

Research Article

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Dimensions of Visitor Satisfaction at Attractions: A Study of Kakum National Park, Ghana

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Abstract: Attractions are crucial in contributing to the overall satisfaction of visitors in tourism, and ensuring the satisfaction of visitors is key to the sustenance of attractions at destinations. Therefore, this study sought to ascertain the extent to which visitors are satisfied with the service dimensions at Kakum National Park (KNP), and to ascertain whether service dimensions vary with visitors' socio-demographic characteristics. The study adopted a cross-sectional field survey and sampled 367 respondents for data collection using a questionnaire. Data were analysed via the mean scores and standard deviation. Independent t-tests and ANOVA were used to explore the difference between dimensions of satisfaction and socio-demographic characteristics of visitors. The study found that some satisfaction dimensions at the KNP in the Central region of Ghana vary with certain socio-demographic characteristics of visitors, namely age, continent of origin and level of education, at $p\text{-value} \leq 0.05$. Visitors were found to be satisfied with all measured dimensions except the price. The study therefore recommends that the management of the attractions adopt conscious service strategies to enrich the experience of visitors in order to ensure better value for their money. This study's findings

expand knowledge about visitor satisfaction and how satisfaction dimensions vary with socio-demographic characteristics at destinations.

Keywords: Destination; Attractions; Kakum National Park; Satisfaction dimensions; Socio-demographic characteristics

1 Introduction

Tourism is globally recognized as one of the fastest-growing industries. According to Croce (2018), the tourism sector continuously experiences expansion and diversification, and it has become one of the largest economic sectors in the world. Tourism is defined as encompassing the activities of persons traveling and staying in places outside their usual environment for no more than one consecutive year; this can be for leisure, business, or other purposes. Tourism is regarded as a major contributor to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and employment in many economies of the world (World Tourism & Travel Council, 2015).

The global pandemic (COVID-19) caused the tourism industry to lose 62 million jobs and almost 2.89 trillion US dollars in income, according to a statista.com 2022 paper that was reprinted. After COVID, the industry has begun to record increasing growth in its revenue and jobs. A report from the United Nations World Tourism Organization (2022), indicated a growth of 64% in total revenue in 2022. International tourist arrivals saw a sharp increase of 130% over the figure in the previous year's 2021 United Nations World Tourism Organization report. According to the World Tourism & Travel Council (2021), 3.8 million tourism-related jobs could be generated both directly and indirectly in the next 10 years in Sub-Saharan Africa. In Africa, some of the major tourist destinations include Kenya, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Mauritius and Ghana (Imbeah, 2018). According to a Ghana Tourism Authority (2022) report, Ghana, despite the effects of COVID-19, recorded a 47% growth in its international tourist arrivals,

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which increased from 623,523 in 2021 to 914,892 in 2022 and led to a total tourism receipt of over 2.5 trillion US dollars. These statistics place Ghana among the top leading destinations as the number-one tourist destination in West Africa (Coffie *et al.*, 2023).

In tourism destinations, attractions are recognized as one of the three most important elements of the tourism supply, in addition to transport and accommodation (Haneef *et al.*, 2019). Indeed, tourism would not exist without attractions (Wanhill, 2008; Haneef *et al.*, 2019). This view is shared by Gunn (1988), who argues that without developed attractions, tourism would not exist and that there would be little need for transportation, facilities, services and information systems. Kakum National Park (KNP), which is one of several iconic attractions created in the country in the early 1990s, is one of the most-visited attractions (Ghana Statistical Service, 2014). Even though others of its kind have since been created, it remains the flagship attraction in among the national parks in Ghana (Ghana Tourist Authority, 2010).

Boakye and Boohene (2010) argue that attractions are crucial in contributing to the overall satisfaction of visitors, while Handayani and Rashid (2016) considers attractions to be the core of tourism, not only in terms of formulating the tourism product but also as a gauge of the performance of the entire destination (Cooper *et al.*, 2005). Destinations, therefore, need to be monitored on a daily basis to ensure their sustainability before they lose their popularity (Richmond & Cornelius, 2021).

To ensure the sustenance of attractions and destinations, the satisfaction of visitors is key (Agyeiwaah *et al.*, 2019). A higher level of visitor satisfaction increases visitor dedication (Flint *et al.*, 2011), reduces price elasticity (Fornell *et al.*, 2006), brings down exchange costs (Yang & Peterson, 2004), and limit the inflow of new visitors (Uncles *et al.*, 2013). As it is the main driver of visitors to a destination, tourist satisfaction at attractions has far-reaching implications and is worthy of study. Studies on visitor satisfaction with destinations have often focused on other tourism supply elements such as hotels, transport and restaurants, with little emphasis on attractions. This is especially the case in Ghana, where tourism scholars have barely studied visitor satisfaction with attractions and its effect on tourists' future behavioural tendencies (Amissah, 2013; Adam *et al.*, 2015).

