Level of automation of processes at the restaurant (e.g. order taking, payment)	6.20	.84	5.57	1.18	7.00	7.00	6.00	6.00	-7.41	.000

	Guests' expectations		Guests' perceptions		Wilcoxon tests		
					Guests' expectations	Guests' perceptions	Guests' perceptions
Level of automation of processes at the front desk (e.g. during check in, check out, payment)	6.23	.79	5.72	1.04	6.00	6.00	-6.86 .000
Courtesy of personnel at the restaurant	6.66	.66	6.44	.82	6.00	7.00	-3.97 .000
Courtesy of front office personnel	6.68	.65	6.45	.89	7.00	7.00	-3.84 .000
Reliability of employees at the restaurant	6.66	.77	6.25	.84	7.00	6.00	-6.13 .000
Reliability of front office employees	6.65	.70	6.39	.85	7.00	7.00	-4.22 .000
Knowledge and skills of staff at the restaurant	6.59	.72	5.96	.96	7.00	6.00	-7.05 .000
Knowledge and skills of front office staff	6.62	.70	6.23	.86	7.00	6.00	-5.75 .000
Price of menu items	6.50	.99	5.93	1.24	7.00	6.00	-7.15 .000
Price of rooms	6.49	1.03	5.94	1.40	7.00	6.00	-6.37 .000
Value for money derived from the meal	6.44	1.06	6.01	1.09	7.00	6.00	-5.60 .000
Value for money derived from staying in the hotel	6.51	1.09	6.20	.99	7.00	6.00	-5.06 .000
Benefits given to repeat guests	6.18	1.21	5.35	1.74	7.00	6.00	-7.03 .000
Atmosphere of restaurant (e.g. noise, music)	6.59	.69	6.44	1.14	7.00	6.00	-5.95 .000
Atmosphere of the rooms and lobby (e.g. noise, music)	6.67	.66	6.26	.82	7.00	6.00	-6.00 .000
Layout and decor of the restaurant (e.g. furniture, colour scheme, furnishing)	6.38	.70	5.89	1.01	7.00	6.00	-6.50 .000
Layout and decor of the rooms and lobby (e.g. furniture, colour scheme, furnishing)	6.42	.70	6.00	.93	7.00	6.00	-6.01 .000
Other customers in the hotel (e.g. appearance, behaviour)	5.53	1.20	5.08	1.46	7.00	6.00	-3.93 .000

	Guests' expectations		Guests' perceptions		Wilcoxon tests		
					Guests' expectations	Guests' perceptions	
Crowding at the hotel	5.08	1.66	4.44	1.69	6.00	5.00	-6.7
Appearance of staff at the hotel (e.g. uniform)	6.58	.77	6.00	.99	7.00	6.00	-6.80
Appearance of the hotel's exterior (e.g. landscape)	6.45	.77	5.99	.93	7.00	6.00	-5.42
Business hours of operation of the restaurant	6.55	.89	6.42	1.35	7.00	7.00	-3.86
Location of the hotel (e.g. convenience, views)	6.63	.76	6.38	.73	7.00	7.00	-4.54
Accessibility of the hotel	6.69	.65	6.38	.74	7.00	7.00	-3.15
Security at the hotel	6.78	.55	6.62	.72	7.00	7.00	-5.09
Parking availability at the hotel	5.31	1.37	4.67	1.79	6.00	6.00	-4.88

Note: 1. To no extent at all; 7. To a very large extent

Price of menu items [Z=-7.15, p=.000]; Price of rooms [Z=-6.37, p=.000]; Value of the meal [Z=-5.60, p=.000]; Value of the stay [Z=-5.06, p=.000]; Benefits given to guests [Z=-7.03, p=.000]; Atmosphere of the restaurant [Z=-5.95, p=.000]; Atmosphere of the rooms and lobby [Z=-6.00, p=.000]; Layout and décor at the restaurant [Z=-6.50, p=.000]; Layout and décor at the front desk [Z=-6.01, p=.000], Other customers [Z=-3.93, p=.000]; Appearance of the staff [Z=-6.80, p=.000]; Appearance of hotel's exterior [Z=-5.42, p=.000]; Business hours of operation [Z=-3.86, p=.000]; Accessibility [Z=-3.75, p=.000]; Security [Z=-5.09, p=.002]; and Parking availability [Z=-4.88, p=.000].

