

African Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Management

ajthm.eanso.org

Volume 4, Issue 1, 2025

Print ISSN: 2790-9603 | Online ISSN: 2790-9611

Title DOI: <https://doi.org/10.37284/2790-9611>



Original Article

Nexus between Guest Satisfaction and Behavioural Intentions in Budget Hotels in Machakos County, Kenya

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Article DOI: <https://doi.org/10.37284/ajthm.4.1.3168>

Date Published: ABSTRACT

18 June 2025

Keywords:

Behavioural Intentions, Guest Satisfaction, Hospitality Industry, Budget Hotels, Machakos County, Kenya.

Limited resources with rising competition make it difficult for budget hotels to maintain guest satisfaction and build customer loyalty. Guest behavioural intentions and perceptions are constantly changing and budget hotels need to understand the interaction for long-term success and sustainability. The objective was to assess the influence of guest satisfaction and behavioural intentions among budget hotels in Machakos County, Kenya. Data was collected using semi-structured questionnaires administered to 332 hotel guests across 10 budget hotels using a mixed-methods research approach. Quantitative data was analysed by use of descriptive statistics, and ordinal regression analysis was used to determine their relationship. The study reveals that the effect is statistically significant since it had a p-value of 0.000, thus, less than the 0.05 level of significance, suggesting that guest satisfaction was a robust predictor of behavioural intentions. The research suggests that budget hotels should concentrate their efforts on cleaning, customer service, and swift check-in/check-out procedures to exceed guest expectations.

APA CITATION

Mwalimu, Z. M., Ndivo, R. M. & Kariru, A. N. (2025). Nexus between Guest Satisfaction and Behavioural Intentions in Budget Hotels in Machakos County, Kenya. *African Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Management*, 4(1), 232-245. <https://doi.org/10.37284/ajthm.4.1.3168>.

CHICAGO CITATION

Mwalimu, Zipporah Mueni, Rayviscic Mutinda Ndivo and Antonetta Njeri Kariru. 2025. "Nexus between Guest Satisfaction and Behavioural Intentions in Budget Hotels in Machakos County, Kenya". *African Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Management* 4 (1), 232-245. <https://doi.org/10.37284/ajthm.4.1.3168>.

HARVARD CITATION

Mwalimu, Z. M., Ndivo, R. M. & Kariru, A. N. (2025) "Nexus between Guest Satisfaction and Behavioural Intentions in Budget Hotels in Machakos County, Kenya" *African Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Management*, 4(1), pp. 232-245. doi: 10.37284/ajthm.4.1.3168

IEEE CITATION

Z. M. Mwalimu, R. M. Ndivo & A. N. Mwalimu "Nexus between Guest Satisfaction and Behavioural Intentions in Budget Hotels in Machakos County, Kenya", *AJTHM*, vol. 4, no. 1, pp. 232-245, Jun. 2025.

MLA CITATION

Mwalimu, Zipporah Mueni, Rayviscic Mutinda Ndivo & Antonetta Njeri Kariru. "Nexus between Guest Satisfaction and Behavioural Intentions in Budget Hotels in Machakos County, Kenya". *African Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Management*, Vol. 4, no. 1, Jun. 2025, pp. 232-245, doi:10.37284/ajthm.4.1.3168

INTRODUCTION

Guest satisfaction remains a key strategic business priority for the hospitality industry. Hotels have long relied on it to provide better customer experiences, leading to behavioural effects like consumer loyalty, along with repeat visits and strong recommendations (Ali et al., 2021). Further, because of rising hotel competition, customer satisfaction has emerged as a driver for hotel facilities differentiation and client retention and hence, sustainable profitability (Amoah et al., 2016).

Within the African context, hotels serving budget travellers have of late experienced rapid growth, serving as essential lodging solutions for domestic and regional visitors. For instance, budget hotels that play a major role in Kenya's hospitality sector have expanded significantly in recent years, particularly in city and outskirts regions (Murage, 2021). However, service delivery, along with infrastructure quality and customer satisfaction levels, remain major obstacles experienced by African budget hotels (Juma, 2020).

Machakos County, within Eastern Kenya near Nairobi City, has developed into a significant hospitality centre boasting multiple budget hotels that serve both domestic residents and tourists from the neighbouring areas. Budget accommodation needs have increased in Machakos County due to its advantageous location and its thriving tourism sector, along with the expanding business sector.