Cajiao *et al.* (2022) propose that attractions can customise their marketing and communication efforts to resonate with particular visitor categories through research on satisfaction characteristics across diverse socio-demographic profiles. According to Babolian Hendijani (2016), examining these dimensions of satisfaction, as well as

the extent to which they differ, will help researchers and attraction managers enhance the overall visitor experience, customise offerings to fit a variety of tastes, and address any socio-demographic discrepancies in satisfaction. This focused strategy makes sure that attractions properly convey their value proposition to various groups, boosting the possibility of bringing in and satisfying a variety of people. The objective of this study is therefore to answer the following questions:

1. To what extent are visitors satisfied with the dimensions of service at KNP?
2. To what extent do satisfaction dimensions differ with visitors' socio-demographic characteristics?

2 Literature Review

2.1 The concept of attractions in tourism

According to Harianto *et al.* (2020), an "attraction" is any place or thing that has the ability to persuade a person to visit a destination. Lew (1987) defines tourist attractions as "consisting of all those elements of a non-home place that draw discretionary travellers away from their homes. They usually include landscapes to observe, activities to participate in and experiences to remember" (p. 553). Pearce (1991) defines visitor attractions as "a named site with a specific human or natural feature which is the focus of visitor and management attention." Leask (2010) also argues that the use of the phrase "Visitor attraction" can also be used to cater to the non-overnight tourist market. Notwithstanding the use of the lexicon, the importance of a factor that draws visitors in is irrefutable. Visitors' need for attractions may stem from various forms of motivation, ranging from pleasure-seeking, recreation and relaxation, education, learning about other cultures, and visiting museums and parks (Leask, 2010; Kemptiak *et al.*, 2017).

According to Chen *et al.* (2020), visitor attractions can include natural features such as beautiful mountains and valleys, scenery, gardens and springs, scenic drive, parks, lakes, rivers, wildlife, caves, and underground formations. Another form of attraction is entertainment, which could include events such as exhibitions, cultural events and festivals, Western musicals, nightlife and entertainment, as well as historical attractions such as landmark and heritage buildings (Biswas *et al.*, 2020).

Attractions are at the core of tourism development in any given destination (Akyeampong, 2008; Jurowski,

2009; Haneef et al., 2019). Other studies also affirm the importance of attractions to tourism by arguing that attractions are an essential component of tourism development (Wanhill, 2008; Manhas et al., 2016).

Attractions provide a focal point, setting the agenda for tourists' activities at a destination (Leask, 2010; Padrón-Ávila & Hernández-Martín, 2019). There are a number of attributes associated with each destination, such as attractions, services, and infrastructure. However, attractions and the experience they provide are major contributors to overall satisfaction (Boakye & Boohene, 2010; Leask, 2010), and have been labelled as key to determining a destination's image, which in turn influences tourist satisfaction (Lascu et al., 2018).

2.2 Visitor satisfaction with attractions in tourism

The importance of visitors' satisfaction in the service industry has been acknowledged by several researchers as crucial for a destination's sustainability and overall success (Veasna et al., 2013; Sukiman et al., 2013; Jarvis et al., 2016; Iniesta-Bonillo et al., 2016; Loi et al., 2017). An understanding of visitor satisfaction is of paramount importance to the tourism industry because it is considered one of the key objectives and indicators of a tourist destination's successful management (Štumpf et al., 2018). Satisfaction here is defined as an attitude or evaluation that is formed by the customer comparing their pre-purchase expectations of what they would receive with their subjective perceptions of what they actually received (Oliver, 1980). Sadik and Alhassan (2021) also view it as a person's feelings of pleasure or disappointment by comparing a product's perceived performance (outcome) in relation to his or her expectation. If the person's expectations are met, he or she is likely to evaluate his or her experience as satisfactory; conversely, dissatisfaction will surface if the services provided do not meet the visitor's desires (Otsuka, et al., 2023).

Recognizing the needs of visitors and providing them with memorable experiences, managers of attractions are increasingly appreciating the economic importance of meeting visitors expectations (Adam et al., 2019; Seyfi et al., 2020). Regarding the tourism industry, it has been suggested that when tourists are satisfied with the service dimensions at a destination, they are likely to recommend that destination to others (Hosany et al., 2017). Satisfied tourists tend to engage in positive word-of-mouth communication with others about their memorable experiences (Kozak & Rimmington, 2000; Filieri et al., 2015; Meng &

Han, 2018). This in turn contributes to increased rates of tourist patronage, retention, loyalty and acquisition (Swart et al., 2018; Meng & Han, 2018). Invariably, there is a positive association between tourist satisfaction and the long-term profitability and success of the destination.