The results therefore showed that the guests felt that the hotels adequately addressed crowding. However, the guests had different expectations and perceptions of the quality of food and beverages, quality of rooms, nutritional content of menu items, room amenities, food safety, variety of menu, cleanliness of the rooms and restaurant, courtesy of front desk and restaurant staff, reliability of front desk and restaurant staff, knowledge and skills of front desk and restaurant staff, service speed at the front desk and restaurant, level of automation of processes at the restaurant and front desk, atmosphere of the rooms and restaurant, layout and décor of the rooms and restaurant, appearance of staff and the hotel's exterior, other customers, price of rooms and meals, value of the stay and meal, benefits given to repeat guests, parking availability, security, hours of operation of the restaurant, corporate social responsibility, location and accessibility. This meant that the hotels could improve their marketing strategies in order to match the expectations of the guests.

Managers' Expectations and Perceptions-gap Analysis

In order to explore the gaps in managers' expectations and perceptions of the marketing strategies of the hotels, Wilcoxon signed rank tests were computed. Scores on the managers' expectations of the marketing strategies of the hotels addressing the following factors were significantly different from those on their perceptions.

Table 2: Gap differences on Managers' Expectations and Perceptions on the Marketing Strategies of Four and Five Star Hotels in Kenya Addressing the Factors Which Influence the Guests' Purchase Decisions

	Managers' expectations		Managers' perceptions		Wilcoxon tests			
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Managers' expectations Median	Managers' perceptions Median	z	p
Variety of menu	6.33	.84	6.22	.88	7.00	6.00	-1.20	.230
Nutritional content of menu items	6.22	1.13	5.61	1.49	7.00	7.00	-5.03	.000
Food safety at the restaurant	6.55	1.49	6.28	.72	7.00	7.00	-2.98	.003
Quality of food and beverages	6.52	.68	6.48	.80	7.00	7.00	-.51	.610
Quality of rooms	6.56	.68	6.53	.72	7.00	7.00	-.26	.788
Cleanliness of restaurant	6.59	.67	6.34	.86	7.00	7.00	-2.87	.004
Cleanliness of rooms	6.59	.64	6.44	.83	7.00	7.00	-1.68	.093
Room amenities	6.53	.65	6.28	.91	7.00	7.00	-3.05	.002
Room service provided at the hotel	6.42	.77	6.27	.90	7.00	7.00	-1.43	.152
Service speed at the restaurant	6.56	.68	6.15	1.11	7.00	7.00	-3.36	.001
Service speed at the front office	6.59	.66	6.22	1.09	7.00	7.00	-3.00	.003
Level of automation of processes at the restaurant (e.g. order taking, payment)	6.30	.87	5.72	1.42	7.00	6.00	-3.54	.000
Level of automation of processes at the front desk (e.g. during check in, check out, payment)	6.29	.83	6.08	.94	6.00	7.00	-1.94	.052

	Managers' expectations		Managers' perceptions		Wilcoxon tests			
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Managers' expectations		Managers' perceptions	
					Median	Median	z	p
Courtesy of personnel at the restaurant	6.48	.85	6.42	.84	7.00	7.00	-53	.591
Courtesy of front office personnel	6.57	.73	6.32	.82	7.00	7.00	-2.98	.003
Reliability of employees at the restaurant	6.50	.74	6.34	.94	7.00	7.00	-1.83	.067
Reliability of front office employees	6.48	.68	6.37	1.05	7.00	7.00	-.98	.323
Knowledge and skills of staff at the restaurant	6.49	.76	6.30	.84	7.00	7.00	-2.11	.034
Knowledge and skills of front office staff	6.41	.78	6.31	.80	7.00	7.00	-1.22	.222
Price of menu items	6.15	1.11	6.07	1.04	6.00	7.00	-.57	.564
Price of rooms	6.24	1.07	5.97	.87	7.00	7.00	-2.28	.022
Value for money derived from the meal	6.28	.87	6.11	1.12	7.00	7.00	-1.80	.071
Value for money derived from staying in the hotel	6.32	.94	6.25	1.06	7.00	7.00	-.57	.569
Benefitis given to repeat customers	6.31	.91	6.59	1.15	7.00	6.00	-2.99	.003
Atmosphere of restaurant (e.g. noise, music)	6.46	.76	6.00	.99	6.00	7.00	-4.43	.000
Atmosphere of the rooms and lobby (e.g. noise, music)	6.36	.71	6.07	1.01	6.00	7.00	-2.74	.006
Layout and decor of the restaurant (e.g. furniture, colour scheme, furnishing)	6.30	.81	6.07	1.01	6.00	6.00	-1.86	.062
Layout and decor of the rooms and lobby (e.g. furniture, colour scheme, furnishing)	6.25	.88	6.10	1.04	6.00	6.00	-1.07	.283

