



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

Cornelius Tengan^{1*}, Augustine Kuusogre¹, Gordon Maayir², Richmond Sakyi³

¹Department of Hospitality Management, University of Bolgatanga Technical, Sumbungu, Ghana; ²Department of Marketing, University of Bolgatanga Technical, Sumbungu, Ghana; ³Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management, University of Ho Technical, Ho, Ghana

ABSTRACT

This study sought to ascertain the difference between visitors' socio-demographic characteristics and dimensions of satisfaction at Kakum National Park (KNP) in Ghana. The study adopted a cross-sectional field survey and sampled 367 respondents for data collection, using a questionnaire. Data was analyzed via the mean scores and standard deviation. Independent t-test and ANOVA were used to explore the difference between dimensions of satisfaction and socio-demographic characteristics of visitors. Out of the socio-demographic characteristics used only age, the continent of origin and level of education were found to vary with some of the dimensions of satisfaction at p -value ≤ 0.05 . Visitors were found to be satisfied with all the dimensions of satisfaction except the price. The study, therefore, recommends that management of the attractions adopt conscious service strategies to enrich the experience of visitors in order to ensure value for money. The study findings expand the knowledge on visitor's satisfaction and how socio-demographic characteristics vary with visitor's dimensions of satisfaction. However, since the study concentrations were only on visitors to KNP, the research results may lack generalizability. The application of the study to other national parks in Ghana would allow for wider generalizations to be made from the results achieved.

Keywords: Destination; Attractions; Kakum national park; Satisfaction dimensions; Socio-demographic characteristics

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is globally recognized as the fastest growing industry. According to the World Tourism Organization 2014 report, the tourism sector continuously experienced expansion and diversification, and it has become one of the largest and fastest-growing economic sectors in the world [1]. Defined as an activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business, and other purposes, tourism is regarded as a major contributor to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and employment in many economies of the world opined that, the tourism and travel sector outshined the global economy in 2016 as its direct contribution increased by 3.1 percent as compared to the growth of the global economy (2.5) percent. Moreover, its contribution to employment grew by 1.8 percent in 2016 which revealed almost 2 million net additional employment opportunity was created by the sector [2]. In Africa, some of the major destinations for tourists include Kenya, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Mauritius and Ghana

(Ghana Tourist Authority (GTA) in 2016). The Ghana Tourist Authority in 2016 alludes that, Ghana leads its neighbors as the number one tourist destination in West Africa.

Attractions are recognized as one of the three important elements of tourism supply in addition to transport and accommodation [3]. Hence, tourism would not exist without attractions [4]. This view is shared by Gunn 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) is one of the most visited attractions and among the country's iconic attractions created since the early 1990 s in Ghana (Ghana Statistical Report, 2017). Even though others of its nature have been created, it remains the flagship attraction in the categories of National Parks in Ghana [5]. Argue that attractions are crucial in contributing to the overall satisfaction of visitors, considered attractions as 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 [6,7].

Correspondence to: Cornelius Tengan, Department of Hospitality Management, University of Bolgatanga Technical, Sumbungu, Ghana, E-mail: cornelius108@gmail.com

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Therefore, to ensure the sustenance of attractions and destinations, the satisfaction of visitors is key [8]. A higher level of visitor satisfaction increases visitor dedication, reduce price elasticity, brings down exchange costs, and enhance the limit inflow of new visitors [9]. As the main driver of visitors to a destination, satisfaction with the experiences of a tourists at attractions has far-reaching implications and 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 attraction. This is especially the case of Ghana where tourism scholars have barely studied visitor satisfaction with attractions and its associate relations with future behavioral tendencies towards the destination [10]. The objectives of this study are to ascertain visitors' level of satisfaction with services at KNP and also to study the differences between visitors' satisfaction dimensions and their socio-demographic characteristics.

The concept of attractions in tourism

According to attraction is any place or thing that has the ability to persuade a person to visit a destination defines tourist's attractions as "consisting of all those elements of a non-home place that draw discretionary travelers away from their homes. They usually include landscapes to observe, activities to participate in and experiences to remember "defines visitor attractions as "a named site with a specific human or natural feature which is the focus of visitor and management attention" also argues that the use the phrase "Visitor attraction" is meant to cater for the non-overnight tourist market. Notwithstanding the use of the lexis, the existence of a drawing factor is irrefutable. Visitors' need for attractions may stem from various forms of motivation, ranging from pleasure-seeking, recreation and relaxation, education, learning other people's culture and visiting museums and parks [11].