Limited empirical research documents the relationship between factors that affect guest satisfaction in Machakos County budget hotels as well as the relationship of satisfaction to guest behavioural metrics such as revisit intentions and customer loyalty. The hospitality industry depends on service quality and customer satisfaction factors leading to behavioural intentions (Ali et al., 2021; Tuncer et al., 2021). The research space for budget hotels in developing economies like Kenya remains underdeveloped because of exceptional conditions affecting resources and customer needs, along with service delivery challenges.

Research investigating the connection between hotel guest satisfaction and behavioural intentions is scarce for budget hotels operating within Machakos County. Budget hotel management depends heavily on knowing this relationship to improve their services and maintain their customer base, as well as sustain their business growth. This research examined the relationship that exists between guest satisfaction levels and their subsequent intentions to behave among budget hotel customers in Machakos County, Kenya. The research examined major guest satisfaction components as well as their impact on future customer conduct toward specific budget hotels through revisiting intentions and recommendations, and loyalty behaviours.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Guests Satisfaction and Behavioural Intentions

Perceived satisfaction in the hospitality management context is an essential moderator of behavioural patterns, the link between perceived service quality and customer loyalty (Oliver, 2023). Satisfaction represents the degree to which the experience met or exceeded the guest's expectations and plays a major role in the guest's repeat visit intentions, word-of-mouth communication and positive word-of-mouth communication. As is evident in the case of budget hotel chains, which sell to consumers who are more price sensitive, expectations are moderate and accordingly, satisfaction depends not only on perceived benefits but also on the delivered services' credibility.

Many studies carried out in different parts of the world agree with the discovery that customer satisfaction has a great effect on the repeat business and the customer loyalty within the hospitality industry, with a multiplier impact on the long-term revenue generation capability of business entities. The author Liu et al. (2022) surveyed customer satisfaction in China in budget hotels and found that the budget hotels with high customer satisfaction levels had 30% more repeat business than the hotels with a lower satisfaction level. The study underlined the fact that cost-conscious hotels that managed to provide good

quality services by concentrating on basic factors, which are room cleanliness, responsive employees, fast registration and check-out processes, are particularly prominent among customers. Appealing to customer needs in the budget hotel sector were considered to be important for repeat business, arguing that increased investment in service quality is necessary to ensure its long-term sustainability.

Similarly, in the same manner, Smith and Brown (2022) did a research to understand the correlation that exists between customer satisfaction and customer advocate behaviours in the budget hotel industry of the United States of America. The study results showed that the percentage of customers satisfied with the services they received are five times more likely to refer another person to a hotel than customers who are dissatisfied with the service they received. This supports the notion that customer satisfaction not only generates loyalty but also sales promotion tool, which is much more effective in the current world following the inception of online customer reviews and social media. The research recommended that small hotels, especially those operating within a tight budget, should attempt to win over the majority of their clients and encourage them to recommend the hotels to third parties, other people, and other potential clients.

European research by Dupont and Finkelstein (2021) in Spain revealed that budget hotel chains that received a high customer satisfaction score had better customer value, since satisfied customers tend to repeat business, hence saving on acquisition costs. The authors explained that customer satisfaction is the product of operational variables (‘the Offer’) and several perceptual variables (‘the Perception’) that include room quality and value ‘tangible elements’ and staff friendliness and ‘over the top’ service ‘intangible elements’. It also emphasised the need to pay attention to this in the brand’s budget segments so they can deliver the kind of service that meets expectations.

The analysis of guests’ satisfaction surveys in Africa reveals the problems that are specific to the

developing world, including instability of service quality, deficits of infrastructure and uneven quality of service delivery on the continent. For example, Amponsah and Opoku (2023) established that in Ghana, guest satisfaction in budget hotels is highly dependent on the availability of utilities such as water and electricity. Such considerations, which are usually a subject of scant regard in low-cost property businesses, were recognised as essential in creating guest satisfaction. In point form, the study took its stand on the fact that solving these fundamental issues of infrastructural development, inclusive of adequate power supply and water supply, could go a long way in enhancing guest satisfaction and boosting customer loyalty in Ghanaian budget hotels.

Another study conducted by Okeke and Odoh (2021) in Nigeria revealed that the customer satisfaction level in budget hotels was reduced due to the absence of a trained workforce, unavailability of quality amenities and poor guest interface by hotel management. The authors suggested that better staff training and basic physical/rational facility and service enhancements are needed to advance new EU guest satisfaction and encourage revisit and positive word-of-mouth behavioural intentions.