According to Ali et al. (2021), factors used in evaluating satisfaction of attractions include both tangibles (appearance of physical facilities, including equipment, personnel and communication materials) and intangibles (good ambiance, and experience, among others). Zeithaml et al. (1985) focuses on the intangibles.

These factors of satisfaction have been expounded upon and given the following sets of categories: responsiveness, tangibles, communications, consumables and empathy (Pakurár et al., 2019); product, experience, marketing, culture and leadership (Frochot, 2003); surroundings of the attraction, reception/ticket office, literature (McKercher et al., 2004); and the souvenir selling area, exhibitions, catering, toilets, and the visitor's overall impression (Nowacki & Kruczek, 2021). Zhong and Moon (2020) showed that the physical environment can powerfully affect customers' cognition, emotions, and behaviour, and that it is the most thoroughly emphasized factor in the research on satisfaction with attractions.

2.3 Satisfaction and tourists' socio-demographic characteristics

Ariya et al. (2020) note that an understanding of tourists' socio-demographic characteristics is significant for tourism marketing management. Socio-demographic characteristics of tourists can include gender, age, income, educational level, nationality occupation and marital status (Zeinali et al., 2014; Amir et al., 2017). According to Adhikari et al. (2021), dimensions of satisfaction vary greatly with these socio-demographic factors, specifically nationality, age, gender, income, and education. Zeinali et al. (2014) and Esu (2015) found that dimensions of satisfaction do not vary with age and income significantly, and that they vary more with gender, education, and occupation. According to Weiler and Ham (2005), there is a significant gender difference in the dimensions of satisfaction, with females expressing higher satisfaction than males in research on the Panama Canal Watershed. Spinks et al. (2005) and Phosikham et al. (2015) make similar assertions about Sunshine Coast tourist attractions and Luang Prabang Province, respectively. This contrasts with the findings of Salim and Mohamed (2014), which showed that males have a higher level of satisfaction than females.

Clifton *et al.* (2014), argue that satisfaction levels differ with visitors' educational backgrounds. Salim and Mohamed (2014), in their research on snorkeling experiences in Pulau Payar Marine Park, also found a significant relationship between dimensions of satisfaction and visitors' educational levels.

With respect to nationality, Montañó *et al.*, (2019) argue that there is a significant difference in the dimensions of satisfaction across the different nationalities of visitors to the Balearic Islands in Spain. On the contrary, Geng *et al.* (2021) suggest that nationality makes no significant difference in overall satisfaction.

The above evidence pointing to the differences in tourists' satisfaction dimensions and their socio-demographic characteristics can be described as mixed and contradictory. This, in part, could be attributed to the different socio-cultural contexts and aspects of the tourist activities under study.

2.4 Theoretical Framework

Jones and Suh (2000) claimed that two types of consumer satisfaction exist: transaction-specific satisfaction, and overall satisfaction. Transaction-specific satisfaction is attached to a specific encounter with an organization, whereas overall satisfaction is a collective construct describing the level of satisfaction with specific products and services of an organization's various facets, such as physical facilities (Garbarino & Johnson, 1999). It is based on information from all previous encounters with an organization, and can be viewed as a function of all previous transaction-specific satisfaction (Jones & Suh, 2000).

The underpinning theory for this current study is the transaction-specific theory (Parasuraman *et al.* 1994; Teas, 1993) which suggests that the satisfaction of a customer is dependent on their experience with specific attributes of a service, based on which they engaged in a transaction. Subsequently, the decision to re-engage in the service transaction in the future is hinged on the customers' satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the earlier transaction (Seizov & Wulf, 2020). The transaction-specific theory suggests that since customers' judgement of satisfaction is based on specific proportions, the decision to re-purchase could be ascribed to the customers' satisfaction with a specific service dimension rather than the overall service. Given the above, when consumer satisfaction is evaluated, researchers should define whether the satisfaction measure is based on overall or transaction-specific satisfaction.

This study aims to define the differences in visitors' satisfaction dimensions at the KNP of Ghana as they relate to their socio-demographics. Transaction-specific theory was deemed appropriate because KNP has specific service attributes that make it easier to measure visitor satisfaction and comprehend the satisfaction dimensions that tourists consider when traveling to a site. The objective of this study is therefore to answer the following specific questions:

1. To what extent are visitors satisfied with the service dimensions at KNP?
2. To what extent do satisfaction dimensions vary with visitors' socio-demographic characteristics?