Visitor Attractions are classified to include natural attractions such as beautiful mountain and valleys, scenery, gardens and springs, scenic drive, parks, lakes, rivers, wildlife, caves, and underground formations. Another form of attraction is entertainment and events, which include shows, exhibitions, cultural events and festivals, western musicals and nightlife and entertainment as well as historic attractions such as history, heritage, and vintage buildings [12].

Attractions are at the core and give a reason for the development of tourism in any given destination [13]. Other studies also affirm the importance of attraction to tourism by arguing that attractions are an essential component of tourism development [14].

Also, attractions provide the focus by setting the agenda for tourists' activities of a destination in the tourism industry [15]. 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 [16]. More so, it has been labeled as key determinant of a destinations image that influences tourist satisfaction [17].

Visitor satisfaction with attractions in tourism

The importance of visitor's satisfaction in the service industry has been acknowledged by several researchers as crucial for destination sustainability and the overall success of the destination [18-20]. Therefore, an understanding of visitor satisfaction is of paramount

importance for the tourism industry because it is considered as one of the key objectives and indicators in the success in tourist destination management [21]. Satisfaction is viewed as an attitude or evaluation that is formed by the customer comparing their pre-purchase expectation of what they would receive from the product to their subjective perceptions of the performance they did received also views 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 expectation is met, he or she is likely to evaluate his or her experience as satisfactory, and disaffection will surface if the services provided do not meet the visitors' desires [22].

Recognized as an important behavioral antecedent, managers of attractions are increasingly appreciating the economic importance of meeting the needs of visitors and providing them with memorable experiences [23]. Regarding the tourism industry, it has been suggested that when tourists are satisfied, they are likely to recommend the tourist destination to others [24]. Accordingly, satisfied tourists tend to engage in positively word of mouth communication with others about their positive experiences [25-30]. This in turn, contributes to increased rates of tourists' patronage, retention, loyalty and acquisition. Invariably, there is a positive association between tourist satisfaction and the long-term profitability and success of the destination.

According to factors used in evaluating the satisfaction of attractions includes both tangibles (appearance of physical facilities, including equipment, personnel and communication materials) and intangibles (good ambiance and well-dressed staff among others) while focus on the intangibles [31]. These factors have been expanded and categorized under the following various authors: Responsiveness, tangibles, communications, consumables and empathy product, experience, marketing, culture and leadership; surroundings of the attraction, reception/ticket office, literature and souvenir selling area, exhibition, catering, toilets, general impression showed that the physical environment can powerfully affect customers' cognition, emotions, and behavior [32]. According to them, one important factor that has been thoroughly emphasized in the satisfaction of attractions research is the physical environment [33].

Satisfaction and tourists' socio-demographic characteristics

Note that an understanding of tourists' socio-demographic characteristics is significant for tourism marketing management [34]. Socio-demographic characteristics of tourists include; gender, age, income, education, nationality occupation and marital status, socio-demographic profiles such as nationality, age, gender, income, and educational level are highly vary with satisfaction. Indicate that age and income do not affect the level of satisfaction significantly, but gender, education, and occupation had a significant influence on satisfaction [35]. According to there is a significant difference between satisfaction and gender and that, females expressed higher satisfaction than males; an assertion similar to this contrasts the finding of that showed that males have a higher level of satisfaction than females [36]. With reference to the level of education, argue that different educational backgrounds influence satisfaction levels also showed a significant relationship between educational level and satisfaction with snorkeling experience in Pulau Payar Marine

Park. With respect to nationality, argue that there is a significant difference in satisfaction across the different nationalities of visitors to Balearic Island in Spain [37]. On the contrary, suggest that, there is no significant difference in overall satisfaction and nationality [38]. From the above, it may be assumed that the evidence pointing to the differences in tourists' satisfaction 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 the different aspects of tourists' activities that were considered [39,40].

Theoretical framework

The two types of consumer satisfaction exist. These are the transaction-specific and overall satisfaction. Transaction-specific satisfaction is correlated to a specific encounter with the organization whereas overall satisfaction is a collective construct summing satisfaction with specific products/services of the organization with various facets of the company, physical facilities for example. 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 [41-50].