In Kenya, a number of studies have looked into customer satisfaction in budget hotels and studies have noted that factors such as cleaner accommodation, the cost of the hotel and the courtesy of staff have an impact on satisfaction among the guests. Recent research by Mutua et al. (2021) with budget hotel guests in Kenya highlighted that guests are increasingly more concerned with cleanliness, cost, and cordiality of the staff rather than accoutrements of luxury. The study also pointed out that if the beliefs and expectations from a budget hotel are well met, the customer is likely to report a high level of satisfaction and hence can refer more guests to that facility.

In addition, customer satisfaction levels were found to be positively correlated to service prices and facility cleanliness (Kinyanjui, 2020). As

concerning the perception of price, guests were glad to see lower prices in the budget hotels, however, dissatisfaction emerged when expectations on service quality or the condition of a room were not met. The authors provided their recommendations stating that where value is offered it is done at the expense of cleanliness and minimum standardised service delivery in Kenya's context. The research showed that high satisfaction does not equal a low price; it is about making sure that what is offered to the guests corresponds to the price they pay.

Behavioural Intentions

A common theme in the literature on hospitality is behavioural intention, especially when it comes to studies on customer satisfaction and service quality. Researchers and management agree that behavioural intention makes up the feedback loop between the quality of the services provided and the happiness of the consumer. Businesses can ascertain if their strategic actions to raise customer satisfaction and service quality levels lead to positive behavioural intention on the side of customers by conducting behavioural intention research. Businesses need to strategically consider behavioural intention to reach the customers they want and grow their market share.

Various definitions of behavioural intention have been proposed by researchers. Rama (2020) defines behavioural intention as including factors such as price sensitivity, loyalty, repurchase, and recommendation to others. Behavioural intention, according to Tavitiyaman, Qu, Tsang and Lam (2024), is the entirety of actions that suggest whether a customer will buy the same good or service again later on. Behavioural intention has been considered a preliminary indicator of actual conduct, despite its unpredictable nature and temporal variability (Yu et al., 2020). Behavioural intention can be thought of as the customer's behavioural input to the business regarding the quality of a product or service. Positive behavioural intention is defined by researchers as a customer's willingness to refer others to the business for services they have received. Mafojane (2022) tell others about the business in a positive

light. Koc et al. (2022), remain loyal to the business, and agree to pay more for the services they receive (Ahmed, Fan & Billah, 2022). Positive behavioural intentions are linked to a service provider's capacity to persuade clients to do the following: (1) speak well of them, (2) refer them to others, (3) stick with them (i.e., make additional purchases from them), (4) spend more money with them, and (5) pay price premiums (Ali et al., 2021).

A customer's intention to pay is expressed by their willingness to pay more. For the benefits that the client now receives from the service provider, a higher price than competitors charge (Abrate, Quinton & Pera, 2021). According to research by Akbari and Wagner (2021), hotel visitors who felt particular feelings (including security, comfort, and welcome) were willing to spend more than they had during their prior visit.

In particular, research on the hospitality industry has shown that perceived value directly influences behavioural intention (Ibrahim & Borhan, 2020). Additionally, Kwon, Lee and Back (2020) discovered a statistically significant relationship between perceived value and behavioural intention.

Research has demonstrated that behavioural intentions can be accurately predicted by quality, perceived worth, and satisfaction (Xiao, 2020). Revisit intentions and word-of-mouth communication are measuring variables for behavioural intentions.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in ten (10) selected budget hotels located within Machakos County, situated in the Eastern part of Kenya, and one of the emerging urban and tourism spots in Kenya. A mixed-methods research approach was adopted, combining both quantitative and qualitative data.

A total of 332 respondents, made up of all the guests who stayed at the selected hotels during the study period, were involved in the study. The initial sample size was 344 budget hotel guests, but 332 guests responded to the questionnaires,

thus a 96.5% response rate. The sample size was reached using Yamane's (1967) sample size formula, normally used when the population size is known and a particular level of precision is required (Ahmed, 2024). The Department of Tourism, Machakos County, Kenya (2023), estimated that over 45 budget hotels were

established in the area and licensed. With this in mind, an estimate of the study was carried out that suggested a potential guest population of approximately 1000 guests over the years of data collection. The number of guests was then sampled as shown below.

SS = Sample Size was given by;

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where:

- n = sample size
- N = total population (assumed as 1,000)
- e = level of precision (0.05)

$$n = \frac{1000}{1 + 1000(0.05)^2} = \frac{1000}{1 + 2.5} = \frac{1000}{3.5} \approx 286$$

Additional participants = $286 \times 0.202 \approx 57.772$

Total Sample Size thus;

Total sample size = $286 + 57.772 \approx 343.772$

Rounding down, the final sample size was set at 344 guests.