2.5 Study area

The Kakum National Park is located in the Central region of Ghana, which has Cape Coast as its capital city and is described as the tourism hub of Ghana because of its numerous tourism sites and facilities (Richmond & Cornelius, 2021). KNP is close to a small community called Abrafo Odumasi and is among the many protected areas in the country developed for touristic purposes. The main attractions at the park are the canopy walkway, bird watching, nature walks and teahouses for night camping (Ghana Heritage Conservation Trust, 2016). According to Yiadom (2015), the KNP is not only considered the greatest and most visited attraction among the national parks in Ghana, but it is also the country's flagship attraction

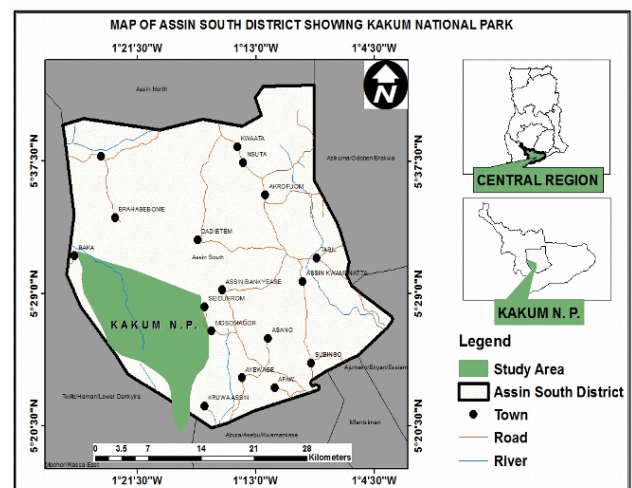


Figure 1: Map of Kakum National Park

Source: Cartographic and Remote Sensing Unit (2021)

because of its unique ecotourism attributes (the canopy walkway and the rainforest), which appeal to a greater number of visitors who come to the Central region.

3 Study Method

The study adopted a descriptive cross-sectional field survey. According to Creswell and Creswell (2005), the main drive of descriptive research design is to report an exact description of observations in a situation, with no attempt made to change subjects' behaviour. A convenient sampling technique was used to reach out to the research participants: with the help of two trained field assistants stationed at key areas of the park, visitors who had finished their tour were invited to complete a questionnaire before exiting the attraction. Before the actual collection of data, a pre-test of the instrument was carried out at KNP. A sample size of 30 visitors was selected for this purpose. Pre-testing was done to ensure that the instrument collected high-quality and concise information. A self-administered questionnaire with closed-ended questions was then used for data collection between April and May 2019.

The instrument was structured into two sections (A and B), each of which fulfilled different objectives of the study. Section A captured information on the socio-demographic characteristics of the participants, such as age, gender, level of education, religion and continent of origin, while section B dealt with assessing visitor satisfaction using six service dimensions they experienced from the selected attraction: Tangibles, Price, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance and Empathy. These were adapted from Akama & Kieti (2003) and Frochot (2003). Respondents' views on the six service dimensions measuring visitor satisfaction were captured using a 5-point Likert Scale (1 - Strongly disagree, 2 - Disagree, 3 - Neither agree nor disagree, 4 - Agree, 5 - Strongly Agree), which they used to indicate the extent of their agreement or disagreement with various statements posed by the researcher.

In all, twenty-eight (28) statements were presented to visitors to indicate their levels of satisfaction along the six dimensions. Tangibles consisted of eight statements – for example, “Site is well kept and restored” and “Staff are presentable and easily identified”. The Price dimension included three statements, two of which were “The entry fee to the attraction is reasonable” and “The site offers value for money.” The Reliability dimension namely consisted of four statements, which included “Staff are always willing to help visitors” and “Staff perform ser-

vices right the first time.” Six statements were presented for Responsiveness, with statements such as “Staff are helpful and courteous” and “Staff are quick to react to visitors' requests.” The dimensions of Assurance and Empathy also indicated four and three questions, respectively. Two statements presented for these dimensions were “Staff provide services on time as promised” and “Personal attention is provided to visitors when needed.”

A total of 400 questionnaires were distributed to respondents, of which 387 were retrieved. Out of this number, 367 were found useful for analysis, representing a 91.75% response rate. Collected data were analysed using both descriptive statistics (percentage in agreement, mean scores and standard deviation) and inferential statistical analysis techniques. Specifically, an independent t-test was employed to compare the mean score between satisfaction dimensions and gender, while one-way ANOVA was employed to compare the satisfaction dimensions and the mean score of more than two groups among age, marital status, religion, continent of origin, and level of education. To calculate the overall satisfaction, we summed the means of each satisfaction attribute, and then divided the result by the number of dimensions. The questionnaire sought to answer these two questions:

1. To what extent are visitors satisfied with the service dimensions at KNP?
2. To what extent do satisfaction dimensions differ with visitors' socio-demographic characteristics?

3.1 Ethical Considerations

Participation in the study was entirely voluntary. Before participants answered to the survey, they were asked for their informed consent. The participants were given sufficient information about the study so that they could choose whether or not they wanted to participate. Management of attraction and visitors were asked for permission using an introductory letter from the Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management of the University of Cape Coast.