The underpinned theory for this current study is the transaction-specific theory which suggests that satisfaction of a customer is dependents of their experience with specific attributes of services based on which they engaged in a transaction. Subsequently,

the decision to re-engage in the service transaction in future is hinged on the customers' satisfaction or dissatisfaction of the earlier transaction [51]. Further, the transaction-specific theory suggests that since customers' judgment of satisfaction is based on specific proportions, decision to re-purchase could be ascribed to the customers' satisfaction of a service dimension rather than the overall service [52]. Given the above, when consumer satisfaction is evaluated, the researchers should define whether the satisfaction measure is based on the overall or the transaction-specific satisfaction [53]. This study aims to define the differences between socio-demographics and satisfaction dimensions of visitors' at the KNP of Ghana [54,55]. The transaction-specific theory is thus deemed appropriate since KNP has specific services attributes that makes it easier to measure visitors satisfaction (Figure 1).

Study area (Insert map of study area)

The Kakum National Park is located in the Central Region of Ghana, close a small community called Abrafo Odumasi and among the many protected area in the country develop for touristic purposes. The main attractions at the park cover the canopy walkway, bird watching, nature walk and teahouses for night camping [56-60]. The KNP is not only known as the greatest and most visited attraction among the national parks in Ghana, according to the country's flag ship attraction because of its unique attributes (canopy walk way and the rainforest) which appeals to a greater number of visitors who come at the central region.

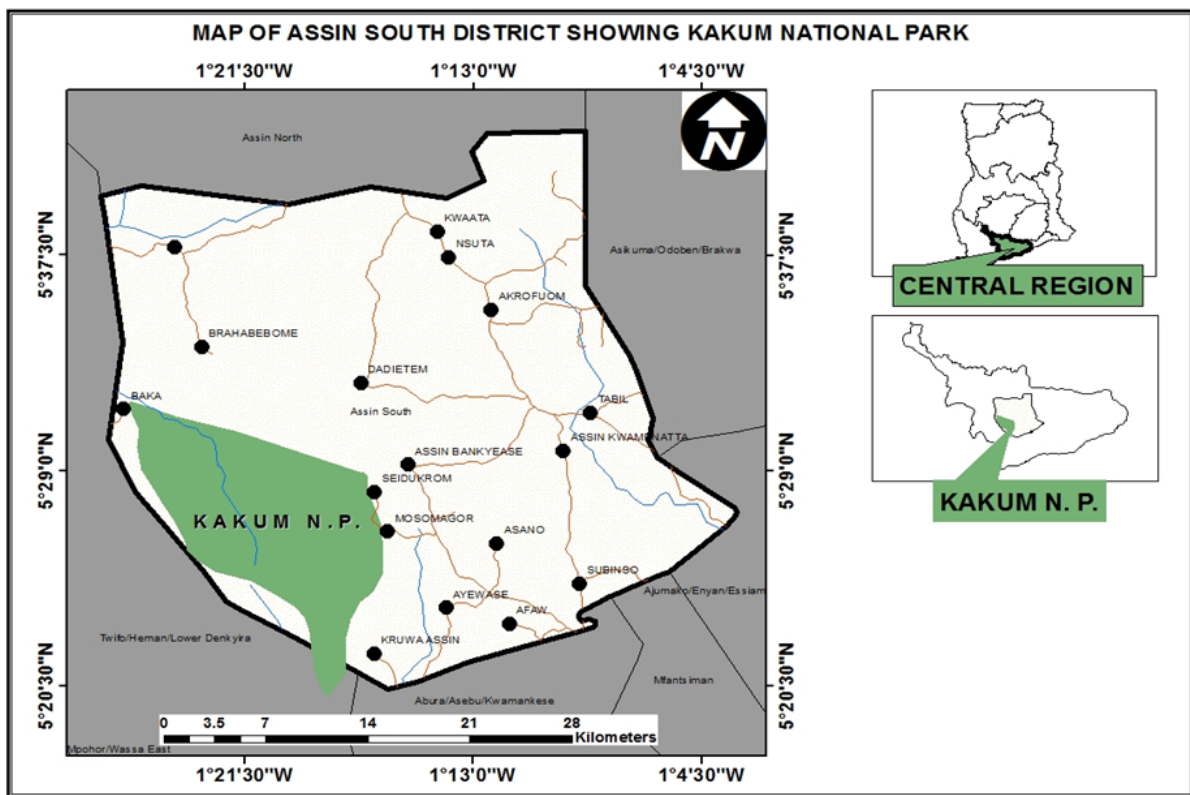


Figure 1: Map of Kakum national park.
 Note: (Green box) Study Area ; (Black outline) Asian South District; (Black dot) Town; (Orange line) Road; (Blue line) River
 Source: Cartographic and remote sensing unit, UCC (2017).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study adopted a descriptive cross-sectional field survey [61]. According to the main drive of descriptive research design is to report an exact description of observations in a situation and no attempt is made to change behaviors [62]. A convenient sampling technique was used to reach out to the research participants [63-65]. 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 [66-70]. Before the actual collection of data, a pretest 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 measured quality and concise information [71].