	Managers' expectations		Managers' perceptions		Wilcoxon tests				
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Managers' expectations	Managers' perceptions	Median	z	p
					Median	Median			
Other customers in the hotel (e.g. appearance, behaviour)	5.86	1.37	5.76	1.24	7.00	6.00	6.00	-98	.323
Crowding at the hotel	6.08	1.21	5.76	1.44	7.00	6.00	6.00	-2.00	.045
Appearance of staff at the hotel (e.g. uniform)	6.35	.91	6.15	1.14	7.00	6.00	6.00	-1.76	.077
Appearance of the hotel's exterior (e.g. landscape)	6.26	.90	6.19	.95	7.00	6.00	6.00	-.43	.661
Business hours of operation of the restaurant	6.22	.96	6.15	1.03	7.00	6.00	6.00	-.59	.551
Location of the hotel (e.g. convenience, views)	6.49	.68	6.43	.71	7.00	7.00	7.00	-.61	.536
Accessibility of the hotel	6.46	.74	6.50	.75	7.00	7.00	7.00	-.59	.552
Security at the hotel	6.60	.70	6.62	.62	7.00	7.00	7.00	-.33	.741
Parking availability at the hotel	6.26	.90	6.43	.80	7.00	5.00	5.00	-2.18	.029
Experiential marketing	5.05	1.58	4.72	1.52	5.00	5.00	5.00	-2.43	.015
Relationship marketing	5.83	1.50	5.56	1.45	5.00	5.00	5.00	-2.50	.012
Sales promotion	5.85	1.34	5.80	1.20	6.00	6.00	6.00	-1.92	.156
Personal selling	5.84	1.39	5.72	1.24	6.00	6.00	6.00	-1.73	.082
Public relations	6.17	1.30	5.81	1.25	6.00	6.00	6.00	-3.56	.000
Advertising	6.03	1.34	5.88	1.26	7.00	6.00	6.00	-1.74	.054
Internet marketing	6.25	1.26	6.25	1.07	6.00	6.00	6.00	-.80	.418
Corporate social responsibility	5.19	1.66	4.81	1.57	7.00	7.00	7.00	-2.88	.004

Note: 1. To no extent at all, 7. To a very large extent

Nutritional content of menu items [Z=-5.03, p=.000]; Food safety [Z=-2.98, p=.003]; Cleanliness of the restaurant [Z=-2.87, p=.004]; Room amenities [Z=-3.05, p=.002]; Service speed at the restaurant [Z=-3.36, p=.001]; Service speed at the front office [Z=-3.00, p=.003]; Level of automation of processes at the restaurant [Z=-3.54, p=.000]; Courtesy of front office staff [Z=-2.98, p=.003]; Knowledge and skills of restaurant staff [Z=-2.11, p=.034]; Price of rooms [Z=-2.28, p=.022]; Benefits given to guests [Z=-2.99, p=.003]; Atmosphere at the restaurant [Z=-4.43, p=.000]; Atmosphere of the rooms [Z=-2.74, p=.006]; Crowding [Z=-2.00, p=.025]; Parking availability [Z=-2.18, p=.029]; Relationship marketing as a promotional tool [Z=-2.50, p=.012]; Experiential marketing as a promotional tool [Z=-2.43, p=.015]; Public relations as a promotional tool [Z=-3.56, p=.000]; and Corporate social responsibility as a promotional tool [Z=-2.88, p=.004].