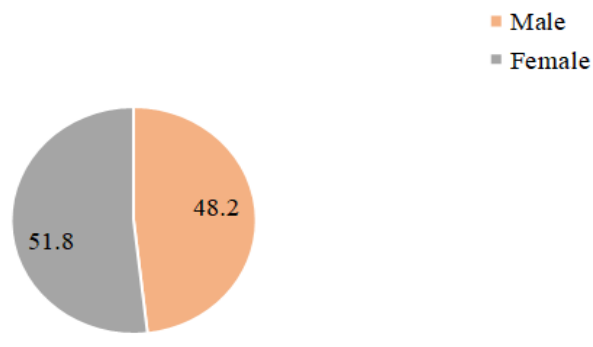
Convenience sampling, which was a well-established non-probability method, was used, such as selecting conveniently available guests according to the constraints of time, budget, and access situations. It only reduces generalizability, but it enables time-saving data collection (Landreville, 2020). Data collection involved a semi-structured questionnaire consisting of open-ended and closed-ended questions. The data analysis was carried out based on a multi-step systematic data analysis framework, which was based on existing academic advice. The descriptive statistics (frequencies, means and standard deviations) were used to tabulate the quantitative dataset after cleaning and coding to outline the guest satisfaction and behavioural intentions. The correlation between guest satisfaction and behavioural intentions was then

investigated via Spearman rank correlation, which was used on variables with an ordinal Likert scale. Additionally, ordinal regression was used to predict the relationship between guest satisfaction and behavioural intention, and a value of $p < 0.05$ was used to determine the level of significance. The suitability of the regression model was tested using the normality test. The entire statistical analyses were performed using SPSS v20 and included descriptive along inferential analyses. Ethical principles were also followed to ensure that respondents were completely aware of the goals and methods of the study, thus ensuring their free and informed consent to participate in the study.

RESULTS

Demographic Characteristics of the Study Respondents

The study group consisted of approximately equal male and female participants, where females accounted for 172 guests (51.8%) and males composed 160 participants (48.2%) as per Figure 1.

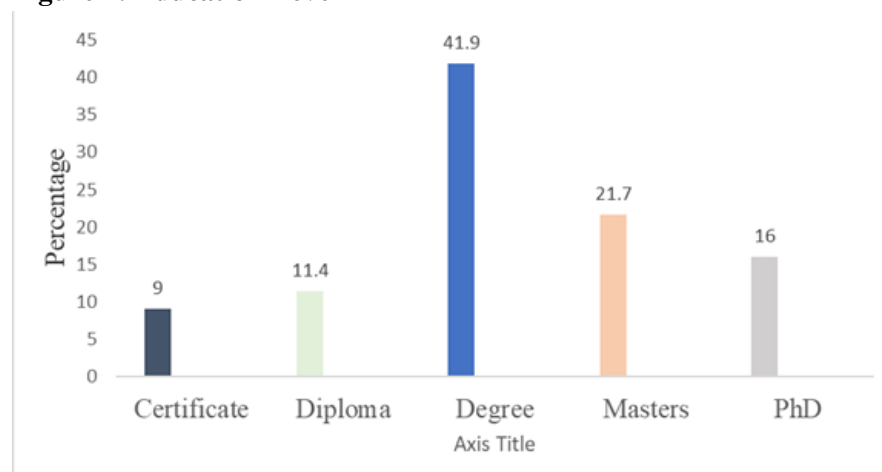
Figure 1: Gender

According to Table 1, the majority of the study respondents were between 26-45 with 26-35 years accounting for 29.5%, and 36-45 years accounting for 28.9%.

Table 1: Age Distribution of Study Respondents

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
18-25 years	53	16.0	16.0	16.0
26-35 years	98	29.5	29.5	45.5
36-45 years	96	28.9	28.9	74.4
46-55 years	66	19.9	19.9	94.3
Above 55 years	19	5.7	5.7	100.0
Total	332	100.0	100.0	

In terms of levels of education in Figure 2, the majority of the respondents were holders of a university bachelor's degree (41.9%) followed by Master's degrees (21.7%) with the rest split between PhDs (16.0%), diplomas (11.4%), and certificates (9.0%). The majority of the respondents were employed (56.0%) while business owners made up 25.9% of respondents.