A self-administered questionnaire which comprised of closed-ended questions was used for data collection [72]. The instrument was structured into two sections (A and B) in connection to the objectives of the study [73]. Section A captured information on the socio-demographic characteristics of the participants and section B dealt with issues on visitor's satisfaction assessment of six service dimensions they have experience from the selected attraction namely Tangibles, Price, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance and Empathy which is adopted initially, respondents views on the six service dimensions measuring visitors' satisfaction were captured using a 5-point Likert Scale (1-Strongly disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Neither agree nor disagree, Agree, 5-Strongly Agree) of which they were asked to indicate their extent of agreement or disagreement with some statements posed by the researcher. To facilitate the interpretation of the results, the 5-point Likert Scale was subsequently collapsed to 3 points which was as follows: Disagree=1 (Strongly disagree+disagree); Neither agree nor disagree=2; Agree=3 (Agree + Strongly agree) [74,75]. The Three-point Likert scale concur with the assertion that, the points 'strongly disagree' and 'strongly agree' which are at the extreme ends of the scale, only stress the degree of agreement or otherwise. Aside, this resolution was reliant on the fact that data transformation exercise does not lead to any information lost but, rather enhances the interpretation of the results; it improves the simplicity of the results and conveys more precise meanings [76].

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 91.75% response rate. Collected data were analyzed using both descriptive statistics (percentage in agreement, mean scores and standard deviation) and inferential statistical analysis techniques [77]. Specifically, independent t-test was employed to compare the mean score between gender and satisfaction dimensions while one way ANOVA was employed to compare the mean score of more than two groups which are age, marital status, religion, and continent of origin, level of education and employment status and the attributes of satisfaction. To calculate the overall satisfaction, we summed the means of each attribute and then divided the result by the number of dimensions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents

The assumption was that, visitors' socio-demographic characteristics of participants will vary by the satisfaction dimensions. In this study, variables that were included for socio demographic characteristics were sex, age, marital status, religion, continent of origin, level of education and employment status [78]. This section is important because, research has shown that, the satisfaction level of visitors

varies by their socio-demographic background. Accordingly, a summary of the socio-demographic profile of respondents are presented in Table 1.

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
50+	30	8.2
Marital status		
Never Married	262	71.4
Married	94	25.6
Ever Married	11	3
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
Europe	69	18.8
Others	10	2.8
Level of education		
Secondary School	48	13.1
University/College	236	64.3
Postgraduate	83	22.6
Employment status		
Students	145	39.5
Employed	207	56.4
Unemployed	15	4.1

Regarding the sex distribution of participants, the results indicate that, a little over half (55.9%) of the visitors was made up of males. Traditionally, males are known to travel more than females, and this could be a contributing factor to the low 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 brackets and were followed by those aged between 30-39 years (20.2%) while (8.7%) of the respondents were below 20 years [79]. The indication is that, the visitors who visit KNP are generally dominated by young adults between the ages of 21-29 mainly because of the canopy walkway which attracts. This corroborates the popular notion that the youth have a high propensity to travel, than other segments and due to their exuberance and curiosity to discover new things and place to spend a lot for time on leisure pursuits. Moreover, 8.7% of the respondents were below 20 years. Finally, the least (8.2%) of the total respondents from the attraction were aged from 50 years and above. The rigorous nature of activities at the attraction especially the canopy walkway could account for the smaller number of aged visitors to the destination [80].

In terms of marital status, ninety-four (94), representing 25.6% of respondents were currently married while 3% were ever married (separated, divorced or widowed) [81]. This finding could be as a

result of a popular notion that single people have the propensity to travel more because they may not have any family responsibility or obligation. Study support this finding which suggests that as people marries, night life and other activities like travel becomes less important. With regards to religious affiliation, majority (78.2%) were Christians, followed by those who were atheists (10.9%). Islam recorded (7.6%) and (3.3%) were others, including Traditionalist, Buddhist and Jewish [82]. This means that Christianity was the dominant religion among visitors who visited the attraction during the time of the study.