Anonymity was also thoroughly protected. The absence of participant names from the instrument utilized provided assurance of this; since names and other personal information were not linked to the respondents' responses, the use of questionnaires ensured respondents' anonymity. The researchers were able to do this by not disclosing or talking about any of the information provided by the respondents to any third parties. The study adhered

to confidentiality. These were the relevant conditions put in place to safeguard the rights of all participants. The researchers were able to accomplish this by not disclosing or discussing any information provided by the respondents to a third party. Additionally, information acquired from respondents was only used for the specific reason it was collected. The respondents also received assurances that their participation in the study was voluntary and that they could revoke their consent at any time.

4 Results and Discussion

4.1 Socio-demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The assumption was that visitors' satisfaction dimensions would vary with their socio-demographic characteristics. In this study, the socio-demographic characteristics that were recorded were sex, age, marital status, religion, continent of origin, level of education and employment status. This section is important because research has shown that the satisfaction level of visitors varies with their socio-demographic background (Huh & Usyal, 2003; Richins, 2005). Accordingly, a summary of the socio-demographic profile of respondents is presented in Table 1.

Regarding the sex distribution of participants, the results indicate that a little over half (55.9%) of the visitors were made up of males. Traditionally, males have been known to travel more than females, and this could be a contributing factor to the lower patronage of females.

The age characteristic identifies Ghana as appealing to the young market. Over half of the respondents (56.9%) were within the 21–29 age bracket, followed by those aged between 30–39 years (20.2%), while 8.7% of the respondents were younger than 20 years. The indication is that the visitors who visit KNP were generally dominated by young adults between the ages of 21–29, perhaps because the canopy walkway is attractive to this group. This corroborates the popular notion that youth have a high propensity to travel than other segments and tend to spend a lot of time on leisure pursuits due to their exuberance and curiosity to discover new things and places (Richards & Wilson, 2003; Boakye *et al.*, 2013; Dayour, 2013; Otoo & Amuquandoh, 2014; Ghana Tourism Authority, 2022). 8.7% of the respondents were below 20 years, while the smallest proportion (8.2%) of the total respondents at the attraction were aged 50 years and above. The physically rigorous nature of activities at the attraction, espe-

cially the canopy walkway, could account for the smaller number of older visitors to the destination.

In terms of marital status, ninety-four (94), representing 25.6% of respondents, were currently married, while 3% had been married in the past (i.e., separated, divorced or widowed). This finding could be the result of the popular notion that single people have the propensity to travel more because they are less likely to have any family responsibilities or obligations. Bojanic's (1992)

Table 1: Socio-Demographic Characteristic of Respondents (N=367)

Socio-demographic Characteristics	Frequency (N= 367)	Percentages (%)
Sex		
Male	205	55.9
Female	162	44.1
Age		
18 – 20	32	8.7
21 – 29	209	56.9
30 – 39	74	20.2
40 – 49	22	6.0
50+	30	8.2
Marital Status		
Never Married	262	71.4
Married	94	25.6
Previously Married	11	3.0
Religion		
Christianity	287	78.2
Atheism	40	10.9
Islam	28	7.6
Others	12	3.3
Continent of Origin		
North America	64	17.4
Africa	224	61.0
Europe	69	18.8
Others	10	2.8
Level of Education		
Secondary School	48	13.1
College/University	236	64.3
Postgraduate	83	22.6
Employment Status		
Student	145	39.5
Employed	207	56.4
Unemployed	15	4.1

study supports this finding, which suggests that as people marry, nightlife and other activities like travel become less important. With regards to religious affiliation, a majority (78.2%) were Christians, followed by atheists (10.9%). Islam recorded 7.6%, and 3.3% belonged to other faiths, including Traditionalist, Buddhist and Jewish. This means that Christianity was the dominant religion among visitors at the attraction during the time of the study.

From the standpoint of the continent of origin, the study observed that Africans (mostly Ghanaian and Nigerian) were predominant among the visitors (61.0%), followed by Europeans (18.8%) and North Americans (17.4%), with only 12 respondents (3.3%) from various other continents, such as South America, Australia and Asia. This result is consistent with the Ghana Tourism Authority's statistics (2010), which maintain that the bulk of Ghana's visitors are from the continent of Africa. The remarkable proportion of African arrivals could be attributed to the burgeoning travel culture among the people in the sub-region.

In relation to the level of education, a majority (64.3%) of the visitors were those with university and college education, followed by postgraduates (22.6%). Those with the least level of education were those with secondary school education (13.1%).

Another variable considered was the employment status of respondents. Out of the total respondents, more than half (56.4%) were employed, 39.5%, were students and the smallest number (4.1%) were unemployed. This implies that most of the visitors who visited the attractions at the time of the study were financially sound with regular income and thus had money to spend. Discretionary income is generally needed for a person to travel, and this is possible when they are employed.