Figure 2: Education Level

As per Table 2, the income bracket of Ksh 50,001-80,000 represented the most common group with 24.1%, while earnings below Ksh 30,000 constituted 18.4% and employment earnings exceeding Ksh 150,000 constituted 16.9% of the total guests surveyed. Other income brackets included 30,001-50,000 (11.7%), 80,001-100,000 (15.4%), and 100,001-150,000 (13.6%). Budget hotels can draw customers from different income levels but the middle-income category between Ksh 50,001-80,000 demonstrates the strongest preference. The occurrence of budget hotel

customers with more than Ksh 150,000 income demonstrate that price-conscious travellers choose budget facilities regardless of their financial capabilities.

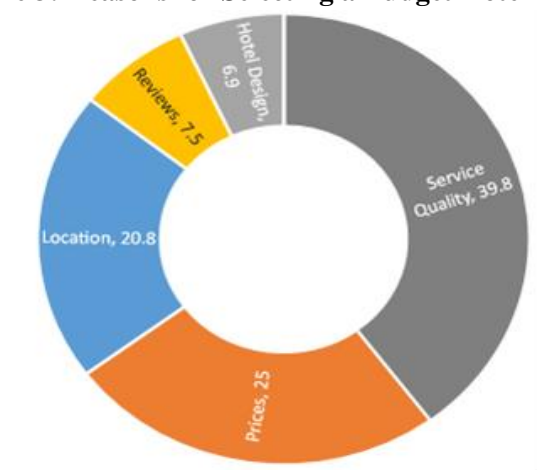
Table 2: Respondents Monthly Income

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
<30,000	61	18.4	18.4	18.4
30,001-50,000	39	11.7	11.7	30.1
50,001-80,000	80	24.1	24.1	54.2
Valid 80,001-100,000	51	15.4	15.4	69.6
100,001-150,000	45	13.6	13.6	83.1
>150,000	56	16.9	16.9	100.0
Total	332	100.0	100.0	

According to Figure 3, the budget hotel was selected primarily as a result of service quality, which accounted for 39.8% of responses to demonstrate hotel guest experience significance. Affordability proved to be the second essential decision driver for customers after service quality (25.0%). Location was the third leading reason for

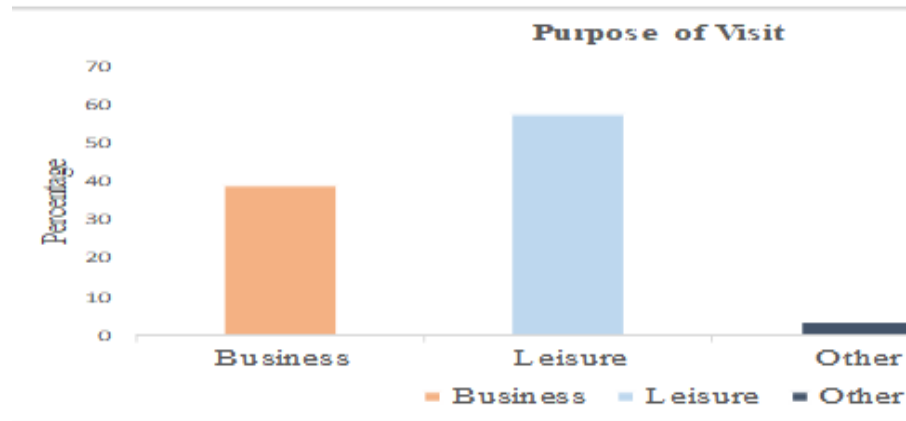
selecting budget hotels (20.8), with reviews and hotel design demonstrating somewhat smaller effects on this decision-making process. Therefore, the findings from Figure 3 demonstrate that budget hotel guests care about finding affordable prices, high-quality services, and convenient locations.

Figure 3: Reasons for Selecting a Budget Hotel



It is clear from Figure 4 that the main purpose of visiting the budget hotels was leisure, accounting for 57.5%, while business purposes accounted for the second leading purpose of visit (38.9%).

Therefore, guests searching for cost-effective yet non-business lodging use budget hotels as their preferred accommodation choice throughout Machakos County, Kenya.

Figure 4: Purpose of Visit

On the frequency of visits in Table 3, among the visited budget hotels in Machakos County, first-time visitors made up 33.4% of the respondents and those who visited 2-3 times accounted for 27.1%. Repeat customers form a significant group at 27.4% because they selected multiple visits

beyond five occasions. The number of people who had visited 4 to 5 times amounted to 12.0%. Budget hotels in Machakos County maintain strong guest loyalty benefits because around 27.4% of their visitors have arrived more than five times.