From the standpoint of continent of origin, the study observed Africans (mostly Ghanaian and Nigerian) visitors' domination (61.0%) followed by Europeans (18.8%) and North Americans (17.4%) with only 3.3% (12) from other continents like South America, Australia and Asia representing the least [83]. This result reflects the Ghana Tourism Authority statistics (2010) which maintains that the bulk of Ghana's visitors are from the continent of Africa. Conceivably, these remarkable African arrivals can be attributed to the increasing travel culture among the people in the sub-region [84].

In relation to level of education, majority (64.3%) of the visitors were those with University and College education, followed by Postgraduates (22.6%) and those with the least level of education were those with secondary school education (13.1%). Another variable considered was employment status of respondents. Out of the total respondents, more than half (56.4%) was employed, (39.5%), were students and the least (4.1%) were unemployed [85]. This implies that most of the visitors who visited the attractions at the time of the study were financially sound with regular income and therefore have the money to spend. For a person to travel, he or she needs a discretionary income, and this is possible when the person is working.

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, mean and standard deviation. Overall, visitors indicated that they were satisfied with the destination services with a mean (2.55). Specifically, Visitors were satisfied (M=2.69) with the destinations reliability [86]. According to the ability of the attraction to deliver the promised service dependably and accurately means it is reliable this implies that staff at the KNP are well informed about the attraction and as such delivered up to visitors' expectation.

One utmost responsibility of any business is the "duty of care" to its customers which has a long-term positive impact to 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. The implication is that staff of the attractions was caring, welcoming and hospitable to visitors who visited the destination. Therefore, it may be said that visitors will be willing to visit again and recommend the KNP to others because they were well catered for (Table 2).

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

Dimensions	%(Agreement)	Mean	Std. deviation	Ranks
Reliability	77.1	2.69	0.52	1
Empathy	77	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	

Note scale: 1.0-1.49=Disagree, 1.50-2.49=Uncertain, 2.50-3.0=Agree.

Also, responding promptly to customers' enquiries is an important responsibility of every staff in any institution which has a lasting implication to customers' 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 staff at the attraction during their visit to the destination.

Assuring customers of your expertise and knowledge in the discharge of your duties allays the fears in them and gives them confidences when dealing with you. In this study, staff displayed the above characteristics with a mean of 2.61 suggesting that visitors were satisfied with assurance demonstrated by staff at the various attractions.

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

Conclusively, regarding the highest satisfied service dimensions in order of magnitude, visitors ranked reliability as the most satisfied attribute with the highest overall mean score (M=2.69), followed by empathy (M=2.68), responsiveness (M=2.67), assurance (M=2.61), tangibles (M=2.57) while price was ranked as uncertain dimension by visitors with an overall mean score of (M=2.14) for satisfaction at the attraction. Aside visitors been uncertain about the price dimension of the attractions, tangibility of the destination were the least satisfied dimension. The notion that Ghana's destination is been faced with sanitation challenges could have been a contributing factor.

Difference between visitors' satisfaction dimensions and socio-demographic characteristics

Table 3 presents the difference between visitors' satisfaction dimensions and their socio-demographic characteristics. The table indicates that some satisfaction dimensions had significant differences with certain socio-demographic variables. A t-test showed that value of significant (2-tail) is higher than 0.05 meaning that the sex of respondents does not vary with any of the satisfaction dimensions at attractions at $p > 0.05$. Hence, the sexes (male and female) of respondents do not vary with the various satisfaction dimensions at the destination (Tangibles, Price, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance and Empathy). This finding is consistent who found that gender does not vary with satisfaction. However, with the highest mean score across all dimensions, females were more satisfied than males; a finding which is also consistent.

Table 3: Difference between visitors' satisfaction dimensions and socio-demographic characteristics.

Variables	N	Satisfaction					
		Tangible mean	Price mean	Reliability mean	Responsiveness mean	Assurance mean	Empathy mean
Sex							
Male	205	2.62	2.13	2.71	2.71	2.7	2.65
Female	162	2.68	2.16	2.8	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	2.6	2.04	2.72	2.7	2.73	2.67
30-39	74	2.61	2.12	2.73	2.7	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	2.9	2.77	2.8
P=0.03 F=4.11*							
Religion							
Christianity	287	2.62	2.09	2.74	2.7	2.7	2.68
Atheism	40	2.75	2.43	2.88	2.95	2.87	2.8
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	2.8	2.72	2.73
Others	10	2.8	2.4	2.9	2.8	2.8	2.7
P=0.001 F=5.70* 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	2.7
Married	94	2.68	2.15	2.81	2.79	2.72	2.71
Ever Married	11	2.73	2	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	2.7	2.67
Post-graduate	83	2.69	2.31	2.71	2.74	2.7	2.74
P=0.04 F=3.24*							
Employment status							
Student	145	2.64	2.06	2.7	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

Note: *Significant at $p \leq 0.05$.