The findings therefore showed that the managers were satisfied with the way the hotels marketed the quality of food and beverages, variety of menu, quality of rooms, cleanliness of rooms, room service, level of automation of processes at the front desk, courtesy of staff at the restaurant, knowledge and skills of staff at the front desk, reliability of staff, price of menu items, value, layout and decor, other customers, appearance of staff, appearance of the hotel's exterior, business hours of operation of the restaurant, accessibility, location, security and promotional tools such as sales promotion, personal selling and internet marketing.

However, the managers had different expectations and perceptions of the nutritional content of menu items, food safety, cleanliness of the restaurant, room amenities, service speed, level of automation of processes at the restaurant, courtesy of front desk staff, knowledge and skills of restaurant staff, price of rooms, benefits given to guests, atmosphere, crowding, parking, experiential marketing, relationship marketing, corporate social responsibility and public relations. This meant that the managers could improve their marketing strategies in order to meet their expectations.

Managers' and Guests' Perceptions-gap Analysis

In order to explore the gaps in guests' and managers' perceptions of the marketing strategies of the hotels, Mann Whitney tests were conducted. Scores on perceptions of the marketing strategies of the hotels addressing the following factors were significantly different between the guests and managers.

Table 3: Gap differences on Managers' And Guests' Perceptions on the Marketing Strategies of Four and Five Star Hotels in Kenya Addressing the Factors Which Influence Guests' Purchase Decisions

	Managers' perceptions		Guests' perceptions		Mann Whitney test				
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Managers' perceptions	Managers' perceptions	Guests' perceptions	U	p
					Median	Median	Median		
Variety of menu	6.22	.88	5.84	1.06	6.00	6.00	6.00	-3.13	.002
Nutritional content of menu items	5.61	1.49	6.27	.88	7.00	7.00	6.00	-3.79	.000
Food safety at the restaurant	6.28	.90	6.53	.85	7.00	7.00	7.00	-2.86	.004
Quality of food and beverages	6.48	.80	6.44	.77	7.00	7.00	7.00	-.56	.575
Quality of rooms	6.53	.72	6.18	.98	7.00	7.00	7.00	-3.28	.001
Cleanliness of restaurant	6.34	.86	6.58	.73	7.00	7.00	7.00	-2.60	.009
Cleanliness of rooms	6.44	.83	6.50	.87	7.00	7.00	7.00	-.93	.348
Room amenities	6.28	.91	6.21	1.16	7.00	7.00	6.00	-3.32	.001
Room service provided at the hotel	6.27	.90	5.86	1.03	7.00	7.00	6.00	-3.40	.001
Service speed at the restaurant	6.15	1.11	5.98	.96	7.00	7.00	6.00	-2.21	.027
Service speed at the front office	6.22	1.09	6.12	.98	7.00	7.00	6.00	-1.51	.129
Level of automation of processes at the restaurant (e.g. order taking, payment)	5.72	1.42	5.57	1.18	6.00	6.00	6.00	-1.75	.079
Level of automation of processes at the front desk (e.g. during check in, check out, payment)	6.08	.94	5.72	1.04	7.00	7.00	7.00	-2.91	.004
Courtesy of personnel at the restaurant	6.42	.84	6.44	.82	7.00	7.00	7.00	-.03	.976