Table 3: Frequency of Visit

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
First time	111	33.4	33.4	33.4
2-3 times	90	27.1	27.1	60.5
Valid 4-5 times	40	12.0	12.0	72.6
More than 5 times	91	27.4	27.4	100.0
Total	332	100.0	100.0	

Descriptive Statistics for Guest Satisfaction

The study further fought to assess the influence of guest satisfaction on behavioural intentions among budget hotels in Machakos County, Kenya. The measurement indicators were Net Promoter Score and a five-point Likert scale on customer satisfaction score, and employee feedback. The Net Promoter Score (NPS) was used to determine how one could recommend the budget hotel to a friend or colleague and were represented as follows; 1 – Not Likely at All, 2 – Very Unlikely, 3 – Unlikely, 4 – Somewhat Unlikely, 5 – Neutral, 6 – Slightly Unlikely, 7 – Somewhat Likely, 8 – Likely, 9 – Very Likely, 10 – Extremely Likely. Additionally, a 5-point Likert scale was used on the remaining two statements (I am satisfied with my overall experience at this hotel and the hotel staff appear motivated and engaged in their roles) where: 1 represented

Strongly Disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Neutral, 4-Agree, and 5-Strongly Agree.

According to Table 4, the Net Promoter Score (NPS) for guest referrals measured at 8.30 points above the mean with a standard deviation of 1.580. Most guests show a strong propensity to recommend the hotel, while the wide standard deviation shows some divergence in their ratings. A small minority of guests showed moderate disinterest toward the hotel despite the overall positive reception. The research participants displayed an intense agreement toward their satisfaction with their hotel stay, resulting in a Mean = 4.42 and SD = 0.697. The uniformity of guest feedback can be supported by this low standard deviation since this indicates that all guests reported positive hotel experiences. Hotel staff motivation and engagement received high scores from clients who rated it at 4.40 with a

standard deviation of 0.753, meaning most of the budget hotel guests received good treatment from hotel staff. Although the standard deviation rate

was slightly above other scales, it indicates some guests experienced varying engagement perceptions across their service encounters.

Table 4: Mean and Standard Deviation of Guest Satisfaction

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
How likely are you to recommend this hotel to a friend or colleague (NPS Score)	332	8.30	1.580
I am satisfied with my overall experience at this hotel.	332	4.42	.697
The hotel staff appear motivated and engaged in their roles.	332	4.40	.753
Valid N (listwise)	332		

The Relationship between Guest Satisfaction and Behavioural Intentions within Budget Hotels

The research investigated the connection between guest satisfaction and behavioural intentions among budget hotels in Machakos County, Kenya. All findings from Table 5 demonstrate positive correlations between guest satisfaction indicators and Behavioural Intentions (BI) at a 0.01 significance level.

From the study findings presented in Table 5, the study found that the Net Promoter Score produced the highest positive correlation rating regarding behavioural intentions ($r = 0.722$; $p < 0.01$). A high level of guest satisfaction with hotel services leads customers to actively recommend the hotel to their social network. A high Net Promoter Score demonstrates that positive word-of-mouth serves as a fundamental factor for building budget hotel customer loyalty and encouraging guest repeat visitation. The relationship between Customer Satisfaction Score and behavioural intentions achieved both significance and a positive correlation rating at 0.654 ($p < 0.01$).

Guests demonstrated a greater disposition to recommend others and stay loyal to the hotel after expressing satisfaction with their hotel stay experience. The correlation between Employee Feedback and behavioural intentions was positively significant at ($r = 0.546$, $p < 0.01$), yet showed weaker results than the other guest satisfaction dimensions. Guest satisfaction increases and behavioural intention does too, because of quality communication and employee feedback that hotel staff provide to guests, and the guests plan to stay at that hotel again.

The research findings in Table 5 established robust positive relationships that exist between survey measurement components for guest satisfaction. Net Promoter Score generated a strong correlation with two other satisfaction indicators through its direct relationship with Customer Satisfaction Score ($r = 0.772$, $p < 0.01$) and Employee Feedback ($r = 0.663$, $p < 0.01$). The research findings establish that hotel guests base their recommendation intention not only on their satisfaction rates but also on how well hotel staff interact and provide feedback.