With respect to age, the findings did not record any statistical differences with the dimensions of satisfaction except price which showed a significant variation at ($F=4.108$, $p=0.003$). This finding contradicts the study by findings suggested that there is no significant variation between satisfaction of price and value with age. Also, it came to light that the age group from 18-20 were more satisfied with tangibles, with the highest mean ($M=2.78$), ages from 21-29 were also much satisfied with the assurance dimension with $M=2.73$, while ages 30-39 were more satisfied with reliability with a mean $M=2.73$. The ages from 40-49 and 50+ were also much satisfied with tangibles and responsiveness with the means of $M=2.86$ and $M=2.90$ 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 prioritizes with regards to the dimensions of satisfaction.

Religion, marital status and employment status of visitors did not have any significant variation on the satisfaction of the various dimensions at $p>0.05$ level. All visitors across religion 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 the other religious affiliations were all highly satisfied with responsiveness with means ($M=2.95$, $M=2.75$ and $M=2.75$) respectively.

More so, respondents who were single and the ones who were married recorded the higher levels of satisfaction ($M=2.74$) and (2.81) for reliability respectively while those who had ever married (Divorced, Widowed or Separated) were more satisfied with the tangible aspects of the attractions. Aside price ($F=3.24$, $P=0.04$) which showed a statistical association with visitors' levels of education at the attraction, the remaining satisfaction dimensions

showed otherwise. This finding is similar to that who found that, educational level of tourists statistically vary with satisfaction of price and value.

Moreover, aside price, all the categories under level of education showed satisfaction with the various dimensions; however, the extent of agreement was higher among secondary school students across all the satisfaction dimensions. Similar finding emerged in the study of satisfaction. Their findings revealed that, those with secondary school education had a highest mean satisfaction than the other groups.

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

Contrary to this, Table 3, indicates that continent of origin has a significant association with all the satisfaction dimensions at $p \leq 0.05$ levels except reliability. Specifically, the table showed a significant difference between continent of origin and tangibles ($F=5.70$, $p=0.001$), price ($F=12.57$, $p<0.001$), responsiveness ($F=4.98$, $p=0.002$), assurance ($F=6.31$, $p<0.001$) and Empathy ($F=5.45$, $p=0.001$) respectively (Table 3).

CONCLUSION

The tourism industry is considered an important contributor to the growth of many 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 visitors' socio-demographic characteristics (Age, sex, religion, continent of origin, marital status, level of education and employment status) varies with service dimensions of satisfaction (tangibles, price, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy) 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 price was not positive. This finding affirms the transaction-specific theory which posits that satisfaction of customers is based on their experiences of specific attribute of the service based on which the customers make a transaction. The age and educational background of visitors vary with the price dimension of the attractions. Continent of origin of visitors also varies with tangibles, pricing, responsiveness, and assurance and empathy dimensions of the destination.

Practically, the finding of significant variations between the different ages, educational background and price dimension as well as the different continent of origins and satisfaction dimensions, necessitate the need for tourism operators and destination managers to continue to market this important segments and develop strategies for repeat visitation to destination.

With a plethora of studies postulating how socio-demographic characteristics vary with satisfaction dimensions of visitors, it is expected that, the outcomes of this study will inform destination managers to know the extent to which socio-demographic characteristics of visitors vary with satisfaction dimensions at attractions and to customize services to meet the varying demographic segment who serve as their clientele.

Although the current study reveals association between some socio-demographic characteristics and some satisfaction dimensions at the KNP, the study however failed to confirm where the differences occur between the groups that were statistically significant. Future research should employ a Post-hoc test to ascertain where the differences occur within the significant groups.

Also, the study concerned itself with the differences that exist between the socio-demographic profiles of visitors' and satisfaction dimension at the attractions without considering the outcome of satisfaction. Accordingly, satisfied customers are likely to be loyal and also recommend the destination to other. Hence, future studies should explore the post-visit behavioral intention of visitors at the attraction as to whether visitors are willing to recommend and revisit the destination again as a result of their satisfaction or not, 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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