4.2 Dimensions of Visitor Satisfaction

Table 2 presents the various dimensions of satisfaction with services experienced by visitors at the destination, with their percentage in agreement, including mean and standard deviation. Overall, visitors indicated that they were satisfied with the destination services with a mean of 2.55. Specifically, visitors were satisfied ($M = 2.69$) with the destinations' reliability. Zeinali et al. (2014), defines reliability as the ability of the attraction to deliver the promised service dependably. This implies that the staff at the KNP are well-informed about the attraction and, as such, delivered on visitors' expectations.

One utmost responsibility of any business is the "duty of care" to its customers, which has a long-term positive impact on the business. Our findings from the study suggest that visitors were also satisfied ($M = 2.68$) with the level of empathy exhibited by staff at the attractions. This implies that the staff at the attractions were caring, welcoming and hospitable to visitors who visited the destination. Therefore, it may be said that visitors will be willing to visit again and would recommend the KNP to others because they were well cared-for.

Responding promptly to customers' inquiries is also an important responsibility of every staff member at any institution, and it has a lasting implication for customer satisfaction. Accordingly, visitors agreed that staff at the attractions were willing to help them and provided prompt services, with a corresponding mean of 2.67. This implies that visitors were satisfied with the responsiveness of the staff at the attraction during their visit.

Assuring customers of your expertise and knowledge in the discharge of your duties allays their fears and gives them confidence when dealing with you. In this study, the staff displayed such characteristics with a mean of 2.61,

Table 2: Dimensions of visitors' satisfaction at the attractions (N = 367)

Dimensions	% Agreement	Mean	Std. deviation	Rank
Reliability	77.1	2.69	0.52	1
Empathy	77.0	2.68	0.63	2
Responsiveness	77.6	2.67	0.65	3
Assurance	70.3	2.61	0.65	4
Tangibles	68.3	2.53	0.71	5
Price	44.3	2.14	0.85	6
Overall satisfaction	69.1	2.55	0.62	

suggesting that visitors were satisfied with the assurance demonstrated by the staff at the various attractions.

Similarly, visitors also expressed satisfaction with the tangibles of the attraction, with an overall mean score of 2.53. Critically, environmental cleanliness is one thing visitors look at when forming opinions about destinations. Price is another dimension to which tourists attach importance to when it comes to choosing a destination. However, most visitors were uncertain about the price of service at the attraction, with a mean of 2.14. Reasons for this uncertainty with price could be associated with the fact that most of the visitors came in groups and/or with a package tour, and therefore did not know the entry price to the attraction. Also, most package tours are time-limited, and as such visitors went back to their buses just after the tour and did not have a chance to explore the prices of products and services at the KNP.

Regarding the most-satisfied service dimensions in order of magnitude, visitors most frequently named reliability, which had the highest overall mean score ($M = 2.69$), followed by empathy ($M = 2.68$), responsiveness ($M = 2.67$), assurance ($M = 2.61$), and tangibles ($M = 2.57$). Price, however, was ranked as an uncertain dimension by visitors, with an overall mean score of 2.14 for satisfaction with prices. Aside from visitors being uncertain about the price dimension of the attractions, tangibles at the destination was the least-satisfied dimension. The notion that Ghana's destination has been faced with sanitation challenges could have been a contributing factor (Teye *et al.*, 2002; Akyeampong, 2008).

4.3 Difference between Visitors' Satisfaction Dimensions and Socio-demographic Characteristics

Table 3 presents the relationship between visitors' satisfaction dimensions and their socio-demographic characteristics. The table indicates that some satisfaction dimensions had significant differences across certain socio-demographic variables. With regards to the satisfaction dimensions and sex of respondents, a *t*-test showed that the value of significance (2-tail) was higher than 0.05, meaning that none of the satisfaction dimensions at the attraction varied with sex of respondents. Hence, the various satisfaction dimensions at the destination (Tangibles, Price, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance and Empathy) did not vary with the sexes (male and female) of respondents. This finding was consistent with Weiler and Ham (2005), and Perović *et al.* (2012), who found that the service dimensions of satisfaction do not vary with gender.

However, females were more satisfied than males with the highest mean score across all dimensions, a finding that is also consistent with those of Spinks *et al.* (2005) and Phosikham *et al.* (2015).