Table 5: Correlation Analysis of Guest Satisfaction and Behavioural Intentions Within Budget Hotels

			BI	Net Promoter Score	Customer satisfaction Score	Employee Feedback
Spearman's rho	BI	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.722**	.654**	.546**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000	.000
		N	332	332	332	332
	Net Promoter Score	Correlation Coefficient	.722**	1.000	.772**	.663**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000	.000
		N	332	332	332	332
	Customer satisfaction Score	Correlation Coefficient	.654**	.772**	1.000	.671**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.	.000
		N	332	332	332	332
	Employee Feedback	Correlation Coefficient	.546**	.663**	.671**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.
		N	332	332	332	332

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Notes: (BI-Behavioural Intention, Net Promoter Score represent how likely the guests were to recommend the hotel to a friend or colleague)

Test of Hypothesis on Guest Satisfaction and Behavioural Intentions

The study hypothesised that guest satisfaction does not influence behavioural intentions among budget hotels in Machakos County, Kenya. Moreover, the objective was to assess the influence of guest satisfaction on behavioural intentions among budget hotels in Machakos County, Kenya.

The Model Fitting Information Table 6 displays results from intercept-only and final model testing because it uses guest satisfaction to predict behavioural intentions. Analysis shows the -2 Log Likelihood value for the intercept-only model

stands at 450.804 and it decreases to 170.267 in the final model. When guest satisfaction variables were added to the model, the Chi-Square statistic rose to 280.537 (df = 1, p = 0.000), which established their essential contribution to the model explanation. The significance level below 0.05 proves the final model's validity because it demonstrates that guest satisfaction stands as an essential factor in predicting behavioural intentions. Contented guests display higher demands to rebook budget hotel stays alongside sharing positive recommendations with others. Results confirm the direct and major effects of guest satisfaction on behavioural intentions.

Table 6: Model Fit Information

Model	-2 Log Likelihood	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Intercept Only	450.804			
Final	170.267	280.537	1	.000

Link function: Logit.

Testing using Goodness-of-Fit measures reveals the extent to which the model describes the link between guest satisfaction and behavioural intentions.

According to Table 7, a significant Pearson Chi-Square value of 111.177 (df = 83, p = 0.021) exists along with unexplained variability in the model. Study findings in Table 7 showed the Deviance Chi-Square value at 59.302 (df = 83, p = 0.977),

which proves the model matches the data effectively. The Deviance test applied to logistic regression models yields reliable results that validate the appropriateness of the model

interpretation due to its non-significant outcome. The analysis demonstrates that budget hotel guest satisfaction actively determines their behavioural intentions.

Table 7: Goodness-of-Fit

	Chi-Square	Df	Sig.
Pearson	111.177	83	.021
Deviance	59.302	83	.977
Link function: Logit.			

Pseudo R-Square results in Table 8, it was noted that there was a moderate to strong relationship between guest satisfaction and behavioural intentions since R^2 was found to be 0.588. This

means that guest satisfaction served as the most credible measure because it accounted for 58.8% in shaping behavioural intentions.

Table 8: Pseudo R-Square

Cox and Snell	.570
Nagelkerke	.588
McFadden	.240
Link function: Logit.	

In Table 9 the coefficient for guest satisfaction is 2.427, with a standard error of 0.170 indicating a strong and positive relationship between the two constructs. This effect is statistically significant since it had a p-value < 0.000 at a 95% confidence interval, suggesting that guest satisfaction was a robust predictor of behavioural intentions. Therefore, guest satisfaction plays a substantial role in enhancing the probability of behavioural outcomes such as returning to the hotel and recommending it to others.

The null hypothesis presented that guest satisfaction does not influence behavioural intentions among budget hotels in Machakos County, Kenya. The p-value of 0.000 in Table 9, which is less than the standard value of 0.05, was statistically significant, providing strong evidence to reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis. Thus, guest satisfaction has a statistically significant influence on behavioural intentions.

Table 9: Parameter Estimates (BI- Behavioural Intentions, and GS- Guest Satisfaction).

		Estimate	Std. Error	Wald	Df	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
							Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Threshold	[BI = 2.67]	5.616	.989	32.232	1	.000	3.677	7.555
	[BI = 3.00]	7.439	.794	87.862	1	.000	5.884	8.995
	[BI = 3.33]	9.495	.806	138.881	1	.000	7.916	11.074
	[BI = 3.67]	11.600	.909	162.786	1	.000	9.818	13.381
	[BI = 4.00]	12.961	.964	180.792	1	.000	11.072	14.851
	[BI = 4.33]	14.296	1.017	197.426	1	.000	12.302	16.290
	[BI = 4.67]	15.337	1.051	212.984	1	.000	13.277	17.397
Location	GS	2.427	.170	202.804	1	.000	2.093	2.761

Link function: Logit.