	Managers' perceptions		Guests' perceptions		Mann Whitney test			
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Managers' perceptions	Guests' perceptions	U	p
					Median	Median		
Courtesy of front office personnel	6.32	.82	6.45	.89	7.00	7.00	-1.98	.047
Reliability of employees at the restaurant	6.34	.94	6.25	.84	7.00	7.00	-1.37	.170
Reliability of front office employees	6.37	1.05	6.39	.85	7.00	6.00	-.64	.525
Knowledge and skills of staff at the restaurant	6.30	.84	5.96	.96	7.00	6.00	-2.85	.004
Knowledge and skills of front office staff	6.31	.80	6.23	.86	7.00	6.00	-.65	.570
Price of menu items	6.07	1.04	5.93	1.24	7.00	6.00	-.56	.574
Price of rooms	5.97	1.07	5.94	1.40	7.00	6.00	-1.03	.300
Value for money derived from the meal	6.11	1.12	6.01	1.09	7.00	6.00	-1.12	.261
Value for money derived from staying in the hotel	6.25	1.06	6.20	.99	7.00	6.00	-.81	.413
Benefits given to repeat customers	6.59	1.10	5.35	1.70	6.00	6.00	-2.51	.012
Atmosphere of restaurant (e.g. noise, music)	6.00	.99	6.44	1.14	7.00	6.00	-.89	.368
Atmosphere of the rooms and lobby (e.g. noise, music)	6.07	1.01	6.26	.82	7.00	6.00	-1.24	.212
Layout and decor of the restaurant (e.g. furniture, colour scheme, furnishing)	6.07	1.01	5.89	1.04	6.00	6.00	-1.78	.074
Layout and decor of the rooms and lobby (e.g. furniture, colour scheme, furnishing)	6.10	1.04	6.00	.93	6.00	6.00	-1.42	.153

	Managers' perceptions		Guests' perceptions		Mann Whitney test			
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Managers' perceptions	Guests' perceptions	U	p
					Median	Median		
Other customers in the hotel (e.g. appearance, behaviour)	5.76	1.24	5.08	1.46	6.00	6.00	-3.87	.000
Crowding at the hotel	5.76	1.44	4.44	1.69	6.00	6.00	-6.50	.000
Appearance of staff at the hotel (e.g. uniform)	6.15	1.14	6.00	.99	6.00	6.00	-2.15	.031
Appearance of the hotel's exterior (e.g. landscape)	6.19	.95	5.99	.93	6.00	6.00	-2.08	.037
Business hours of operation of the restaurant	6.15	1.03	6.42	1.35	6.00	6.00	-.75	.448
Location of the hotel (e.g. convenience, views)	6.43	.71	6.38	.73	7.00	7.00	-.42	.670
Accessibility of the hotel	6.50	.75	6.38	.74	7.00	7.00	-1.08	.277
Security at the hotel	6.62	.62	6.62	.72	7.00	7.00	-.32	.743
Parking availability at the hotel	6.43	.80	4.67	1.79	5.00	5.00	-8.77	.000

Note: 1. To no extent at all, 7. To a very large extent

Variety of menu items [U=-3.13, p=.002]; Nutritional content of menu items [U=-3.79, p=.000]; Food safety levels at the restaurant [U=-2.86, p=.004]; Quality of rooms [U=-3.28, p=.001]; Cleanliness of the restaurants [U=-2.60, p=.009]; Room amenities [U=-3.32, p=.001]; Room service provided [U=-3.40, p=.001]; Service speed at the restaurant [U=-2.21, p=.027]; Level of automation of processes at the front desk [U=-2.91, p=.004]; Courtesy of staff at the front desk [U=-1.98, p=.047]; Knowledge and skills of restaurant staff [U=-2.85, p=.004.]; Benefits given to repeat customers [U=-2.51, p=.012]; Crowding at the hotel [U=-6.50, p=.000]; Other customers [U=-3.87, p=.000]; Appearance of staff [U=-2.15, p=.031]; Appearance of hotel's exterior [U=-2.08, p=.037]; and Parking availability [U=-8.77, p=.000].

The results therefore showed that the managers and guests equally agreed that the hotels paid a lot of attention to the quality of food and beverage, cleanliness of the rooms, service speed at the front desk, level of automation of processes at the restaurant, knowledge and skills of staff at the front desk, courtesy of restaurant staff, reliability of staff, prices, value for money, atmosphere, layout and decor, business hours of operation of the restaurant, accessibility, location and security.

One can expect the best marketing strategies from these hotels. Still, differences were expressed which showed that the managers and guests had different perceptions of the extent to which the marketing strategies of the hotels addressed the variety of menu, nutritional content of menu items, food safety, quality of rooms, cleanliness of the restaurant, room amenities, room service, service speed at the restaurant, level of automation of processes at the front desk, courtesy of front desk staff, knowledge and skills of restaurant staff, benefits, other customers, crowding, appearance of staff, appearance of the hotel's exterior and parking availability. This meant that the hotels were not aware of the guests' perceptions implying that they could improve their marketing strategies in order to match these perceptions.