The findings also indicated that, with the exception of price, none of the satisfaction dimensions at the attraction varied with age. Hence, there exist a statistical differences between the price dimension of the attraction and age at ($F = 4.108$, $p = 0.003$). This finding contradicts the study by Zeinali *et al.* (2014), whose findings suggested that there is no significant variation between age and satisfaction with price and value. It also came to light that the 18 - 20 age group were more satisfied with tangibles, with the highest mean ($M = 2.78$), and ages 21-29 were also highly satisfied with the assurance dimension ($M = 2.73$), and ages 30-39 were more satisfied with reliability as well ($M = 2.73$). The ages from 40-49 and 50+ were also highly satisfied with tangibles and responsiveness, with means of 2.86 and 2.90, respectively. The reason for these responses might be that every age group has its own characteristics that differ from each other, and as such have different priorities with regards to the dimensions of satisfaction.

At the $p > 0.05$ level, none of the satisfaction dimensions varied with religion, marital status or employment status of respondents at the destination. Visitors across all religions were satisfied with most of the dimensions at the destination, except price. Specifically, Christians were more satisfied with reliability ($M = 2.74$) while atheists, Muslims and other religious affiliations showed the highest satisfaction with responsiveness, with means of 2.95, 2.75, and 2.75, respectively.

Respondents who were single and those who were married recorded the highest levels of satisfaction for reliability ($M = 2.74$ and $M = 2.81$, respectively), while those who had been previously married (Divorced, Widowed or Separated) were more satisfied with the tangible aspects of the attractions. Price satisfaction showed a statistical variation with visitors' levels of education at the attraction ($F = 3.24$, $P = 0.04$), but the remaining satisfaction dimensions showed otherwise. This finding contradicts that of Esu (2015), who found that visitors' satisfaction with price and value does not vary with educational level.

Aside from price, all the categories under level of education showed satisfaction with the various dimensions. The extent of agreement was higher among secondary school graduates across all the satisfaction dimensions. Similar findings on satisfaction emerged in the study of Salim and Mohamed (2014). Their findings revealed that those with secondary-school education had the highest mean satisfaction among the education-level groups.

With regard to employment status, visitors expressed different satisfaction levels in different dimensions. Specifically, students were more satisfied with empathy ($M = 2.72$), while unemployed respondents were most satisfied with the assurance dimension of the attractions ($M = 2.87$). Respondents who were employed, however, recorded the highest mean of for the reliability dimension of the destination ($M = 2.79$).

Contrary to this, Table 3 indicates that every satisfaction dimension of the attraction varied with respondents' continent of origin at $p \leq 0.05$ levels, except for reliability. Specifically, the table showed a significant difference between tangibles ($F = 5.70$, $p = 0.001$), price ($F = 12.57$, $p < 0.001$), responsiveness ($F = 4.98$, $p = 0.002$), assurance ($F = 6.31$, $p < 0.001$), empathy ($F = 5.45$, $p = 0.001$) according to continent of origin.

4.4 Conclusions and Recommendations

The tourism industry is considered an important contributor to the growth of many countries' economies, and Ghana is no exception. For the industry to remain competitive, it is important that it meets the changing needs and demands of the tourism market. Thus, it has become pertinent for destination managers to study the dimensions relating to satisfaction at attractions and formulate strategies to retain visitors. The current study assessed how dimensions of satisfaction (tangibles, price, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy) vary with socio-demographic characteristics (age, sex, religion, continent of origin, marital status, level of education and employment status) of visitors at KNP in the Central region of Ghana.

From the study, an overall mean score of 2.55 was recorded for satisfaction dimensions, indicating that all the respondents agreed that they were satisfied with the whole service experience at the destination. Even though visitors were generally satisfied with the attractions' services, their satisfaction with the price was not unanimous. This finding supports transaction-specific theory, which posits that satisfaction of customers is based on their experiences of specific attributes of the service, based upon which the customers make a transaction. "Gender" and "Employment status" have no significant differences in satisfaction in relation to "Tangibles," "Price," "Reliability," "Responsiveness," "Assurance" and "Empathy." However, "Continent of Origin" has significant differences in satisfaction in five of the six dimensions, namely "Tangibles," "Price," "Responsiveness," "Assurance" and

"Empathy." Age and marital status only have a significant influence on satisfaction related to "Price".

In terms of practical recommendations, the finding of significant variations between the price dimension of satisfaction and the different ages, educational backgrounds and price dimensions, as well as the finding that the satisfaction dimensions of tangibles, price, responsiveness, assurance, empathy vary with different continents of origin, necessitate the need for tourism operators and destination managers to continue to market these important segments and develop strategies for repeat visitation to destinations.

With a plethora of studies (Salim & Mohamed, 2014; Zeinali et al., 2014; Esu, 2015; Adetola et al., 2016) postulating how dimensions of satisfaction vary with socio-demographic characteristics of visitors, it is expected that the outcomes of this study will inform destination managers about the extent to which satisfaction dimensions vary with socio-demographic characteristics at attractions, allowing them to customize services to accommodate the varying demographic segments who serve as their clientele.