Note: (BI- Behavioural Intentions, and GS- Guest Satisfaction).

DISCUSSION

The study established that budget hotel guests in Machakos County demonstrated positive

behavioural intentions which directly related to their satisfaction levels. These hotels possessed an 8.30 score on the Net Promoter Scale, which

represents how likely guests would recommend these facilities to others according to current global hospitality standards. Research indicates a strong positive relationship ($r = 0.654$, $p < 0.01$) between guest satisfaction and their behavioural intentions to return to and recommend the hotels. Liu et al and their research show similar results that Chinese budget hotels with better customer satisfaction achieved a 30% boost in repeat business, according to Liu et al. (2022). The study by Smith and Brown (2022) identified how U.S. budget hotel customers with satisfaction five times more frequently spread positive word-of-mouth about their experiences. The research revealed employee engagement as a major variable where feedback from staff positively influenced their behavioural intentions ($r = 0.546$, $p < 0.01$). Independent studies conducted by Mburu et al. prove similar results. Mburu et al. (2020) found in their research that the hospitality industry in Kenya sees improved service quality through employee management relationships built on mentorship, coaching and trust. Furthermore, Onyango et al. (2020) showed that employee engagement improves through fair management practices since proper treatment leads to staff motivation which results in enhanced guest satisfaction. Guest satisfaction serves as a strong predictor in behavioural intentions since it explains 58.8% of the variance in Nagelkerke ($R^2 = 0.588$) (Shiyammurti, 2023). Analysis data indicates that guest satisfaction as a determinant factor explains 58.8% of the behavioural intentions, making it essential to focus on guest satisfaction. Budget hotel guests who focus on getting their money's worth value cleanliness and speed alongside responsive staff during their stay. Research by Mutua et al. (2021) and Kinyanjui (2020) in Kenya backs this finding, saying that satisfying the basic requirements of responsiveness and cleanliness leads to higher guest satisfaction, together with increased return visits.

CONCLUSIONS

Budget hotels in Machakos County experience changes in behavioural intentions that directly correspond with guest satisfaction levels. Guests

who experience high satisfaction from quality service, along with motivated staff during positive encounters, tend to choose hotels again and share their experiences with others. Budget hotels need to concentrate on satisfaction-delivering strategies because this maintains customer devotion and favourable customer behaviour. The hotel should invest in employee training to boost staff engagement, alongside maintaining superior guest experiences by actively requesting continuous guest feedback for areas to improve. A focus on guest satisfaction allows budget hotels to obtain lasting growth from regular customers who will positively recommend the hotels.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Businesses need to dedicate funds toward complete employee education and continuous participation. Guest satisfaction strongly depends on the quality of interactions between staff members. Employees achieve better guest satisfaction when organisations run regular training sessions about communication and problem-solving alongside empathy skills. When staff receive empowerment to improve guest experiences, the outcome becomes higher service quality and increased motivation among staff members.

Implement Personalised Guest Experiences. The utilisation of data collected from guests allows hotels to provide customised services like greetings, accommodation preferences, and special celebrations, which creates enhanced guest satisfaction. Personalised service creates loyal guests who maintain their business with the establishment.

Organisations improve service quality by keeping feedback channels permanent. The evaluation of guest feedback through established mechanisms helps hotels discover how they could improve. Therefore, by acting right away to solve problems and adjusting according to feedback from guests, hotels show they truly care about customer satisfaction and get more positive word-of-mouth promotions.

Hotels should upgrade their amenities while maintaining a high level of facility cleanliness. Providing hotels with clean, properly-functioning facilities which house essential amenities results in delighted guests. Through frequent upkeep of hotel facilities, hotel management can avoid problems and establish an improved hotel image.

Leverage Technology to Streamline Operations. Hotel efficiency levels increase significantly through technology implementation of mobile check-in/check-out platforms alongside digital concierge and real-time communication platforms to satisfy modern tech user expectations.

The implementation of loyalty programs establishes incentives for guests to visit again. A loyalty program which provides unique advantages and rewards encourages hotel guests to stay longer and encourages their friends to choose the same hotel. This initiative makes customers feel better connected while growing their ongoing profits.

Acknowledgement

We express our sincere appreciation to the management of budget hotels in Machakos County for facilitating the data collection process in their establishments. This study effectively obtained valuable insights from the guests who willingly participated. Additionally, we extend our gratitude to Murang'a University of Technology for its unwavering academic support throughout the study.

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