Managers' and Guests' Expectations-gap Analysis

In order to explore the gaps in guests' and managers' expectations of the marketing strategies of the hotels, Mann Whitney tests were conducted. Scores on expectations of the marketing strategies of the hotels addressing the following factors were significantly different between the guests and managers.

Table 4 Gap differences on managers' and guests' expectations on the marketing strategies of four and five star hotels in Kenya addressing the factors which influence the guests' purchase decisions

	Managers' expectations		Guests' expectations		Managers' expectations	Guests' expectations	Guests' expectations		U	p
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Median	Median	Mann Whitney test			
Variety of menu	6.33	.84	6.44	.88	7.00	7.00	9193.50	-1.45	.145	
Nutritional content of menu items	6.22	1.13	6.55	.93	7.00	7.00	8538.00	-2.64	.008	
Food safety at the restaurant	6.55	.72	6.78	.58	7.00	7.00	8558.00	-3.04	.002	
Quality of food and beverages	6.52	.68	6.73	.58	7.00	7.00	8510.50	-2.89	.004	
Quality of rooms	6.56	.68	6.70	.57	7.00	7.00	9169.50	-1.66	.096	
Cleanliness of restaurant	6.59	.67	6.77	.48	7.00	7.00	8932.50	-2.22	.026	
Cleanliness of rooms	6.59	.64	6.76	.53	7.00	7.00	8810.50	-2.46	.014	
Room amenities	6.53	.65	6.48	.78	7.00	7.00	10056.00	-.06	.945	
Room service provided at the hotel	6.42	.77	6.48	.84	7.00	7.00	9371.50	-1.19	.233	
Service speed at the restaurant	6.56	.68	6.55	.93	7.00	7.00	9484.50	-1.07	.284	
Service speed at the front office	6.59	.66	6.63	.76	7.00	7.00	9417.00	-1.21	.224	

	Managers' expectations		Guests' expectations		Managers' expectations	Guests' expectations	Guests' expectations		p
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Median	Median	Mann Whitney test	U	
Level of automation of processes at the restaurant (e.g. order taking, payment)	6.30	.87	6.20	.84	7.00	7.00	9252.50	-1.28	.198
Level of automation of processes at the front desk (e.g. during check in, check out, payment)	6.29	.83	6.23	.79	6.00	6.00	9471.00	-.96	.337
Courtesy of personnel at the restaurant	6.48	.85	6.66	.66	7.00	6.00	9150.50	-1.71	.087
Courtesy of front office personnel	6.57	.73	6.68	.65	7.00	7.00	9280.50	-1.50	.133
Reliability of employees at the restaurant	6.50	.74	6.66	.77	7.00	7.00	8688.00	-2.52	.012
Reliability of front office employees	6.48	.68	6.65	.70	7.00	7.00	8287.50	-3.13	.002
Knowledge and skills of staff at the restaurant	6.49	.68	6.59	.72	7.00	7.00	9214.50	-1.51	.130
Knowledge and skills of front office staff	6.41	.78	6.62	.70	7.00	7.00	8487.00	-2.72	.007

	Managers' expectations		Guests' expectations		Managers' expectations	Guests' expectations	Mann Whitney test	U	p
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Median	Median			
Price of menu items	6.15	1.11	6.50	.99	6.00	7.00	7992.00	-3.46	.001
Price of rooms	6.24	1.00	6.49	1.03	7.00	7.00	8132.50	-3.29	.001
Value for money derived from the meal	6.28	.87	6.44	1.06	7.00	.00	8404.00	-2.78	.005
Value for money derived from staying in the hotel	6.32	.98	6.51	1.09	7.00	7.00	8166.00	-.51	.605
Benefits given to repeat customers	6.31	.91	6.18	1.21	7.00	7.00	9763.50	-1.34	.180
Atmosphere of restaurant (e.g. noise, music)	6.46	.76	6.59	.69	6.00	7.00	9297.00	-4.51	.000
Atmosphere of the rooms and lobby (e.g. noise, music)	6.36	.71	6.67	.66	6.00	7.00	7429.00	-.59	.550
Layout and decor of the restaurant (e.g. furniture, colour scheme, furnishing)	6.30	.81	6.38	.70	6.00	7.00	9714.50	-1.33	.182
Layout and decor of the rooms and lobby (e.g. furniture, colour scheme, furnishing)	6.25	.88	6.42	.70	6.00	7.00	9241.00	-3.00	.003
Other customers in the hotel (e.g. appearance, behaviour)	5.86	1.37	5.53	1.20	7.00	7.00	8034.00	-.53	.000