One of the main advantages of studying satisfaction dimensions is that it offers insights into particular dimensions affecting visitor satisfaction (Santos et al., 2022). Following the identification of these dimensions, researchers and attraction managers can concentrate their efforts on improving the features that have the greatest effects on visitor happiness. To enhance the overall visitor experience, this information can be used to guide decision-making, marketing strategies, and resource allocation.

Studying visitor satisfaction dimensions also makes it possible for destination and attraction managers to understand visitor preferences and expectations on a more sophisticated level (Richards et al., 2020). Different people may place a higher priority on various aspects of their attraction experience. The level of customer service may be important to certain visitors, while the availability of amenities may be more important to others. Researchers can determine the characteristics that influence visitor satisfaction for different visitor groups by examining these dimensions, which enables attraction managers to customize their offerings to satisfy the varied wants and preferences of their target audiences.

Moreover, analysing how dimensions of satisfaction differ with the socio-demographic profiles of visitors provides valuable insights into the role of individual characteristics in shaping visitor experiences. Socio-demographic factors such as age, gender, income, education level, and continent of origin can influence visitor expectations, preferences, and evaluations of attractions.

Table 3: Differences between visitors' satisfaction dimensions across socio-demographic characteristics

		Satisfaction					
		Tangible	Price	Reliability	Responsiveness	Assurance	Empathy
Variables	N	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean
Sex							
Male	205	2.62	2.13	2.71	2.71	2.70	2.65
Female	162	2.68	2.16	2.80	2.77	2.74	2.75
Age							
18-20	32	2.78	2.28	2.88	2.84	2.75	2.91
21-29	209	2.60	2.04	2.72	2.70	2.73	2.67
30-39	74	2.61	2.12	2.73	2.70	2.65	2.62
40-49	22	2.86	2.46	2.82	2.82	2.77	2.82
50+	30	2.73	2.53	2.87	2.90	2.77	2.80
			P=0.03				
			F=4.11*				
Religion							
Christianity	287	2.62	2.09	2.74	2.70	2.70	2.68
Atheism	40	2.75	2.43	2.88	2.95	2.87	2.80
Islam	28	2.71	2.25	2.71	2.75	2.68	2.71
Others	12	2.67	2.25	2.67	2.75	2.67	2.67
Continent of Origin							
North America	64	2.89	2.64	2.94	2.94	2.97	2.94
Africa	224	2.58	2.02	2.68	2.66	2.64	2.62
Europe	69	2.61	2.04	2.78	2.80	2.72	2.73
Others	10	2.80	2.40	2.90	2.80	2.80	2.70
		P=0.001	P<0.001		P=0.02	P<0.001	P=0.01
		F=5.70*	F=12.57*		F= 4.98*	F= 6.31*	F= 5.45*
Marital Status							
Never Married	262	2.63	2.15	2.74	2.72	2.73	2.70
Married	94	2.68	2.15	2.81	2.79	2.72	2.71
Ever Married	11	2.73	2.00	2.55	2.64	2.55	2.64
Level of Education							
Secondary	48	2.65	2.21	2.85	2.81	2.83	2.75
University/ college	236	2.63	2.07	2.74	2.72	2.70	2.67
Post-graduate	83	2.69	2.31	2.71	2.74	2.70	2.74
			P=0.04				
			F= 3.24*				
Employment Status							
Student	145	2.64	2.06	2.70	2.69	2.72	2.67
Employed	207	2.66	2.18	2.79	2.76	2.72	2.72
Unemployed	15	2.47	2.47	2.73	2.87	2.67	2.67

*Significant at $p \leq 0.05$

By examining how these dimensions of satisfaction vary across different socio-demographic profiles, researchers can identify potential disparities and inequalities in visitor experiences. This knowledge can inform efforts to promote inclusivity, diversity, and accessibility within attractions, ensuring that all visitors have equitable opportunities for satisfaction.

Although the current study reveals a variation between some satisfaction dimensions and some socio-demographic characteristics at the KNP, it did not, however, confirm where the differences occur between the groups were statistically significant. Future research should employ a post-hoc test to ascertain where the differences occur within the significant groups. Also, since the study's only collected data on visitors to KNP in April and May 2019, the research results may lack generalizability. The application of the study to other national parks in Ghana, as well as different time frames, would allow for wider generalizations to be made from the results.

Moreover, this study concerned itself with the differences that exist between satisfaction dimensions and the socio-demographic profiles of visitors at the attractions without considering the outcomes resulting from satisfaction. Hosany et al. (2017) argue that satisfied customers are likely to be loyal and also recommend the destination to others. Hence, future studies should explore the post-visit behavioural intention of visitors at the attraction, investigating whether visitors are willing to recommend and revisit the destination again as a result of their satisfaction, because other factors, such as the lack of diversified tourism products at the destination, can deter a satisfied visitor from revisiting in the future.

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