	Managers' expectations		Guests' expectations		Managers' expectations	Guests' expectations	Guests' expectations		U	p
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Median	Median	Mann Whitney test			
Crowding at the hotel	6.08	1.21	5.08	1.66	7.00	6.00	6400.50	-2.15	.031	
Appearance of staff at the hotel (e.g. uniform)	6.35	.91	6.58	.77	7.00	7.00	8828.00	-1.63	.103	
Appearance of the hotel's exterior (e.g. landscape)	6.26	.90	6.45	.77	7.00	7.00	9064.50	-3.65	.000	
Business hours of operation of the restaurant	6.22	.96	6.55	.89	7.00	7.00	7916.50	-2.66	.008	
Location of the hotel (e.g. convenience, views)	6.49	.89	6.63	.76	7.00	7.00	8382.50	-3.24	.001	
Accessibility of the hotel	6.46	.74	6.69	.65	7.00	7.00	8279.50	-2.96	.003	
Security at the hotel	6.60	.70	6.78	.55	7.00	7.00	8647.00	-6.26	.000	
Parking availability at the hotel	6.26	.90	5.31	1.37	7.00	6.00	5831.50	-3.59	.000	

Note: 1. To no extent at all, 7. To a very large extent

Nutritional content of menu items [U=-2.64, p=.008]; Food safety levels at the restaurant [U=-3.04, p=.002]; Quality of food and beverages [U=-2.89, p=.004]; Reliability of front office employees [U=-2.52, p=.012]; Knowledge and skills of front office staff [U=-2.72, p=.007]; Price of menu items [U=-3.46, p=.001]; Price of rooms [U=-3.29, p=.001]; Atmosphere of restaurant [U=-4.51, p=.000]; Layout and décor of rooms [U=-3.00, p=.003]; Appearance and behaviour of other guests [U=-5.35, p=.000]; Crowding at the hotel [U=-2.15, p=.031]; Appearance of the hotel's exterior [U=-3.65, p=.000]; Business hours of operation of the restaurant [U=-2.66, p=.008]; Location [U=-3.24, p=.001]; Accessibility of the hotel [U=-2.96, p=.003]; Security [U=-6.26, p=.000]; and Parking availability [U=-3.59, p=.000].

The results therefore showed that the managers and guests equally felt that the hotels should pay a lot of attention to the variety of menu, quality of rooms, cleanliness, knowledge and skills of staff at the restaurant, reliability of restaurant staff, courtesy of staff, service speed, room service, room amenities, level of automation of processes, value for money, benefits, atmosphere of the rooms, layout and décor of the restaurant and appearance of staff.

However, the managers and guests had different expectations of the marketing strategies addressing the nutritional content of menu items, food safety, quality of food and beverages, reliability, knowledge and skills of front desk staff, prices, atmosphere of the restaurant, layout and décor of the rooms, other customers, crowding, appearance of the hotel's exterior, business hours of operation of the restaurant, location, accessibility, security and parking. This meant that the managers were not aware of the guests' expectations thus providing opportunities for improvement.

Conclusion

The significant gaps in perceptions and expectations of the marketing strategies indicate that guests and managers in four and five star hotels in Kenya have both positive and negative perceptions of the marketing strategies of the hotels. Nevertheless, the hotels should close these gaps. The hotels should therefore develop products, services, experiences and marketing strategies which address the needs, desires and wants of guests.

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